

State Policy Landscape: Cellphone Use in Schools

October 21, 2025

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Enacted State Legislation

Summary

States have addressed cellphone use in schools through legislative and non-legislative actions.¹ Since 2023, 36 states and DC have enacted legislation related to cellphone use in schools. Enacted legislation includes requirements, guidance, and incentives concerning students' use of cellphones, commonly affecting policies set by school districts and governing bodies.

- **Requirements:** 32 states and DC have enacted legislation establishing requirements for policies on students' use of cellphones in schools, and Louisiana has established a statewide requirement.
- **Guidance:** 11 states and DC have enacted legislation with measures providing for guidance, model policies, and other resources related to students' use of cellphones in schools.
- **Incentives:** 4 states have enacted legislation allocating funds for approaches or solutions that relate to students' use of cellphones in schools, such as pouches or bags for devices.

Some states have enacted a combination of these measures. Eight states and DC have provided for guidance to inform the development of local policies that meet established requirements, and South Carolina and Vermont require local policies to be consistent with guidance. New York and Oklahoma have enacted legislation including requirements and incentives.

Requirements for Cellphone Use in Schools

In states with requirements, legislation commonly specifies conditions on students' use of cellphones and exceptions. States commonly require and/or permit school districts and governing bodies to include certain conditions in policies; and a few states have established additional provisions relating to the policy development process, including stakeholder involvement, periodic reviews and updates to policies.

Conditions Relating to Use

Conditions on students' use of cellphones vary according to the type of requirements set, and when and where they apply to students. Requirements include general policies, restrictions, and prohibitions.

¹ Please see appendices A, B and C for additional information and resources on state activity.

- **General Policies:** 5 states have enacted local policy requirements that generally address students' access to, possession or use of cellphones.
- **Restrictions:** 5 states have enacted local policy requirements that establish limits or restrictions on students' access to, possession or use of cellphones.
- **Prohibitions:** 20 states and DC have enacted local policy requirements that prohibit or ban students' access to, possession or use of cellphones. Louisiana has established a statewide prohibition on students possessing electronic communication devices.

In addition to the states above, California requires local policies to restrict or prohibit students' use of smartphones.

Legislation often defines when and where students may be restricted from accessing, possessing, or using cellphones, such as during instructional time or throughout the school day. Most states have policy requirements that generally apply to students, though two states have provisions which pertain to specific ages or grade levels. Florida prohibits elementary and middle school students' use of a wireless communications device during the school day, and high school students' use during instructional time. Georgia prohibits bell-to-bell access to personal electronic devices for students in grades K-8.

Conditions Relating to Exemptions

States with requirements on cellphones in schools commonly outline conditions for exemptions. Most states require local policies to include exemptions pertaining to specified circumstances, while a few states allow for school districts and governing bodies to include additional exemptions in policies. Some states identify exemptions that local policies may include and do not stipulate requirements.

The most common exemption requirements include special education, health, emergency, and language and translation-related purposes, though states have also specified exemptions for other instances. Several states also provide for teacher and administrator discretion in allowing students to access, possess or use cellphones in schools.

Additional Provisions

Beyond defining conditions on use and exceptions, some states have established additional measures relating to topics such as:

- Implementation and enforcement, such as provisions regarding storage, personnel and administration, monitoring and compliance, and disciplinary measures.
 - Communication procedures, such as provisions regarding guidelines and criteria for parent-student communication and emergency-related protocols.
 - Accountability and transparency, such as provisions regarding the publication and communication of policies, and providing data and reports.
 - Digital literacy, internet safety and the use of technology and social media in schools.
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Appendices

The appendices provide additional information on state activity related to cellphone use in schools. States have enacted legislation, engaged in non-legislative activity, or acted in a combination of approaches. The appendices include:

- Appendix A: Enacted Legislation on Cellphone Use in Schools
- Appendix B: Sample of Non-Legislative Activity
- Appendix C: NCSL Resources

Appendix A: Enacted Legislation on Cellphone Use in Schools

The table below summarizes state legislation on cellphone use in schools according to the type of measure informing policy development and the conditions on possession, use and exemptions. The table outlines requirements set by legislation, unless otherwise noted; authorized measures are shown in *italics*.

