

Hampton Council of PTA/PTSAs  
RESOLUTION – Cell Phone Policy for Middle School Students

WHEREAS, many middle school students rely on HRT for their transportation to and from school and may need to reach their parents for numerous reasons: student dropped off at wrong stop and unsure how to get home, bus doesn't arrive in morning, student confronts situation on walk home from bus, bus breaks down, or inclement weather,

WHEREAS, many Hampton City Schools middle school students walk or ride their bikes to and from school, as well as walk or ride their bikes to neighboring high schools for JV sports such that reaching their parents may be needed,

WHEREAS, many middle school students participate in after-school clubs at their schools and/or JV sports at neighboring High Schools requiring parents to pick them up such that parents and students may need to reach each other concerning change in plans,

WHEREAS, middle school students often carpool or go to after-school activities prior to going home with no chance to get their cell phones from their homes,

WHEREAS, cell phones give students a way to reach help in situations such as bullying, custodial issues, no one there to pick them up, lost, approached by a stranger, bike broken, inclement weather, and many other common situations,

WHEREAS, there are 238 registered sex offenders in the City of Hampton as of early 2007,

WHEREAS, cell phones give students instant access to help by calling parents or 911 and also work as a GPS locator,

WHEREAS, pay phones are generally not available at the schools or throughout the community overall,

WHEREAS, after-school clubs and activities often finish following the closing of school offices leaving students and parents no access to communicate with each other,

WHEREAS, giving middle school students the privilege of bringing a cell phone to school will help them learn responsibility for cell phone use preparing them for High School,

WHEREAS, the Michigan State Senate passed Senate Bill 294 and House Bill 4218 eliminating the prohibition on cell phones in schools beginning with the 2004-05 school year, with State Senator Cherry citing "the state ban on pocket pagers, cell phones, and other electronic communications devices was put in place when pagers and cell phones were fairly new and, in many cases, being used for drug sales. The times have changed since then and now these devices are used to help parents and children keep in touch through the day and after school. It is time for state law to catch up with the times."

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WHEREAS, the 2004 State of Florida Legislature passed Senate Bill 184, relating to school board duties regarding student discipline and school safety, providing for the possession of wireless communication devices for students and requiring each district school board to adopt rules governing the use of wireless communications device by a student,

WHEREAS, a survey was conducted in August 2006 by ACE\*COMM of 1000 parents from across the United States with children between ages of 12 and 17 and is to be considered accurate within 3%. It cited that 99 percent of parents want to be able to contact their child and have their child contact them via cell phone in an emergency. 99 percent want their child to be able to contact them by cell phone if an unsafe situation arises on the way to or from school. 71 percent of parents say their child needs a cell phone at school because school administrators won't allow them to use the office phone except in case of illness or emergency,

WHEREAS, neighboring school districts on Peninsula (York County, Newport News, Gloucester, and Williamsburg) allow middle school students to carry cell phones to school,

BE IT RESOLVED, cell phones are now considered by parents to be a much-needed communication device to keep in contact with their children to ensure their safety before and after school hours,

BE IT RESOLVED, on January 10, 2008 the Hampton Council of PTA/PTSAs general membership unanimously approved a motion to seek a change to HCS policy to allow middle school students to carry cell phones to and from school so that they are available to them before and after school hours, but stowed away during the school day.

BE IT RESOLVED, the Hampton Council of PTA/PTSAs desires to work with HCS administrators and teachers representatives to develop such a policy that is acceptable to parents, teachers, and administrators.