

TO: School Committee

FROM: Tim Piwowar, Superintendent

DATE: May 3, 2024

RE: Creation of Task Force on Cellphone Use in Schools

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As we discussed at the April 23, 2024 School Committee meeting, there is growing interest in having a community conversation regarding the use of cellphones in school settings. This is spurred on by the growing research base about the impact of cellphones and social media on children and their development, and our desire to ensure that we have strong, vibrant, and respectful learning communities for all students within our schools.

With this in mind, I am proposing that I create a task force on cellphone use in schools that will include constituents from across our educational community. The work of this task force will be to examine the research base and to develop guiding principles that will inform future policy decisions at the school and/or district level.

The proposed composition of this task force is as follows:

- Superintendent
- Assistant Superintendent
- Director of Technology, Learning, and Innovation
- Three (3) Building administrators; one each from HS, MS, ES
- Three (3) Teachers/professional staff members; one each from HS, MS, ES
- Three (3) Parents/guardians; one each from HS, MS, ES
- Three (3) Students
- Director of Westwood Youth and Family Services
- Two (2) School Committee members

Following the School Committee meeting on May 9, I will seek members from the community to join the task force, with the goal of having an initial meeting prior to the end of the current school year. As part of the commitment to being a part of the task force, members would be expected to engage in the reading of a common text during the summer so that we can have a shared learning experience prior to the work beginning in earnest in Fall 2024.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions and thoughts at our meeting on May 9.