Among the 36 states and DC enacting legislation related to cellphone use in schools since 2023, five states have enacted multiple pieces of legislation during this period, and six states have enacted legislation that amends provisions existing prior to this period.

Some states have enacted legislation which includes requirements for guidance or reports to be developed by state educational agencies and other entities; links to related resources are included in footnotes where available.

State educational agencies and other entities have also engaged in activities outside of legislative requirements; the table does not detail these actions.

Enacted Legislation Related to Cellphone Use in Schools (2023-2025)

State	Bill	Type of Measure	Conditions on Possession and Use	Conditions on Exemptions
AK	HB 57 (2025)	Requirement for local policy adoption: - school districts	General policy on students' possession and use of non-school-issued wireless telecommunications devices during regular school hours.	<i>If a policy prohibits device use, unless pertaining to:</i> - medical or translation purposes - an emergency - educational purposes, when granted by a teacher or administrator
AL	HB 166 (2025)	Requirement for local policy adoption: - local boards of education	Prohibition on students' use and operation, or possession of a wireless communication device in any public elementary or secondary school building or grounds during the instructional day.	Unless pertaining to: - an IEP, Individualized Accommodation Plan, 504 plan, or Individualized Health Plan - an emergency threatening life or safety - educational or learning purposes, under the supervision of local board of education personnel
AR	SB 142 (2025) HB 1015 (2013)	Requirement for local policy adoption: - public school districts and open-enrollment public charter schools	Restriction on students' possession and use of a personal electronic device during the school day; and Prohibition on students' use of a personal electronic device during the school day	Unless pertaining to: - an IEP or 504 plan - health reasons - an emergency - extracurricular activities after a school day - personal electronic devices issued to students during the school day - two-factor authentication for endorsed concurrent enrollment courses <i>Policies may include an exception pertaining to a special event that occurs during the school day.</i>

AZ	HB 2484 (2025)	Requirement for local policy adoption: - school district governing boards and charter school governing bodies	Restriction on students' use of wireless communication devices during the school day.	Unless pertaining to: - a medical condition - an emergency - educational purposes, as directed by a teacher
CA	AB 962 (2025) AB 3216 (2024) AB 272 (2019)	Requirement for local adoption: - school district governing bodies, county offices of education, and charter schools Policy development must involve significant stakeholder participation. Policies must be updated every five years.	Restriction or Prohibition on students' use of smartphones while at a schoolsite or while under the supervision and control of applicable employee.	Unless pertaining to: - an IEP - health or well-being, when determined by a licensed physician and surgeon - a comprehensive school safety plan, in the case of an emergency or in response to a perceived threat of danger - a teacher or administrator who grants permission
CO	HB 1135 (2025)	Requirement for local policy adoption: - local boards of education, district charter schools, institute charter schools, and School for the Deaf and the Blind Guidance includes a collection of resources and research from the department of education that may assist in the development of policies. <i>Policies may consider comments from the public and staff.</i>	General policy on students' possession and use of communication devices during the school day. <i>Policies may limit device possession and use, consider prohibitions and exceptions that are specific to grade levels and are developmentally appropriate, and consider device possession and use on and off of school grounds during the school day.</i>	Unless pertaining to: - ADA accommodation, an IEP or Section 504 plan - monitoring or addressing a medical condition <i>Policies may limit device possession and use, consider prohibitions and exceptions that are specific to grade levels and are developmentally appropriate, and consider device possession and use on and off of school grounds during the school day.</i> <i>Policies may consider possession and use for prevention or response to an emergency and exceptions for instructional purposes or to make a safe2tell report.</i>
DC	B 73 (2025)	Requirement for local policy adoption: - local educational agencies Guidance includes a model policy developed by the office of the state superintendent of education.	Prohibition on students' possession of a personal wireless communication device on school premises at any time during the full school day.	<i>Policies may include exemptions for educational purposes and health care needs.</i>
DE	SB 326 (2024)	Incentive for local policy development: school cell phone pouch pilot program for local education agencies serving students in grades 6-12. ²	Restriction involving technology solutions that reduce the usage of cell phone distractions during learning hours.	Not specified

² Delaware Department of Education (2025). [School Cellphone Pilot Program Report](#).

