

**First Regular Session
Seventy-Seventh General Assembly
STATE OF SAN ANDREAS**

REENGROSSED

LLS NO. 26-0719.03 Payton Gibson x2365

HOUSE BILL 26-014

SENATE SPONSORSHIP

Stimpson

HOUSE SPONSORSHIP

Mitchell, Morton

House Committees

Education (K-12)

Senate Committees

Not assigned

A BILL FOR AN ACT

CONCERNING THE USE OF PERSONAL DEVICES IN EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENTS.

Bill Summary

(Note: This summary applies to this bill as introduced and does not reflect any amendments that may be subsequently adopted. If this bill passes third reading in the house of introduction, a bill summary that applies to the reengrossed version of this bill will be available at <https://saleg.uscgov.com>)

This bill prohibits the use of personal electronic devices by students during the school day in compulsory education settings, beginning in the 2026–2027 academic year. The bill is intended to reduce classroom distractions, improve student engagement, and support effective instructional environments by limiting the use of personal devices such as cellular phones and smart watches during instructional time.

**Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Underlining denotes SENATE amendment.
Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material to be added to existing law.
Dashes through the words or numbers indicate deletions from existing law.**

Under the bill, students enrolled in compulsory education may not use personal electronic devices while on school grounds or participating in school-sponsored instructional activities. Devices must be powered off and stored in accordance with school district policies during instructional hours. Schools retain authority to determine storage procedures and enforcement methods consistent with statewide requirements.

The legislation allows for several exceptions, including the use of school-issued or authorized devices for educational purposes, accommodations required under individualized education programs or medical needs, and limited use authorized by teachers or administrators. Emergency use for safety purposes is also permitted.

The Department of Education is directed to provide implementation guidance to school districts, which must adopt or update local policies prior to the start of the 2026–2027 academic year.

1 *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of San*
2 *Andreas:*
3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.** This bill shall be known and cited
4 as the “Device-Free Learning Act.” **SECTION 2. LEGISLATIVE**
5 **FINDINGS AND INTENT.** (a) The General Assembly finds that
6 excessive use of personal electronic devices in educational
7 settings has been shown to disrupt instruction, reduce student
8 engagement, and negatively impact academic outcomes. (b)
9 Teachers and school administrators require clear and consistent
10 policies to maintain effective classroom environments free from
11 unnecessary distractions. (c) Personal electronic devices,
12 including cellular phones and similar communication devices,
13 may interfere with student learning and social development during
14 instructional time. (d) Schools retain responsibility to provide
15 appropriate educational technology necessary for instruction. (e)
16 It is the intent of the General Assembly to prohibit the use of
17 personal electronic devices by students during the school day in
18 compulsory education settings while permitting devices provided

1 or authorized for educational purposes. **SECTION 3.**
2 **DEFINITIONS.** For purposes of this Act, unless the context
3 otherwise requires: (a) “Department” means the Department of
4 Education. (b) “Compulsory education” means public education
5 provided to students required by law to attend school. (c)
6 “Personal electronic device” means any privately owned
7 electronic device capable of communication, internet access,
8 recording, or entertainment, including but not limited to cellular
9 phones, smart watches, tablets, and personal gaming devices. (d)
10 “Educational device” means a device issued, approved, or
11 authorized by a school or school district for instructional
12 purposes. (e) “Instructional time” means the period during the
13 school day when students are engaged in scheduled classroom
14 instruction or other educational activities directed by school
15 personnel, excluding lunch periods, passing periods, and
16 extracurricular activities. **SECTION 4. PROHIBITION ON**
17 **PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES.** (a) Beginning with the
18 2026–2027 academic year, students enrolled in compulsory
19 education shall not use personal electronic devices during
20 instructional time while on school grounds or participating in
21 school-sponsored instructional activities, except as otherwise
22 provided in this Act. (b) Personal electronic devices shall be
23 powered off and stored in accordance with school or district
24 policy during instructional hours. (c) School districts shall adopt
25 policies governing storage procedures and enforcement consistent
26 with this Act. (d) Enforcement policies adopted pursuant to this
27 Act shall emphasize progressive discipline and shall not result in
28 suspension, expulsion, or referral to law enforcement solely for
29 violation of personal electronic device restrictions. (e) Nothing in
30 this section shall prohibit a student from possessing a personal
31 electronic device on school grounds, provided the device remains
32 powered off or stored in accordance with school district policy
33 during instructional time. (f) School districts shall provide written

