



TINA KOTEK
GOVERNOR

May 12, 2025

The Honorable Lew Frederick
The Honorable Suzanne Weber
Senate Committee on Education
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Frederick, Vice-Chair Weber, and members of the Senate Committee on Education,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony in support of House Bill 2251A, which prohibits cell phone use during the school day in Oregon's K-12 schools. Thank you to Senator Reynolds, Representative Wallan, and Representative Dobson for their leadership in taking this bold step to support our students.

House Bill 2251A addresses two fundamental goals head-on: delivering on our promise of a quality public education and protecting our young people's safety, health, and wellbeing.

We cannot achieve the outcomes we seek on reading, math, and other areas of competency if students are not able to focus on learning when they are in school. Educators tell us that cell phones are disruptive in their classrooms and hinder their ability to teach. Researchers tell us that cell phones undermine a student's ability to focus, even when the phone is just on the desk, not being used.

Limiting cell phone use is not just about reducing distractions. It is also about helping students be fully engaged in the act of learning and in their school community, about students finding belonging and the joy of learning something new. And research is showing that cell phone use has a negative impact on young people's mental health and self-esteem.

Last summer, I directed the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) to create a set of guidelines for setting cell phone use policy. House Bill 2251A would impose a bell-to-bell restriction, covering not only instructional time but also passing periods, lunch, and other non-academic time, which aligns with the intent and spirit of ODE's recommendations.

Our job as leaders is to remove as many barriers as possible so students can succeed – and add as many supports and resources as we can to help students and educators be successful. We must stand up for the promise of every student in every corner of the state. That is why I support this evidence-based, statewide approach as part of our efforts to improve academic outcomes.

Toward that goal, I urge your support.

Thank you,

Governor Tina Kotek