

The Daily Item

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Lynn Public Schools ring out new cell-phone rules

By Jackie Manno
ITEM STAFF

LYNN — Two days before the Massachusetts Senate passed a legislation prohibiting student cellphone use during the school day, Lynn Public Schools hosted a virtual presentation to provide information about updates to its current cellphone policy.

During the July 29 presentation, LPS' compliance officer

Charlie Gallo said the updated cellphone policy "clarifies but does not radically change our existing policy."

"The purpose of the new policy is to foster an environment that prioritizes engaged learning, supports social skills, and promotes the well being of students. We hope that this new policy provides a moderate and gradual approach," Gallo said.

The new policy states that cellphones must be off and not visible during the school day, with potential IEP, 504 plan, or health plan accommodations for students with certain disabilities and medical conditions.

If a student needs to contact a parent or guardian and vice versa, they must do so for "appropriate reasons as determined by the school" via the school's

telephone.

The major change with the new policy is that cellphones and electronic devices are now prohibited during lunchtime and in hallways for students during the school day.

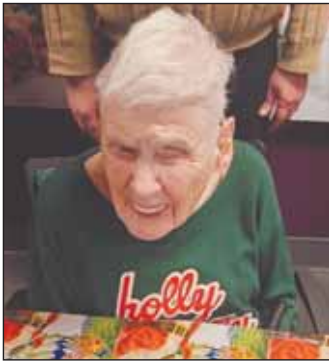
Students who repeatedly violate the policy are subject to progressive discipline such as contacting parents and guardians, confiscation of devices, alternative

remedies to suspension, detention, and suspension depending on the circumstances.

Superintendent Dr. Evonne Alvarez addressed LPS' future approach to enforcing the policy in hopes to avoid resorting to suspension.

"Telling students to put phones out of sight sounds in theory like something they would all comply

CELLPHONE, A7



Joan Ayer, a 90-year-old blind Magnolia Terrace resident with intellectual and developmental disabilities, considers the staff at Bridgewell her family and speaks highly of her experiences there.

90 years of perseverance in Peabody

By Amanda Lurey
ITEM STAFF

PEABODY — Any 90-year-old who lives independently has achieved something special. What Joan Ayer of Peabody has achieved is beyond special.

Ayer has been blind since birth and has intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). The first 40 years or so years of her life were spent in varied institutions, including state "schools" for people with IDD and schools for the blind. Ayer remarkably transitioned to community living and has achieved an age that would have seemed impossible at the time of institutionalization, when people with IDD routinely passed away in their 30s.

Having entered the system as a toddler, Ayer finally left for her own apartment about 47 years ago with support from Peabody-based human services agency Bridgewell. Ayer's longevity is a tes-

tament to the benefits of community living and community-based human services. Last year, she moved from her own apartment to Magnolia Terrace, a resident group home.

"Working with Joan is always a lovely experience," said Walter Palomino, individual support program manager. "She's such a kind soul, such a nice person. She's always very happy with the little things."

"For her, it's not much about the material things, but it's the connection that she has with the staff. For her, it's not important to go to a fancy restaurant or on a very expensive trip. It's more about the relationship and the moment that you get to spend with her."

Ayer emphasized that she has "made friends here" and that "people are nice to me." She said she sees the Bridgewell staff as family. Laura Ruck, Bridgewell residential

AYER, A7



ITEM PHOTO | SPENSER HASAK

A large-scale renovation project is underway to restore the Howe Mansion which was built in 1880 and looks out over Little Nahant.

Howe to preserve Nahant's history

By Zach Laird
ITEM STAFF

NAHANT — The Howe Estate, located at 9 Little Nahant Rd., that has roots dating all the way back to its construction in 1880, is currently undergoing a full restoration project with the new owner Ricky Beliveau at the helm of the mission.

Beliveau, who the managing partner and chief financial officer of V10 Development, spoke about what compelled him to get involved after first purchasing the estate at an auction in June 2023.

"I bought my first historic home in Winchester for my family back in 2020, and I worked closely with my uncle who does a lot of historic reno-

vation. ... After renovating that first house, I was tagged in the auction post online and someone said: 'This house needs you,'" he said.

"It was a passion project for me, and I get excited about bringing things back to life," Beliveau said.

The estate was initially built on the

HOWE, A7

Summerfest Block Party returns to Swampscott

By Zach Laird
ITEM STAFF

SWAMPSCOTT — The town's third annual Humphrey Street Summerfest Block Party will be returning on Aug. 9 from 12-4 p.m.

Community members are encouraged to head down to the area and enjoy the festivities. There will be approximately 60 vendors offering food, goods as well as beer. There will also be a newly designated Kids Zone, filled with activities for youth and families.

Alcoholic beverages can only be sold and consumed within the licensed premises

of the businesses, per local and state regulations.

All Humphrey Street businesses will remain open during the event.

There will be no parking on Humphrey Street (both sides) from Redington Street to Greenwood Avenue, starting at 8 a.m. sharp. Vehicles in violation will be subject to being ticketed and towed.