1 notice to students and parents or guardians regarding the policies
2 adopted pursuant to this section prior to the start of each academic
3 year. **SECTION 5. PERMITTED USES AND EXCEPTIONS.** (a)
4 This Act shall not prohibit: (I) The use of educational devices
5 provided or authorized by the school for instructional purposes;
6 (II) Use of personal devices as part of an approved individualized
7 education program (IEP), Section 504 plan, or documented
8 medical accommodation; (III) Use authorized by a teacher or
9 administrator for a specific educational purpose; (IV) Emergency
10 use when reasonably necessary to ensure student health, safety, or
11 communication during an emergency situation, including school
12 safety incidents or medical emergencies; (V) Reasonable
13 communication between a student and parent or guardian outside
14 instructional time. (b) School districts may establish limited
15 exceptions for extracurricular or non-instructional periods
16 consistent with maintaining an effective learning environment. (c)
17 School districts may permit limited use of personal electronic
18 devices during non-instructional periods, including lunch, passing
19 periods, or before and after the instructional day, provided such
20 use does not disrupt school operations or student safety. (d)
21 Enforcement policies adopted pursuant to this Act shall
22 emphasize progressive discipline and shall not result in
23 suspension, expulsion, or referral to law enforcement solely for
24 violation of personal electronic device restrictions. (e) Nothing in
25 this Act shall limit the authority of a classroom teacher to
26 authorize temporary use of a personal electronic device for
27 instructional, research, translation, accessibility, or classroom
28 management purposes. (f) A student participating in career and
29 technical education programs may use a personal electronic
30 device when such device is reasonably necessary for coursework,
31 certification training, or participation in workforce preparation
32 activities. (g) School districts may permit limited use of personal
33 electronic devices by students in grades nine through twelve

1 during designated non-instructional periods if authorized by local
2 policy. **SECTION 6. IMPLEMENTATION.** (a) The Department
3 of Education shall provide guidance to school districts regarding
4 implementation and best practices for device-free instructional
5 environments. (b) School districts shall adopt or update local
6 policies prior to the start of the 2026–2027 academic year. (c)
7 Nothing in this Act shall require schools to purchase additional
8 devices beyond those already necessary for instructional purposes.
9 (d) School district policies implemented under this Act shall be
10 applied in a manner that does not disproportionately impact
11 students based on disability status, socioeconomic background, or
12 documented educational needs. (e) Implementation guidance
13 issued by the Department shall include recommended practices
14 for secure storage of personal electronic devices that minimize
15 loss, theft, or damage and avoid financial liability for school
16 districts. (f) The Department of Education shall develop model
17 policies to assist school districts in implementing device-free
18 instructional environments while preserving flexibility for local
19 administration. (g) Implementation guidance issued by the
20 Department shall include recommendations for communication
21 protocols allowing students to contact parents or guardians during
22 emergencies without disrupting instructional environments. (h)
23 School districts shall ensure that policies implemented pursuant to
24 this Act include reasonable accommodations for students who rely
25 on personal electronic devices for translation, accessibility tools,
26 or assistive technology. **SECTION 7. RULEMAKING**
27 **AUTHORITY.** The Department of Education may promulgate
28 rules necessary to implement this Act. **SECTION 7.5.**
29 **PROGRAM REVIEW.** (a) On or before January 15, 2028, the
30 Department shall submit a report to the Governor and the General
31 Assembly evaluating: (I) Effects on classroom engagement and
32 academic performance; (II) Student behavioral outcomes; (III)
33 Implementation challenges faced by school districts; and (IV)

1 Recommendations for statutory modification if necessary. (b) The
2 report required under subsection (a) of this section shall include
3 an analysis of whether device restrictions have affected student
4 mental health, digital literacy, or access to educational technology.
5 (c) The report shall also evaluate whether device-free policies
6 have improved classroom engagement and instructional outcomes
7 across different grade levels. **SECTION 8. EFFECTIVE DATE.**
8 This Act shall take effect July 1, 2026.