FL	HB 1105 (2025) HB 379 (2023) SB 184 (2004)	Requirement for local policy adoption; student code of conduct with specified rules: - district school boards Guidance includes a model policy that may be adopted, as outlined in a report.	Prohibition on elementary and middle school students' use of a wireless communications device during the school day, and high school students' use during instructional time.	Unless pertaining to: - an IEP or 504 plan - valid clinical reasoning or evidence - educational purposes, as expressly directed by a teacher
GA	HB 340 (2025)	Requirement for local policy adoption: - local school systems and public schools Regular reviews of the effectiveness of such policies and procedures and adjustments as necessary are required. Guidance includes guidance and technical support from the state department of education.³	Prohibition on bell-to-bell access to personal electronic devices by students in grades K-8.	Unless pertaining to: - an IEP or Section 504 plan, or medical plan as necessary to fulfill the requirements of the respective program or plan
IA	HB 782 (2025)	Requirement for local policy adoption: - school district boards of directors Guidance includes model policies from the director of the department of education. The state board may adopt rules.	Restriction on students' use of personal electronic devices during classroom instructional time. <i>Policies may limit use during school hours, including during classroom instructional time, that are more stringent than model policies.</i>	Unless pertaining to: - an IEP or Section 504 plan - a petition filed by a parent or guardian to allow access for a legitimate reason relating to physical or mental health
ID	SB 1032 (2025)	Requirement for local policy adoption: - local school boards and public charter schools	Restriction on students' use of electronic communications devices; to be as limited as possible in school buildings and on school grounds or premises during school hours; and to reduce distractions in classroom settings during school hours. <i>Policies may prohibit students from carrying devices in school buildings and on school grounds or premises during school hours.</i>	<i>Policies may provide for exceptions, including but not limited to accommodations for IEPs.</i>
IN	SB 185 (2024)	Requirement for local policy adoption: - school corporations and charter schools	Prohibition on students' use of a wireless communication device during instructional time.	Unless pertaining to: - an IEP or 504 plan - an emergency or managing health care - educational purposes during instructional time, if authorized by a teacher

³ Georgia Department of Education (2025). [Guidance to Support the Distraction-Free Education Act](#).

KY	HB 208 (2025) HB 266 (2000)	Requirement for local policy adoption: - school district boards of education	Prohibition on students' use of a personal telecommunications device during instructional time.	Unless pertaining to: - an IEP or 504 plan - an emergency - an instructional purpose, if directed to do so by a teacher - an instance authorized by a teacher
LA	SB 207 (2024)	Statewide Requirement	Prohibition on students' possession and use of an electronic telecommunications device throughout the instructional day.	Unless pertaining to: - an IEP, Section 504 plan, or Individualized Health Plan
ME	HB 809 (2025)	Requirement for local policy adoption: - school boards	General policy on students' use of personal electronic devices during the school day.	Not specified
MN	SB 3567 (2024)	Requirement for local policy adoption: - school districts and charter schools Guidance includes best practices from two Minnesota principals' associations. ⁴	General policy on students' possession and use of cell phones in school.	Not specified
MO	SB 68 (2025)	Requirement for local policy adoption: - school districts and charter school governing boards	Prohibition on students from displaying or using an electronic personal communications device from the beginning of the school day until the end of the school day.	Unless pertaining to: - an IEP or 504 plan - an individualized emergency health care plan or an individualized health care plan - accommodations in compliance with federal laws, including regarding English language learners <i>Policies may include exceptions in the case of an emergency and when directed for an educational purpose with authorization as directed by board policies.</i>
NC	HB 959 (2025)	Requirement for local policy adoption: - public school governing bodies	Prohibition on students from using, displaying, or having a wireless communication device turned on during instructional time.	Unless pertaining to - an IEP or 504 plan - health care, in accordance with a documented medical condition. - educational purposes or for use in the event of an emergency, if authorized by a teacher. <i>Policies may establish parameters to be followed by a teacher in granting such authorizations.</i>
ND	HB 1160 (2025) SB 2354 (2025)	Requirement for local policy adoption: - school districts or applicable governing bodies	Prohibition on students' access to a personal electronic communication device during instructional time. <i>Policies may limit or allow student access outside of instructional time, during a school-related activity.</i>	Unless pertaining to - IEP, 504 or other accommodation plan - health or well-being, as determined by a licensed medical provider

