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I am an LCSW and a school social worker in southern Maine. I am also a parent to a first and third grader in southern Maine. This is a desperate call to action to ban phone in schools in our state.

Maine has the highest rate of childhood anxiety in the nation. We also score highest on adverse childhood events in the nation! Students are not learning, they are anxious, depressed and distracted. They deserve better and they CANNOT regulate their phone/screen use on their own. They just cant. We need to be their frontal lobes and eliminate this distraction from schools. Hopefully parents follow.

Research links improved outcomes to the later age at which young adults first own a smartphone or tablet, most notably showing improved self-confidence, stronger relationships, and fewer suicidal thoughts. Delaying device use in childhood may enhance mental well-being and underscores the value of phone-free social time, such as during school lunches.

Studies have shown that higher use among children and adolescents is linked to adverse effects: depression and anxiety; inadequate sleep (which can disrupt neurological development and lead to depression and suicidal behaviors); low self-esteem; poor body image; eating disorders; and online harassment.

My kids will not be bringing phones to school. Please help this be normalized for them and simply do the right thing and BAN them from Maine schools like many other states are doing.

Thank you,  
Holly  
York, ME