Blaney Street will be closed from Rose Street to Humphrey Street starting at 10 a.m. The streets will reopen after 4 p.m.

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Dayton days to come for St. Mary's Jack Zimmerman.

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Saugus Council weighs input for grants

By Elizabeth Della Piana
ITEM STAFF

SAUGUS — The Cultural Council met Tuesday night to discuss multiple items, including the surveys they put out and when they need to lock down their guiding principles.

The community survey was put out earlier in the summer and could be filled out online or on paper at the library. Some of the responses would determine possible events in the upcoming year, while others would help shape the Council's guiding principles.

"We did get responses back from our community engagement survey, (and) our goal is to be able to use those to help define our guiding principles when awarding grants," Co-Chair Tori Darnell said.

The Council awards grants to individuals and organizations that can focus on the arts, humanities, and interpretive sciences to add vibrancy to the town and enrich the community with cultural events.

"By the end of this month, we need to be able to define what those are," Darnell said.

Based on the online responses, the Council believed they could follow a

GRANTS, A7

New Lynn fire engines control the heat

By Jackie Manno
ITEM STAFF

LYNN — The Lynn Fire Department will be upgrading two of its fire engines after recently receiving much-anticipated replacement pumps.

The new 2025 pumpers are being installed in Engine 1, which serves the Highlands section of Lynn, and Engine 9, which protects the Tower Hill area.

They have been designed by manufacturer E-One, and were sold to LFD by Greenwood Emergency Vehicles. Each replacement pumper cost \$600,000, and were purchased with funds from the American Rescue Plan Act.



ENGINES, A7

The Lynn Fire Department will upgrade two of its fire engines with new pumps.



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90 years of perseverance in Peabody

AYER
From A1

manager, echoed that sentiment, saying that she has truly bonded with Ayer and that if she gets to live to be 90, she wants to be like Ayer.

"Joan has brought a little bit of sunshine to Magnolia," said Ruck. "She is extremely pleasant and kind. I enjoy my visits on a daily basis with Joan when she comes in and chats with me about her day. She loves to chat with staff. They have such a good rapport.

"She has a staff member here who usually cooks dinner. Every day they hug each other. She calls Joanie 'Mama,' and Joanie calls her 'Mama' right back," she said.

Palomino said the work

he does at Bridgewell is "very much a privilege.

"To be able to make a difference in other people's lives, you see the happiness of the individuals that we serve. This is something very valuable," he said. "I like to call it a 'spiritual currency.' It can just make your day. Even if you have a tough day in your own life, seeing the happiness and the difference that it makes, the job that you do, in other people's lives can be very uplifting."

Ayer said she hopes to "live a long time until I get into my 100s," and "I hope I live here (at Magnolia Terrace) a long time."

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Lynn Public Schools ring out new cell-phone rules

CELLPHONE
From A1

with, but we know there will be students who will use phones on multiple occasions. We haven't developed all of our procedures at this time, but we want to ensure that this doesn't become a daily administrative process that it could likely become," she said.

The presentation allowed attendees to provide verbal and written feedback regarding the policy changes.

American Federation of Teachers Massachusetts Secretary Treasurer Brent Duncan and LPS teacher Frank Grealish both expressed concerns over the new prohibition of cell phones in the cafeteria specifically. Duncan described the provision as a "radical change," while Grealish said he felt the lunchtime

ban was "too much initially."

Lynn foster parent and EMT Marissa Pike explained why she believes the ban "may have unintended consequences that undermine students safety and wellbeing.

"Cellphones, when used appropriately, serve as an important tool for safety rather than distraction. In our modern world, cell-phones have become an essential need for communication and safety. During emergencies ... the ability for students to reach a parent or guardian for emergency services can be crucial. Banning cell-phones may inevitably create barriers to communication in situations where timely access can make a difference," she said.

"Additionally, many parents, including myself, rely on their children's cell-

phones for routine check-ins," Pike said. "The ability for students to have a direct line to their family members ensures peace of mind for both students and parents alike."

She continued, "In many education settings, cell-phones can be used as a powerful learning tool. ... Rather than being solely a distraction, phones can be integrated into the classroom to enhance student engagement, facilitate collaboration, and help students access real-time information that supports their learning."

LPS' new cellphone policy will take effect September 1, 2025. The policy changes were created in proactive anticipation of the "bell-to-bell" ban passing on a statewide level. While the "bell-to-bell" ban passed the Senate on July

31, it still requires House approval and Gov. Maura Healey's signature in order to take effect during the 2026-2027 school year.

Lynn Senator Brendan Crighton gave a statement about the bill, which passed the Senate 38-2 on Thursday.

"As one of the original sponsors of phone-free school legislation, I'm proud to have voted in support of this bill that will protect students from the harmful impacts of cell phone use during school. There is strong evidence that a 'bell to bell' ban improves academic performance and has benefits for mental health and social development," he wrote.

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An effort has been made to keep as much of the original wood work as possible.



A large-scale renovation project is underway to restore the Howe Mansion, which was built in 1880 and looks out over Little Nahant.