⁴ Minnesota Elementary School Principals Association and the Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals (2024). *Cellphone Toolkit*.

NE	LB 140 (2025)	Requirement for local policy adoption: - school boards of public school districts Policy development must include stakeholder participation.	Prohibition on students' use of an electronic communication device while on school property or attending a school instructional function.	Unless pertaining to: - an IEP or 504 plan - monitoring or managing health care - an emergency or perceived threat of danger - educational purposes during instructional time, when authorized by the school district - instances determined appropriate by the school board or otherwise allowed by an appropriate school employee
NH	HB 2 (2025)	Requirement for local policy adoption: - school boards and charter school boards of trustees Policies must be developed in collaboration with school parents and teachers and be reviewed annually.	Prohibition on students' personal communication device from when the first bell rings to start instructional time until the dismissal bell rings to end the academic school day.	Unless pertaining to: - an IEP, 504 plan - medical needs, such as insulin pumps and glucose sensors - emergent multilingual students with appropriate language access programs and services
NJ	SB 715 (2023)	Guidance includes a report published by the Commission on the Effects of Social Media Usage on Adolescents. ⁵	Not specified	Not specified
NM	SB 11 (2025)	Requirement for local policy adoption: - school districts and charter schools	General policy on students' wireless communication devices. <i>Policies may prohibit a student from using a wireless communication device during instructional hours.</i>	Unless pertaining to: - an accommodation for a student with a disability or an IEP - a medical necessity - text-to-speech, speech-to-text or other assistive technologies that aid in communication, navigation or learning <i>Policies may permit use in the event of an emergency or to manage health care, permit use for accessibility purposes, and provide for the permissible use during non-instructional hours; and authorize a teacher to permit use for educational purposes during instructional hours.</i>
NV	SB 444 (2025) AB 138 (2003)	Requirement for local policy adoption: - boards of trustees of school districts	Restriction on students' use of an electronic communication device during instruction.	Unless pertaining to: - an IEP or 504 plan - an emergency or crisis or to manage health - instructional purposes, if allowed by a teacher
NY	SB 3006 (2025)	Requirement for local policy adoption: - school districts, charter schools and boards of cooperative educational services	Prohibition on students' use of internet-enabled devices during the school day anywhere on school grounds.	Unless pertaining to: - an IEP or 504 plan <i>Policies may authorize use if allowed by personnel for a specific educational purpose; where necessary for the management of healthcare; in the event of an emergency; for translation services;</i>

⁵ New Jersey Commission on the Effects of Social Media Usage on Adolescents (2025). *Growing Up Online: Findings and Recommendations from the New Jersey Commission on the Effects of Social Media Usage on Adolescents*.

