

Annie Allen
Scarborough
LD 2212

Hi,

My name is Annie Allen. While I currently reside in Scarborough, Maine, I was a middle school principal for many years in California. I have been an educator for over 30 years, and in 2017, I was honored to be named California Principal of the Year.

I can tell you from firsthand experience that removing phones from the school day—from the moment students arrive until the final bell—is in the best interest not only of students, but also of teachers and administrators.

As school leaders, having a bell-to-bell phone ban and collecting devices at the start of the day would save significant time and energy. Instead, most of my colleagues currently in middle and high school administration spend a large part of each day addressing issues that stem directly from social media and cell phones—fights escalated by online posts, emotional distress from group chats, bullying through apps, and the constant disruption of classroom learning.

Our teachers are burnt out. We simply cannot keep asking them to police phones at the start of every class period. Imagine the time and emotional energy we could reclaim if each phone was collected once at the beginning of the day—rather than being battled over up to eight times in a single day across multiple class periods.

This is a systems issue, not an individual teacher problem. For the sake of educators across Maine, we must make it the norm—not the exception—to collect phones at the start of the school day and return them at the end. Leaving this decision up to individual schools or principals only adds to the inconsistency and pressure on already overburdened staff.

Please, support bell to bell, phone free schools. Let's protect our teachers, our school leaders, and most importantly, our students.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Annie Allen
Scarborough, ME