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I'm writing today to show my support of Gov. Mills' supplemental budget to include an implementation of a Bell-to-Bell ban on personal electronic devices (PEDs being cell phones, tablets, smartwatches, other) during the school day for all school districts in Maine.

While I respect the decision-making capabilities of regional school units to create their own policies around cell phone use, new research has emerged about young brains and their lack of impulse control, socialization skill-building, distraction, depression and anxiety, and more... and devices making their way into younger and younger hands makes it even harder for young learners to build healthy lifestyle habits, especially amidst the pressure of peers. Regional school unit policy implementation simply cannot keep up with the speed at which we need to turn the tide on this particular challenge in our schools on a daily basis.

It is my strong belief that a statewide bell-to-bell PED policy would only enhance the educational environment for the better (with the exception of course for IEPs, 504 plans, etc). Seeing as how our state's K-12 academic standings are slipping lower and lower, I would assume that finding every possible way to enrich atmospheres for learning would be a priority for the Maine legislature as well. Thank you for allowing me to provide this testimony.