



February 20, 2026

**RE: LD 2212**

Dear Members of the Legislature,

I am writing to you in my capacity as a licensed clinical psychologist – and local parent – to express my **strong support for the proposed legislation LD 2212 establishing a bell-to-bell, no-cell-phone policy in our school systems.** Based on both clinical experience and substantial research, *this measure is essential to protecting* the mental health, cognitive development, and social well-being of our children.

The science is in: research has definitively demonstrated the negative impact of smartphone use on children and adolescents. Studies published in journals such as JAMA Pediatrics and Child Development have linked excessive screen time and social media use to higher rates of anxiety, depression, sleep disturbance, attention difficulties, and decreased academic performance. Neuroimaging research further indicates that frequent cell phone use activates the brain's **dopamine reward pathways**, which indicates behavioral **addictions**. Adolescents, whose prefrontal cortex—the region responsible for impulse control and executive functioning—is still developing, are particularly vulnerable to these reinforcing mechanisms.

It is important to emphasize that this issue is not one of willpower. Children's nervous systems are highly sensitive to novelty, reward, and social validation. When a device is engineered to capture and sustain attention through intermittent reinforcement, notifications, and algorithm-driven content, a developing brain will predictably gravitate toward it. **In this context, boundaries are not punitive; they are protective.** Healthy development requires external structure while internal self-regulation capacities are still maturing. It is our job as adults and administrators to create safe digital-free environments for our children to learn and socialize.

A bell-to-bell no-phone policy would create the cognitive and emotional space necessary for learning. Research in educational psychology consistently shows that multitasking with digital devices impairs attention, memory consolidation, and comprehension. Students can only create the mental space required for deep learning when they are free from persistent digital distraction.

In addition, such a policy would **promote healthy social development.** Informal, unstructured interactions in hallways and lunchrooms are not trivial; they are foundational to the development of social skills, empathy, conflict resolution, and identity formation. When students default to screens during these transitional moments, they lose critical opportunities for face-to-face connection.

A universal bell-to-bell policy also protects children who do not yet have smartphones. In the absence of clear institutional boundaries, **peer pressure to obtain a device intensifies.** Establishing a consistent, school-wide standard reduces this pressure and allows families to make developmentally appropriate decisions without social penalty.



As clinicians, we understand that children thrive in environments where adults set clear, consistent, and developmentally informed limits. This legislation represents precisely that kind of leadership. By establishing firm boundaries during the school day, we are not restricting opportunity—we are safeguarding attention, mental health, and the conditions necessary for learning and healthy development.

I respectfully urge you to vote in favor of LD 2212. Our children deserve educational environments designed to support their growth, not compete with neurologically compelling digital distractions.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration and for your continued commitment to the well-being of our state's youth.

With regards,

***Carol Ann Faigin, Ph.D.***

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Licensed Psychologist

ME License #PS1328

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Hallowell  
LD 2212

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