

Mock Legislation
Senate Bill 5
Referred to Education Committee

AN ACT amending the Public School Code of 1949 to create a bell-to-bell phone-free policy in schools.

The General Assembly of Pennsylvania hereby enacts as follows:

Section 1. Definitions

The following words and phrases when used in this Act shall have the meanings given to them:

"Chief School Administrator." Superintendent of a school district, Executive Director of an intermediate school, or Chief Executive at a charter, cyber charter, or regional charter.

"Mobile Device." A personal mobile telephone or other portable electronic device capable of connecting to the Internet, that is not owned by a school entity or issued by a school entity to a student. This shall include a device with which a user could engage in a call; write, send, or receive a message; send or receive data or an image; record, play, or edit audio or video data; play a game; or watch a video.

"School Day." The entirety of every instructional day during all instructional and non-instructional time, including homeroom periods, lunch, recess, and the time moving between classes.

"School Entity." A school district, intermediate unit, area career and technical school, charter, regional charter, or cyber charter operating in this Commonwealth.

Section 2. Bell-to-Bell Phone-Free Policy

(A) No later than the start of the 2027-2028 school year, the governing body of each school entity shall adopt a policy related to student possession and use of mobile devices during the school day while on school property.

a. Prior to the adoption of the policy, the governing body of the school shall:

- i. Ensure the opportunity for public comment
- ii. Be encouraged to engage students, parents, legal guardians, employees, and members of the community in a stakeholder process to obtain input on the policy

(B) Nothing in this act shall be construed to require a school entity to take possession of a student's mobile device. If the governing body of a school entity adopts a policy that permits an employee of the school entity to take possession of a student's mobile device, the school entity or school employee shall not be liable for any damaged or lost mobile device.

- (C) At the beginning of each school year and upon enrollment, each school entity shall provide written notification to parents and legal guardians of students of the methods for them to contact their child during the school day.
- (D) A school entity's policy shall include exceptions to allow limited use of a mobile device during the school day by a student who:
- a. Requires a mobile device due to a student's medical condition, documented by a medical provider.
 - b. Has an individualized education program in which a mobile device is part of the accommodation or services provided to the student.
 - c. Is an English learner and uses a mobile device for translation or other English as a second language purposes
- (E) A school entity's policy may allow a Chief School Administrator to approve an exception not authorized in (D) if the request is made by a principal of a school.
- (F) Each school entity shall post the school entity's policy on their publicly assessable internet website no later than five days after adoption.

Section 3. This act shall take effect immediately.