

Cell Phone Free Schools

HB 2251 A

HB 2251A creates **cellphone-free schools from the first bell to the last bell**, with **exceptions for medical and special education needs**.

This **zero fiscal bill** will:

- **Improve academic performance**^{1, 2}
- **Improve youth mental health**^{3, 4, 5, 6}
- **Improve school attendance**⁷

237

Average amount of notifications to a youth's phone per day¹²

Why?

The mere presence of a cellphone, and the actual content on the screen – content that generates tremendous revenue for tech companies – **erodes the impact of the billions and billions of dollars in our K-12 budget**.

As we are on the cusp of the largest statewide school budget in history – let's not tie one hand behind a student's back, or behind a teacher's back, with the ubiquitous distractions of cellphones.

- **We must lift ourselves out of Oregon having the among the worst reading and math scores in the US.**⁸
- **We must lift our HS graduation rates** – we are at about 82%, while the national average is 87%.^{9, 10}
- **We must lift ourselves out of Oregon's ranking of having the worst mental health status among our youth.**¹⁰

Twenty other states have enacted statewide policies on cellphones in schools. **Oregon is one of three states with NO statewide policies** on any of these three policies that seek to mitigate the damage of cellphones: phone free schools, social media restrictions, and supporting childhood independence.¹¹

What?

HB 2251A will direct Oregon school districts to adopt policies which **prohibit the use of student personal electronic devices from the beginning of regular instructional hours to the end of regular instructional hours**. This would include passing periods and lunchtimes, to **foster real person-to-person communication and social skills**.

Q: What about students who need to use a phone for a disability or medical condition?

A: *There are specific exemptions for these students.*

Q: Will this require districts to purchase expensive pouches or lockers?

A: *No. The bill gives broad latitude to school districts to decide how best to implement a phone-free policy in their schools.*



Supporters



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Chiefs: Rep. Wallan, Senator Reynolds, Rep. Dobson

Regular: Speaker Fahey, Rep. Andersen, Bowman, Fragala, Isadore, E. Levy, Muñoz, Hoa Nguyen, Hai Pham, Sosa.

Passed out of the House Committee on Education and the House Floor with **wide bipartisan support** including the vast majority of legislators with backgrounds in schools (teachers and school board members).

These harrowing trends are highlighted in Jonathan Haidt's book, *The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness*, also described in Ezra Klein's podcast: *Our Kids Are the Least Flourishing Generation We Know Of*.

Bibliography

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