		Policy development must involve stakeholder participation.		<i>and on a case-by-case basis, upon review and determination for a student caregiver who is routinely responsible for the care and wellbeing of a family member; and where required by law.</i>
	SB 3003 (2025)	Incentive for local policy adoption: funds appropriated for distraction-free school policies.	Prohibition on students' use of internet-enabled devices during the school day on school grounds, as a stated focus of distraction-free school policies.	Not specified
OH	HB 96 (2025) HB 250 (2024)	Requirement for local policy adoption: - school district boards of education	Prohibition on students' cellular telephone use during the instructional day.	Unless pertaining to: - circumstances determined appropriate by the district board, or if included in an IEP or 504 plan, for the purposes of student learning or to monitor or address a health concern - the building's comprehensive emergency management plan
OK	SB 139 (2025)	Requirement for local policy adoption: - school district boards of education <i>Beginning SY 2026-2027, boards of education may adopt such policies.</i>	Prohibition on students' use of cell phones and personal electronic devices while on the campus of a public school district from bell to bell.	Unless pertaining to: - monitoring health issues - emergency use
	SB 1129 (2025)	Incentive for local policy adoption: grants designated for school districts to provide a cellphone-free educational environment.	Prohibition on students' use of cell phones and personal electronic devices while on the campus of a public school district from bell to bell, as a requirement for the grant program.	Not specified
PA	SB 700 (2024)	Incentive for local policy adoption: funding designated for school entities to purchase cell phone lockable bags.	Prohibition on students' use of cell phones during the school day, as a requirement for the grant program.	Not specified
RI	HB 5598 (2025)	Requirement for local policy adoption, including components as defined by the department of education: - public schools Guidance includes guidelines and recommendations from the department of education and other entities.	Prohibition on students' physical access to a personal electronic device as defined by the department of education.	Unless pertaining to: - an IEP or 504 plan - medical needs such as glucose monitoring - a plan to support emergent multilingual learners - an emergency
SC	HB 4025 (2025) HB 5100 (2024)	Requirement for local policy adoption, as prescribed by the state board of education, as a condition for receiving state aid: - school districts	Prohibition on students' access to personal electronic communication devices during the school day.	Not specified

		Guidance includes a policy adopted by the state board of education. ⁶		
TN	HB 932 (2025)	Requirement for local policy adoption. - local boards of education and public charter school governing bodies	Prohibition on students' use of a wireless communication device during instructional time.	Unless pertaining to: - an IEP, 504 plan or Individual learning plan; or the operation of assistive technology to increase, maintain, or improve the student's functional capabilities - an emergency or to manage health - educational purposes during instructional time, when allowed by a teacher
TX	HB 1481 (2025) SB 1 (1995)	Requirement for local policy adoption: - school district boards of trustees and governing bodies of open-enrollment charter schools Guidance includes model language for the policy established by the state department of education.	Prohibition on students' use of a personal communication device while on school property during the school day.	Unless pertaining to: - an IEP, 504 plan, or a similar program or plan - a documented need based on a directive from a qualified physician - a health or safety requirement
UT	SB 178 (2025)	Requirement for local policy adoption: - local educational agencies Guidance includes one or more model policies; the state board may create such policies.	Prohibition on students' use of a cellphone, smart watch, or emerging technology at a school during classroom hours. <i>Policies may extend restrictions to non-classroom hours during the school day and impose additional limitations.</i>	Unless pertaining to: - an IEP or Section 504 accommodation plan - a medical necessity - an imminent threat to the health or safety of an individual - a school-wide emergency - the SafeUT Crisis Line <i>Policies may provide for other exemptions.</i>
VA	HB 1961 (2025)	Requirement for local policy adoption: - school boards	Restriction on students' cell phone and smart device possession and use on school property from bell to bell.	Unless pertaining to: - an IEP, 504 Plan, individualized health care plan, or Limited English Proficiency plan to monitor or address a health concern or as an accommodation or assistive technology support
VT	HB 480 (2025)	Requirement for local policy adoption, at least as stringent as the model policy: - school boards and independent schools Guidance includes a model policy developed by multiple entities, including the secretary of education.	Prohibition on students' use of cell phones and non-school-issued personal electronic devices at school from arrival to dismissal.	Unless pertaining to: - an IEP, 504 plan, individualized health care plan, international student's special education needs or as part of a disability accommodation - academic, school-sponsored athletic, or cocurricular purpose, for the most limited use reasonably possible, as approved by an administrator - compliance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act
WV	HB 2003 (2025)	Requirement for local policy adoption: - county boards of education	Prohibition on students' access to personal electronic devices for use in a classroom setting during instructional time.	Unless pertaining to: - an approved documented need, as required by a medical doctor or licensed healthcare professional or as a

