



May 12, 2025

Chair Frederick, Vice-Chair Weber, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Phoenix-Talent School District, we respectfully urge you to support the -A5 amendment to HB 2251 and oppose the bill in its current form. While we recognize and appreciate the intent behind HB 2251A and acknowledge that the increasing prevalence of cell phones in schools has created real challenges related to student focus, classroom disruption, and social-emotional health. However, we believe these issues are best addressed at the local level.

Districts need the ability to work directly with students, families, and educators to develop policies that reflect the specific needs and culture of their communities. As currently written, HB 2251A imposes a one-size-fits-all mandate that removes the flexibility districts need to respond effectively and in real time.

At Phoenix-Talent, we take student cell phone use seriously and have implemented clear expectations across all grade levels. These expectations vary between our elementary, middle, and high schools in order to account for developmental differences and the appropriate use of technology. For example, we enforce a bell-to-bell ban at the elementary and middle school levels, while high school students are only allowed to use phones during lunch.

We have chosen to implement these policies through our school handbook, which is developed with input from educators, parents, and administrators. By not formalizing these guidelines through board policy, we are able to adapt quickly to emerging technology, address discipline concerns, and incorporate feedback from our school community.

A statewide mandate would take away this flexibility and could create unintended consequences that districts are not positioned to address. Most districts in Oregon have already taken steps to manage student cell phone use. HB 2251A would override those efforts in order to address a small number of outliers.

We urge the Legislature to trust local school districts to continue managing this issue in partnership with their communities. **Please adopt the -A5 amendment or reject HB 2251A in its current form.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Brent Barry
Phoenix-Talent School District, Superintendent

