
OLR Bill Analysis

HB 6923

AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF SMART DEVICES IN SCHOOLS.

SUMMARY

This bill requires local and regional boards of education (“school boards”) to adopt a policy each school year, starting with the 2025-26 school year, limiting smart device use in the schools they oversee. School boards must use policy guidance published by the State Department of Education (SDE) to develop their policy.

This policy must be in addition to any restrictions a school board has adopted pursuant to the existing law authorizing them to restrict student cell phone possession or use in their schools. Under that law, school boards must consider parents’ and students’ special needs when deciding whether to impose cell phone restrictions.

Under the bill, a smart device is a cellular mobile telephone or other wearable or portable technology that can connect to the internet; collect, process, and transmit data; and communicate with other devices and networks.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

BACKGROUND

Policy Guidance

In August 2024, the State Board of Education (the agency head of SDE) released a position statement and policy guidance entitled “Personal Technology Use in Connecticut Schools: Impact of Social Media and the Use of Cell Phones on Student Learning and Mental Health.” In the guidance, the board strongly recommends that school board policies restrict cell phone use during the day to ensure student engagement in learning; support emotional well-being; and strengthen

students' interpersonal skills, peer interaction, and social communication.

Among other things, the guidance recommends that cell phone use be (1) fully restricted during the school day for elementary and middle school students and (2) limited during the day for high school students. The guidance also outlines the recommended roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders in developing and implementing a policy, including the school board, school administrators, teachers, students, and families.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Education Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 33 Nay 11 (03/21/2025)