



Smithtown Central School District

26 New York Avenue, Smithtown, New York 11787

Mark Secaur, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools
(631) 382-2006

September 5, 2024

Dear Accomsett, Great Hollow and Nesaquake Middle School Communities,

We hope this message finds you well. At each of our middle schools, we pride ourselves in providing an educational experience for our students that best prepares them for the grade level curriculum. In order to best provide this opportunity for our students, we need to have as little distraction as possible. As a result, we will be partnering with Yondr to create phone-free spaces in each of our middle schools to help optimize teaching and learning. We intend to roll out this program in mid-October.

There is a great deal of research regarding the negative impact that smartphone usage has on young adolescents. Given our duty to provide school environments that promote our students academic, social-emotional and mental well being, we felt compelled to address this issue. Many of the apps utilized via smartphones are designed in such a way that they have an addictive effect. As a result, smartphones have become a constant source of distraction for our students during the school day. It is difficult for them to resist the temptation to scroll through social media, play games, or send and receive text messages. All of this serves to negatively impact their concentration and ability to learn. Moreover, it has become increasingly clear that using smartphones excessively can lead to significant mental health problems.

To assist us in implementing this change, the district will be purchasing Yondr pouches for every middle school student. Yondr has been implemented in thousands of schools across 21 countries to facilitate an engaged learning environment. The Yondr Program utilizes a simple, secure pouch that stores a phone. Every student will secure their phone in a personally assigned Yondr pouch when they arrive at school. Students will maintain possession of their phones and will not use them until their pouches are opened at the end of the school day.

We understand that this change will spur many questions and concerns, and as a result, we have created this [FAQ document](#) that we hope will provide you with many of the answers. Should you have additional questions, please feel free to contact your child's principal. You can also visit the Yondr website [HERE](#) for more detailed information. There will also be a presentation regarding this initiative at next Tuesday's Board of Education meeting scheduled for 8:00 pm at New York Avenue.

In an effort to best serve your child, we appreciate your full support in the adoption of the Yondr Program at our middle schools.

Sincerely,

Mark Secaur, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Paul McNeil
Principal
Accompsett MS

John Scomillio
Principal
Great Hollow MS

Dan McCabe
Principal
Nesaquake MS