

Devices in Public Schools

2025 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Lincoln Fillmore

House Sponsor: Douglas R. Welton

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This bill addresses the use of cellphones, smart watches, or emerging technologies during classroom hours.

Highlighted Provisions:

This bill:

- defines terms;
- prohibits a student from using a cellphone, smart watch, or emerging technology during classroom hours;
- allows a local education agency to create exemptions to the prohibition; and
- permits the State Board of Education to create model policies.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

None

Other Special Clauses:

This bill provides a special effective date.

Utah Code Sections Affected:

ENACTS:

53G-7-226, Utah Code Annotated 1953

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:

Section 1. Section **53G-7-226** is enacted to read:

53G-7-226 . Cellular device prohibition.

(1) As used in this section:

- (a) "Cellphone" means a handheld, portable electronic device that is designed to be operated using one or both hands and is capable of transmitting and receiving voice,

28 data, or text communication by means of:

29 (i) a cellular network;

30 (ii) a satellite network; or

31 (iii) any other wireless technology.

32 (b) "Cellphone" includes:

33 (i) a smartphone;

34 (ii) a feature phone;

35 (iii) a mobile phone;

36 (iv) a satellite phone; or

37 (v) a personal digital assistant that incorporates capabilities similar to a smartphone,
38 feature phone, mobile phone, or satellite phone.

39 (c) "Classroom hours" means:

40 (i) time during which a student receives scheduled, teacher-supervised instruction
41 that occurs:

42 (A) in a physical or virtual classroom setting;

43 (B) during regular school operating hours; and

44 (C) as part of an approved educational curriculum.

45 (ii) "Classroom hours" does not include:

46 (A) lunch periods;

47 (B) recess;

48 (C) transit time between classes;

49 (D) study halls unless directly supervised by a qualified instructor;

50 (E) after-school activities unless part of an approved extended learning program; or

51 (F) independent study time occurring outside scheduled instruction.

52 (d)(i) "Emerging technology" means any other device that has or will be able to act in
53 place of or as an extension of an individual's cellphone.

54 (ii) "Emerging technology" does not include school provided or required devices.

55 (e) "Smart watch" means a wearable computing device that closely resembles a
56 wristwatch or other time-keeping device with the capacity to act in place of or as an
57 extension of an individual's cellphone.

58 (f) "Smart watch" does not include a wearable device that can only:

59 (i) tell time;

60 (ii) monitor an individual's health informatics;

61 (iii) receive and display notifications or information without the capability to

- 62 respond; or
- 63 (iv) track the individual's physical location.
- 64 (2)(a) An LEA:
- 65 (i) shall establish a policy that allows a student to use a cellphone, smart watch, or
- 66 emerging technology:
- 67 (A) to respond to an imminent threat to the health or safety of an individual;
- 68 (B) to respond to a school-wide emergency;
- 69 (C) to use the SafeUT Crisis Line described in Title 53B, Chapter 17, Part 12,
- 70 SafeUT Crisis Line;
- 71 (D) for a student's IEP or Section 504 accommodation plan; or
- 72 (E) to address a medical necessity; and
- 73 (ii) may establish a policy that provides for other circumstances when a student may
- 74 use a cellphone, smart watch, or emerging technology.
- 75 (b) An LEA may establish policies that:
- 76 (i) extend restrictions on student use of cellphones, smart watches, or emerging
- 77 technologies to non-classroom hours during the school day, including:
- 78 (A) lunch periods;
- 79 (B) transition times between classes; and
- 80 (C) other school-supervised activities; and
- 81 (ii) impose additional limitations on the use of cellphones, smart watches, or
- 82 emerging technologies beyond those required by this section.
- 83 (3) Except as provided in Subsection (2), a student may not use a cellphone, smart watch, or
- 84 emerging technology at a school during classroom hours.
- 85 (4) The state board may create one or more model policies regarding when a student may
- 86 use a student's cellphone, smart watch, or emerging technology in a school during
- 87 classroom hours consistent with this section.

88 **Section 1. Effective Date.**

89 This bill takes effect on July 1, 2025.