



Cognitive test performance rose across generations for most of the 20th century, then plateaued and reversed in many Western nations beginning in the mid-2000s, as classroom devices spread.¹

These suggested asks are options for parents and caregivers to consider. Each one supports the Intentional Tech Coalition's top 2026-27 School Priorities of Safety, Efficacy, and Alignment. Choose the asks that matter most to your family, and use or adapt the sample message to start the conversation with your child's teacher or principal.

1 No generative AI **SAFETY**

No generative AI on any school-issued device or inside any student-facing tool.

Research: High school students who practiced math with unrestricted GPT-4 scored 17% lower on a later exam without it,² and Common Sense Media rates AI companions an unacceptable risk for anyone under 18.³

Puts into practice: AI off by default

Sample message to the principal

Hi Mr. Hausermann, could generative AI be turned off on school-issued devices and inside student-facing tools? Thank you for your care on this. [Your name]

2 Allowed sites only **SAFETY**

School-issued devices reach only sites the district has allowed, instead of blocking harmful sites one at a time.

Research: One in three teens viewed pornography while at school, and nearly half of those who viewed it during the school day used a school-owned device.⁴

Puts into practice: Allow-list internet

Sample message to the principal

Hi Mr. Hausermann, could school-issued devices at the Ellen Garrison Building at Concord Middle School use an allow-list, so students reach only sites the district has allowed, rather than blocking harmful sites one at a time? Thank you for keeping our kids safe. [Your name]

3 Phones locked away, not just off **ALIGNMENT**

Phones, smartwatches, and other personal devices are stored out of reach from first bell to last, not kept off in a pocket or backpack.

Research: After U.S. schools adopted locking pouches, teacher-reported phone use in class fell from 61% to 13%.⁵

Puts into practice: Bell-to-bell policy

Sample message to the principal

Hi Mr. Hausermann, could phones, smartwatches, and other personal devices be stored out of reach from first bell to last, rather than kept off in backpacks? I'm happy to help with family outreach. Thank you! [Your name]

4 Digital wellness is taught **ALIGNMENT**

Every grade includes a digital wellness unit on how excessive or inappropriate use affects sleep, attention, mood, and relationships, and how to manage it.

Research: A 2025 meta-analysis found school-based programs reduced problematic technology use, with smaller effects on screen time.⁶

Puts into practice: Student well-being

Sample message to the principal

Hi Mr. Hausermann, would the Ellen Garrison Building at Concord Middle School consider a digital wellness unit in every grade on how device use affects sleep, attention, mood, and relationships? I'd be glad to share resources. Thank you! [Your name]



5 School-issued devices stay put ALIGNMENT

School-issued devices stay at school in grades 6 and 7. In grade 8, take-home is by parent opt-in only.

Research: Bedtime access to and use of a media device are linked to less sleep, poorer sleep quality, and daytime sleepiness.⁷

Puts into practice: Student well-being

Sample message to the principal

Hi Mr. Hausermann, could school-issued devices stay at school in grades 6 and 7, with take-home in grade 8 only when families opt in? I'm happy to help share the plan with other families. Thank you! [Your name]

6 60 minutes a day, max SAFETY

No more than 60 minutes a day of school-assigned screen time, including homework.

Research: Tweens average about 5.5 hours of screen media a day outside schoolwork,⁸ and more than an hour a day of recreational use is linked to lower well-being.⁹

Puts into practice: Screen time report

Sample message to the teacher

Hi [Teacher's name], about how much of [Child's name]'s classwork and homework happens on a screen each day? We'd love to keep it under 60 minutes, and I'm happy to support paper options at home. Thank you! [Your name]

7 Screen-free recess and lunch ALIGNMENT

No school-issued device use during recess or lunch.

Research: The AAP's 2026 recess statement cites studies showing unstructured recess helps students retain new classroom learning.¹⁰

Puts into practice: Student well-being

Sample message to the principal

Hi Mr. Hausermann, could school-issued devices stay put away during recess and lunch? I'd be glad to help gather games or supplies for those times. Thank you! [Your name]

At home

1. **Delay a smartphone until at least after middle school.** TechWise Arlington offers a guide to smartphone alternatives: techwisearlington.org/smartphone-alternatives
2. **Keep phones, tablets, and other personal devices out of bedrooms.** Bedtime access to a media device, even without use, is associated with less and poorer sleep.⁷
3. **Opt out of internet use on your child's school-issued device.** Our guide walks you through the request: intentionaltechcoalition.org/itc-internet-consent-guide.pdf

Sources

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