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Devices in Public Schools

2025 GENERAL SESSION

	STATE OF UTAH Chief Sponsor:
= L	ONG TITLE
	eneral Description:
Ŭ	This bill addresses the use of cellphones, smart watches, or emerging technologies in
cl	assrooms.
	ighlighted Provisions:
	This bill:
	• defines terms;
	 prohibits a student from using a cellphone, smart watch, or emerging technology during
in	structional hours;
	 allows a local education agency to create exemptions to the prohibition; and
	requires the State Board of Education to make rules establishing a grant program.
M	Ioney Appropriated in this Bill:
T	his bill appropriates in fiscal year 2026:
	• to State Board of Education - State Board and Administrative Operations - Cellular Device
	Use Prohibition Grant as a one-time appropriation:
	• from the Public Education Economic Stabilization Restricted Account, One-time, \$4,850,000
0	ther Special Clauses:
	This bill provides a special effective date.
U	tah Code Sections Affected:
E	NACTS:
	53G-7-226 , Utah Code Annotated 1953
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В	e 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.
<u>(1</u>)(a)(i) "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, data, or text communication by means of:

(A) a cellular network;

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32	(B) a satellite network; or
33	(C) any other wireless technology; and
34	(ii) "Cellphone" includes:
35	(A) a smartphone;
36	(B) a feature phone;
37	(C) a mobile phone;
38	(D) a satellite phone; or
39	(E) a personal digital assistant that incorporates capabilities similar to a
40	smartphone, feature phone, mobile phone, or satellite phone.
41	(b)(i) "Emerging technology" means any other device that has or will be able to act
42	in place of or as an extension of an individual's cellphone.
43	(ii) "Emerging technology" does not include school provided or required devices.
44	(c) "Smart watch" means a wearable computing device that closely resembles a
45	wristwatch or other time-keeping device with the capacity to act in place of or as an
46	extension of an individual's cellphone.
47	(d) "Smart watch" does not include a wearable device that can only:
48	(i) tell time;
49	(ii) monitor an individual's health informatics; or
50	(iii) track the individual's physical location.
51	(2) Except as provided in Subsections (3), a student may not use a student's cellphone,
52	smart watch, or emerging technology at a school during the school day.
53	(3) <u>An LEA:</u>
54	(a) shall establish a policy that provides for when a student's use of a student's cellphone
55	smart watch, or emerging technology is necessary:
56	(i) to respond to an imminent threat to the health or safety of an individual;
57	(ii) for a student's IEP or Section 504 accommodation plan; or
58	(iii) to address a medical necessity; and
59	(b) may create additional policies establishing reasonable exceptions to when a student
60	may use a student's cellphone, smart watch, or emerging technology in a manner the
61	LEA determines does not interfere with the learning environment at a school.
62	(4) The state board may create one or more model policies regarding when a student may
63	use a student's cellphone, smart watch, or emerging technology in a school during the
64	school day.
65	(5) Subject to legislative appropriations and in accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah

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66	Administrative Rulemaking Act, the state board shall make rules:
67	(a) creating a grant program to assist an LEA with the purchase of equipment for the
68	implementation of the this part in secondary schools; and
69	(b) establishing the parameters for the grant program described in Subsection (5)(a),
70	including:
71	(i) an application format;
72	(ii) relevant time lines and deadlines;
73	(iii) a scoring rubric, including criteria to determine a grant award amount;
74	(iv) allowable uses of a grant award, including types of equipment such as magnetic
75	locking pouches; and
76	(v) any relevant data to evaluate the program that the state board determines is
77	necessary.
78	Section 2. FY 2026 Appropriation.
79	The following sums of money are appropriated for the fiscal year beginning July
80	1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2026. These are additions to amounts previously
81	appropriated for fiscal year 2026.
82	Subsection 2(a) Operating and Capital Budgets
83	Under the terms and conditions of Title 63J, Chapter 1, Budgetary Procedures
84	Act, the Legislature appropriates the following sums of money from the funds or
85	accounts indicated for the use and support of the government of the state of Utah.
86	Public Education
87	ITEM 1 To State Board of Education - State Board and Administrative Operations
88	From Public Education Economic Stabilization
89	Restricted Account, One-time \$4,850,000
90	Schedule of Programs:
91	Cellular Device Use Prohibition Grant \$4,850,000
92	Section 3. Effective date.
93	This bill takes effect on July 1, 2025.
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