A new chandelier hangs in the library.

Howe to preserve Nahant's history

HOWE
From A1

crest of the promontory and overlooking Short Beach, standing as an example of the Queen Anne style design of the era. It features a dynamic roofline and a pyramidal-roofed square tower that extends from the mansard roof with a one-story porch that wraps around the whole house.

While Beliveau had to demo the original porch — along with other work on the exterior, and even more in the interior — he reconstructed it identically to reflect the estate's past.

The Daily Item spoke with Nahant Historical Society (NHS) Board Member Su-

sanne Macarelli, who has been working with Beliveau to document the restoration's progress. Macarelli discussed the background of the project and explained how the mission helps preserve Nahant's unique and historic character.

"The house was built back in 1880 when Thomas Howe, a Boston merchant, asked an architectural firm (Wait and Cutter) and a builder J.T. Wilson to build a 'Gentleman's Residence,'" Macarelli explained.

She said when the estate was first constructed, it was among only a handful of other buildings on Little Nahant. The other two houses, located at 25 Baker Rd. and 80 Little

Nahant Rd., were owned by George Simmons.

The estate remained within the Howe Family until 1928, when the property was sold to Charles Phillips, Bernard Carahar and Leon Delano, who were then known as the Nahant Associates. In 1931, it was purchased by the Peckham family. Since then, it's been passed down through several other owners, according to the NHS website.

Beliveau said the property had been in disrepair for a long time. "Once we started stripping everything down, we realized there was a lot of damage that had to be replaced," he said.

He added that the exteri-

or also needed significant work. Beliveau explained that there had been metal sidings covering the old sidings.

"The old shingles were still there once we took the metal sidings off," he said. "They were covered in lead paint, it had a bunch of asbestos siding that had been attached to them over the years."

However, they were able to keep a lot of the old shingles, and worked to create new ones matching the original sidings.

"When you look back at the property, it's really started to come back to what it looks like historically," Beliveau said.

He continued, explaining

how the preservation efforts help contribute to maintaining the town's historic character.

"Having talked to all the neighbors and the Historical Society, it really opened my eyes to how important this property is to the community," he said. "There were a lot of concerns that it'd be knocked down, or something like multiple condos ... but it was really clear how important this was, and we've had great feedback from the community."

Beliveau said he expects construction to be complete by next month. Looking ahead at potential long-term plans, he expressed hopes for selling it to a fam-

ily who will appreciate and maintain the historic site.

He credited Salt and Stone Interior Design Services, Back Bay Design for general construction, and Legacy Group at EVO Real Estate Group for their assistance in the project.

Beliveau has plans for a public presentation on the work done to bring the estate back to life. On Sept. 21, he will invite the community to head down to Nahant Town Hall at 2 p.m. to see a more in-depth look at his work restoring the estate.

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Abiano Teofilo paints a room as the Howe Mansion undergoes a substantial renovation project.



New windows and trim have been installed in a room looking out over Short Beach.

New Lynn fire engines control the heat

ENGINES
From A1

Although the pumpers were purchased two years ago, the devices can take years to build. Both pieces are expected to be in service within the next few weeks once fully outfitted and trained.

"Our firemen work diligently to ensure the fire protection and safety of the citizens of Lynn, so they must have proper working equipment. We appreciate all the support the city has given us," Chief Dan Sullivan said in a statement.

A main benefit of these new pumpers is that now,

all six LFD engines will be built identically.

"We want to try to have all the apparatuses be as identical as possible. It makes it easier for the firefighters when they have to move from firehouse to firehouse. The training on that particular pumper comes with ease, because it's very similar to the one they just came from," explained Lt. Denis Ring.

Engine 1's previous pumper has been operating since 2015, while Engine 9's had been operating since 2002. Ring said Engine 9 has been running on a spare pumper since last year due to "constant mechanical is-

sues," while the hills in the Highlands area have put a strain on Engine 1.

"The older an apparatus is, the more it needs to be worked on. Engine 9's current apparatus got to the point where it wasn't financially feasible to keep putting money into that pumper," Ring said.

Greenwood Emergency Vehicles Regional Sales Director Dan Martins said that while each fire department operates differently, a city the size of Lynn would ideally replace its fire apparatuses approximately every 15 years. However, he said it is not unheard of for trucks to run for up to 25

years.

"Lynn is going out and is working these trucks multiple times a day, so the goal is to have a good maintenance and replacement schedule," Martins said.

Ring expressed his gratitude regarding the timing of LFD's new pumpers.

"We're very happy to be getting these new pumpers. They're greatly appreciated right now, and it's been on our mind for a while. It's time," Ring said.

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Saugus Council weighs input for grants

GRANTS
From A1

similar path to the following year. However, they needed to review the paper copies to gain a firm understanding of any changes or additions to the principles.

Multiple members agreed that they were happy with the criteria for grants they had last year, but also agreed that each survey

needed to be taken into consideration to make a determination on the matter.

The Council plans to meet again on Aug. 19 with the responses to the online surveys reviewed as the guiding principles must be established by the end of the month.

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