

Phone Free Learning Act

Expenditure and Policy Checklist for LEAs

Summary: Governor Little, with the support of Superintendent Debbie Critchfield, issued an executive order to school districts and public charter schools encouraging creation and implementation of a policy around managing cell phones in the classroom. Utilizing federal funds, LEAs who adopt a cell phone policy will be awarded a \$5,000 grant to assist with expenditures associated with implementing the policy.

LEAs must adopt or have initiated the process of adopting a policy (i.e., at least one reading), no later than January 15, 2025. LEAs must also implement the policy within the 2024-2025 school year. Funds will be administered through the State Department of Education (coordinating with the State Board of Education and Governor's Office). Funds will be distributed by the end of January 2025.

Expenditure Checklist, in order of priority:

Classroom/Main Office Storage Devices

- Magnetic Bags for classrooms
- Cubbies for classrooms
- "Cell Phone Lockbox" at Main Office

Technology

- Device filters

Signage

- "Phone Free Zone" and other policy signage around school buildings.

Miscellaneous Expenditures

- LEAs with existing cell phone policies have spent money on miscellaneous items such as games, music, and other activities for common areas such as the lunchrooms.
- Communications related to policy implementation.

Policy Checklist for LEAs

These components should be considered and incorporated into an *LEA Policy for Cell Phones*:

Clearly define policy objectives.

- Define the specific goals of the policy, such as student safety, staff support, preventing distractions, improving academic focus, and responsible technology use.
- Example: Encouraging kids to focus on only school during the day is an essential part in making up the education gaps in test scores, attendance, and social skills we are seeing because of the pandemic.

Outline limitations and permitted uses.

- Outline policy for limiting and/or structuring student cell phone usage, including when and where students are allowed to use phones.
- Provide behavior expectations for cell phones and devices to students and families, and specify prohibited activities such as texting, social media, and disruptive behavior.
- Define use and non-use areas within the classroom, school, and on school grounds.
- Outline what devices are included, for example, cell phones, tablets, smart watches, etc.
- Limit cell phone usage during testing to protect the integrity of assessment items and results.
- Example: Students may use personal technology devices during lunch, school-sponsored activities outside of school hours, for educational purposes with explicit teacher permission, or in the event of an emergency as defined by this policy. Students may not use personal technology devices to engage in disruptive behavior or cyberbullying.

Plan for accommodations.

- Review and ensure that accommodations for students with disabilities that have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 are met.

Anticipate safety and emergency concerns.

- Define parameters for emergencies, including how to contact a student while in school.
- Teach about the safe use of cell phones and smart devices during emergencies.

Identify expectations surrounding device storage.

- Where will students keep their phones? For example, designated stations, lockers, classroom cubbies, or magnetic bags.

Implement safety measures with respect to school technology.

- Manage wireless to limit access to certain websites or content on school grounds

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Outline discipline and appeals process.

- Outline the disciplinary measures a teacher or administrator will take, including confiscation of the cell phone and/or a call to parent/guardian, if a student violates the policy.
- Provide a fair and transparent process for students or parents/guardians to appeal disciplinary measures.
- Example: The first violation of this policy will result in the student receiving a warning and potential device confiscation. The second violation will result in detention or loss of privileges. The third offense will result in suspension or other disciplinary action, as appropriate. Students may appeal disciplinary actions by submitting a written request to the principal within five (5) school days of the incident.

Obtain feedback from staff, parents, and students (if possible)

- Hold informational sessions to address questions or concerns.

Consult LEA attorney.

- Ensure the policy aligns with state and federal laws, including the First Amendment and student privacy rights.

Implement policy.

- Implement a monitoring system for cell phone use such as classroom rules, designated phone storage areas, or technology monitoring tools
- Educate staff on policy to ensure consistent enforcement
- Communicate the policy to students and their parents or guardians
- Provide information on the mental and physical health effects of high levels of cell phone and social media use to students and families.
- Reinforce digital literacy lessons, the effects of cyberbullying, privacy concerns, and online disinformation.

Review and update policy.

- Review the policy annually to assess its effectiveness and make necessary adjustments.