

Your Question:

A state legislator asked for information on school cell phone use policies.

Our Response:

The issue of cell phone use in schools is wide-reaching and touches on topics from privacy to acceptable use to school safety. According to a [2022 study](#) done by [Pew Research Center](#), the vast majority of teens say they have access to a digital device, such as a smartphone (95%) or a desktop or laptop computer (90%), and 97% of teens say they are on the internet daily. Additionally, 46% say they are online almost constantly. A recent [poll](#) from the National Parents Union found that over three-quarters of parents want their child to have access to a cell phone in case of an emergency. According to the [National Center on Education Statistics](#), almost 77% of schools have banned cellphone use in school as of 2020.

State Policy on Cell Phone Access in Schools

So far in the 2025 legislative session, Education Commission of the States is tracking 39 bills 10 states that address cell phone use in schools. A 2024 scan of state policy, state education agency resources and local education agency policies revealed that most often, the issue of cell phone use in schools was dealt with at the local level. With increased attention on the impacts of social media and cell phones on student learning and behavior, an early review of 2025 legislative actions shows that state level policymakers are increasingly interested in limiting access to cell phones during the school day.

Alabama

In February 2024, the state board passed a [resolution](#) strongly encouraging local boards to adopt a policy limiting cell phone use while on school property.

Alaska [S.B. 18](#) (Pending, 2025)

This bill would direct the department of education to adopt a policy prohibiting the use of non-school issued cell phones during regular school hours, including lunch and passing periods.

Arizona [H.B. 2484](#) (Pending, 2025)

This bill would direct local boards to adopt policies governing student access to the internet and social media platforms, as well as limit the use of cell phones during the school day. A school day is defined to include meal time, passing periods and recess.

Connecticut [S.B. 533](#) and [S.B. 580](#) (Pending, 2025)

These bills would direct the department of education to adopt regulations to prohibit the use of smart phones. The first bill would limit the policy to students grades K-8, the second to students in grades K-12.

California [A.B. 272](#) (Enacted, 2019)

This bill authorizes the governing body of a school district, a county office of education, or a charter school to adopt a policy limiting or prohibiting student use of smartphones while students are on school grounds. Students may use cell

phones in case of an emergency, with employee permission, or when allowed through an individualized education plan.

Florida [HB 379](#) (Enacted, 2023)

This bill prohibits students from using cell phones during instructional time, and requires teachers to designate an area for cell phones during instructional time.

Indiana [S.B. 185](#) (Enacted, 2024)

This bill requires public schools, including charter schools, to adopt and implement a wireless communication device policy that regulates student use of a wireless communication device, including cell phones, tablets, laptops, and gaming devices. This policy must be published on the school's website.

Kentucky [Rev. Stat. Ann. § 158.165](#)

State statute requires the board of education of each school district to develop a policy regarding the possession and use of cell phones by students while on school property or attending a school-sponsored event. The policy is to be included in the district's standards of student conduct. A pending bill ([H.B. 208](#), 2025) would amend this statute to require the board to adopt a policy, and would require the policy to prohibit cell phone use during the school day.

Maine [H.P. 103/L.D. 170](#) (Pending, 2025)

This bill would establish a pilot program to reduce the use of cell phones during the school day. Total funding may not exceed \$250,000, which would be awarded to schools via one-time funds to support the implementation of new policies. Policies must ensure that all student cell phones are turned off and securely locked, inaccessible to students for the duration of the school day.

Maryland [H.B. 147](#) (Pending, 2025)

This bill would require local boards to adopt a policy prohibiting elementary and middle school students from using cell phones during the school day.

Minnesota [S.F. 508](#) (Pending, 2025)

This bill would amend existing policy to require that, beginning in the 2026-27 school year, school districts or charter schools must prohibit cell phones in school for students in grades K-8, and prohibit cell phones in classrooms for students in grades 9-12.

Nebraska [L.B. 140](#) (Pending, 2025)

This bill would direct each public school board to adopt a policy on cell phones. The policy must prohibit student use of cell phones while on school property or attending a school function, and may include discipline and enforcement mechanisms.

North Dakota [S.B. 2300](#) (Pending, 2025)

This bill would direct the superintendent of instruction to provide schools with secure phone storage containers. The bill would require all students to turn their phones off and store their phones in the provided containers upon arrival at school. Students may maintain possession of the containers during the school day and could retrieve their phone at the end of the day. The bill would appropriate \$1,890,000 for the purpose of acquiring the containers.

Ohio [H.B. 250](#) (Enacted, 2024)

The bill requires school districts to adopt a cell phone policy that seeks to limit cell phone use during school hours.

Oregon [H.B. 2251](#) (Pending, 2025)

This bill would require local boards to adopt a policy that prohibits the use of student cell phones on school grounds, at school-sponsored activities, on school-provided transportation and at official school bus stops. Any school that fails to adopt such a policy would be considered [nonstandard and subject to corrective actions](#).

South Carolina [Code Ann. Regs. 43-279 \(IV\)\(A\)\(2\)\(j\)](#)

State policy establishes minimum standards for student conduct that school districts must address in their local student conduct policy. Among the activities and behaviors identified is the possession of cell phones in schools. Consequences for cell phone misuse, as defined by the district, can range from a verbal reprimand to consequences in coordination with local authorities depending on the specific school policy.

Texas [S.B. 2375](#) (Failed, 2023)

This bill would have required the board of trustees of a school district and the governing body of a charter school to prohibit students from using a cell phone during instructional time.

Vermont [H. 54](#). (Pending, 2025)

This bill would direct each school board or governing body of an independent school or private prekindergarten to adopt a policy prohibiting student cell phone use at school from arrival to dismissal.

Virginia [EO-33](#) (2024)

At the beginning of July, Gov. Glen Youngkin issued an executive order directing the department of education to draft guidance for schools to adopt policies that would establish “cell phone-free education.” The guidance must include processes for parents to communicate with their children. A bill introduced in 2025 ([S.B. 738](#)) would direct each school board to adopt a policy to restrict, to the fullest extent possible, student cell phone possession and use on school property during regular school hours. The bill states that no student violation of such a policy would alone constitute sufficient cause for suspension or expulsion.

[Additional Resources](#)

Education Commission of the States, [2025 State of the State Addresses Education-Related Proposals](#)

This resource tracks and summarizes all education-related policy proposals in governor’s State of the State speeches. So far, 10 governors have addressed the topic of cell phones in classrooms in their addresses.

National Education Association, [Cell Phone Bans in School Are Back. How Far Will They Go?](#) (2023)

This article provides an overview of the issue with useful research, perspectives from school leaders and parents, and a discussion of district and school-level policies.

EdWeek, [Schools Say No to Cellphones in Class. But Is It a Smart Move?](#) (2019)

This article provides examples of school and state guidelines around cell phone use and discusses the pros and cons of restricting student access to phones.

National Conference of State Legislatures, [Social Media and Children Legislative Tracking](#)

This resource catalogs introduced and enacted legislation related to minors and social media more broadly, including state efforts to regulate social media networks and content providers, efforts to provide media literacy education in schools, and other efforts to ensure safe access to technology.