⁶ South Carolina State Board of Education (2024). [Model Policy Prohibiting Use of Personal Electronic Devices during the School Day](#).

				requirement of an IEP or 504 plan, the student's health care provider's medical orders, or other written accommodation plan <i>Policies may include exemptions related to the requirements of an approved work-based learning program.</i>
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Appendix B: Sample of Non-Legislative Activity

The table below provides a sample of non-legislative activity on cellphone use in schools in two states that have enacted legislation on cellphone use in schools and three states that have not enacted legislation on the topic between 2023 and 2025. Related resources and reports are linked where available.

Sample of Non-Legislative Activity Related to Cellphone Use in Schools (2023-2025)

State	Action	Summary
CO	Department of law funding initiative (2024 and 2025)	The department of law announced an initiative to fund local education providers (LEPs) in creating policies and pilot interventions that address the impact of smartphones on students' learning environments, mental health and wellbeing, and academic performance. The department invited LEPs to complete a survey about policies, challenges and needs related to student smartphone use, and published the Smartphones in Schools Report .
	Legislation (2025)	The state legislature enacted HB 1135 , which requires local policies concerning students' possession and use of communication devices during the school day. The bill specifies policy requirements, including relative to exceptions, and requires the department of education to make publicly available a collection of resources and research that may assist in the development of policies.
KS	State board of education task force (2024)	The state board of education established the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Student Screen Time to provide recommendations regarding the use of personal devices in school, screen time and mental health, and parental oversight of district-owned devices. The task force published the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Student Screen Time Report , which includes research and recommendations for guidance on student use of digital technology in schools. The state board accepted the report and authorized its release to districts .
MD	State board of education and department of education task force (2025)	The department of education and state board of education created the Task Force on Cell Phone Use in Schools to create guidance for school cell phone policies. The task force published the guidance document, Task Force on Cell Phone Use in Schools: Implementation Guidance and Resources for Support . The state board proposed a resolution regarding cell phone use policies citing the task force's recommendations.
OH	Legislation (2024 and 2025)	The state legislature enacted HB 250 , which requires local policies to limit students' use of cellular telephones during school hours, except under specified conditions. The bill additionally requires the department of education to develop a model policy. HB 96 amended these measures by requiring local policies to prohibit all cellular telephone use by students during the instructional day, except under specified conditions, and repealing the model policy provision.
	Department of education model policy pursuant to legislative requirements and survey (2024)	The department of education published a model policy pursuant to legislative requirements. The department also published the Cell Phone Policy Adoption and Implementation Status Survey .
OR	Executive order and department of education resources and toolkit (2025)	Governor Tina Kotek signed Executive Order No. 25-09 which requires local policies to prohibit students' use of personal electronic devices from the start of regular instructional hours until the end of regular instructional hours, except under specified conditions. The department of education has created resources and a toolkit that align with the executive order.

Appendix C: NCSL Resources

[Pre-K-12 Education Legislation Database](#) (2023-onwards)

- This database includes legislation on cellphones in schools; such legislation can be found under the ‘Technology in Education’ and ‘Personal Devices’ topics.

[State Legislatures News Article: Hold the Phone: Recent State Activity on Cell Use in Schools](#) (2024)

- This article covers state activity on cellphone use in schools and provides summaries of legislation enacted between 2023 and 2024.

[State of Play: State Lawmakers Discuss Cellphone Bans in Schools](#) (2024)

- This installment of “[State of Play](#),” a bipartisan video series created by [A Starting Point](#) and NCSL, features two legislators who discuss the pros and cons of banning or restricting cellphones.

Please note that NCSL takes no position on state legislation or laws mentioned in linked material, nor does NCSL endorse any third-party publications; resources are cited for informational purposes only.
