Attention: Superintendent Roberta Kubik and the Revelstoke Board of Education Trustees: Allan Chell, Sarah Zimmer, Sasha-Emily Walsh, Wendy Rota, Jodie Allen

The BVE PAC supports the BC Government’s concrete action to restrict the use of cell phones and connected devices in schools. Research shows that frequent cell phone interruption in the classroom, social media platforms with addictive algorithms, and predators who seek to exploit young people, all present significant risks to young people. Studies have found that children’s mental health and physical safety can suffer as a result of body-image distortion, cyberbullying, images shared without consent, and disturbing instances of sextortion.

BVE PAC wants to support the Revelstoke school district as it works to develop a robust policy by the start of the next school year to restrict students’ cellphone use in the classroom. To facilitate this process we have created a list of practical recommendations that we would like to see considered in the new policy as follows:

* Cell phones and connected devices brought from home are prohibited for educational activities including: research such as google search engine; games such as Kahoot; communication apps such as WhatsApp; note taking such as camera and video apps unless specifically allowed in a student's IEP or safety plan;
* Use of cell phones and connected devices brought from home are prohibited in classrooms and all learning spaces including the gymnasium and outside gym classes, theatre, drama and art studios, library etc.
* There will be designated areas free of cell phones and connected devices brought from home, including common eating areas, bathrooms, change rooms, hallways;
* There will be areas where cell phones and connected devices brought from home will be permitted such as lockers, exterior non-learning spaces, and entry hallways;
* Clear signage will indicate where cell phones and connected devices brought from home are prohibited and where they are permitted;
* Designated storage for personal connected devices will be provided in secure areas such as lockers, cell phone hotels, or office;
* Clearly articulated and outlined consequences for students who use personal cell phones and connected devices in the areas where use is prohibited;
* All technology used in schools, which is required for learning outcomes, should be provided by the schools, in order to ensure every student has the same learning experience regardless of socio-economic background.
* Policies around personal cell phones and connected devices in the schools should be school-wide (i.e., rather than at the discretion of individual classrooms).

BVE PAC recognizes the importance technology plays in education and lifelong learning. However, it is important that we also recognize the substantive qualitative and quantitative research that shows how cell phones can negatively affect student well-being, mental health and learning outcomes. We believe that this list of recommendations for a School District-wide policy will help to create a fair and safe environment where students can learn that is free from the distractions of cell phones.

This committee understands that there may need to be different policies for elementary and high school students. We also commend the current cell phone policy at Begbie View Elementary which states: *‘Student cell phones and other personal electronic devices are not to be brought to school. If a student must have a cell phone with them for their activities after the school day, any cell phone brought to school must be placed in Airplane Mode in a designated area for the day (usually the teachers’ desks).’*

Thank you for taking the time to read these recommendations and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

BVE PAC