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S.B. 158
136th General Assembly

Bill Analysis

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Version: As Passed by the Senate

Primary Sponsor: Sen. Timken

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SUMMARY

- Requires each public school to adopt a policy prohibiting the use of cellphones by students during instructional hours.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Student cellphone use

The bill requires each public school's (any school district, community school, STEM school, or college-preparatory boarding school) policy governing the use of cellphones by students during school hours to prohibit outright student cellphone use during the instructional day. Though, the bill maintains an exception to that prohibition that permits cellphone use for student learning or to monitor or address a health concern if determined appropriate by the school's governing body or if that use is included in a student's individualized education program (IEP) or section 504 plan. The bill also requires a school's governing body to permit a student to use a cellphone or other electronic communications device to monitor or address a health concern if the board receives a written statement from the student's physician requiring such use.

Under the bill, each public school administrator must include a protocol that addresses student cellphone use during an active threat or emergency in the comprehensive emergency management plan for each building under the administrator's control. The bill suspends the cellphone prohibition for a school building during an active threat or emergency if the building's comprehensive emergency management plan permits it.

Each school must adopt the updated policy by September 1, 2025. As under continuing law, if the district board of education adopts a policy after the bill's effective date, it must do so

at a public meeting and make the policy publicly available and post it prominently on its publicly accessible website.¹

Background

H.B. 250 of the 135th General Assembly, effective August 14, 2024, requires public schools to adopt, by July 1, 2025, a policy governing the use of cellphones by students during school hours that (1) emphasizes that student use be as limited as possible during school hours and (2) reduces use-related distractions in classroom settings.

HISTORY

Action	Date
Introduced	04-01-25
Reported, S. Education	05-13-25
Passed Senate (30-2)	05-14-25

ANSB0158PS-136/ar

¹ R.C. 3313.753 and 5502.262.