

NYS School Cell Phone Ban Legislation

Key Information for Stakeholders

2025

Stakeholder Group Goals

- ▶ Gain an understanding of what we currently know about the cell phone ban legislation.
- ▶ Provide a general guiding philosophy as to how we navigate this shift.
- ▶ Begin to gather feedback from teachers, administrators, students, and parents as to how we best implement this law as it relates to:
 - NCS District Policies
 - NCS Code of Conduct
 - NES and NJH/HS Student Handbooks
- ▶ Identify next steps going forward.

Intentions Behind Law

- ▶ Growing concerns about student addiction to internet connected devices.
- ▶ Links between social media and increased rates of anxiety, depression, negative behaviors.
- ▶ Increasing concerns that technology is causing disruption to learning during the school day.

Limitations of the Law

It puts a significant weight on schools to prohibit cell phone use but it does not address the larger issue:

-What legislation is being passed to hold social media sites/apps accountable for their role?

-What legislation is being passed to hold cell phone providers accountable for providing these devices to students? Should there be a minimum age to possess and use smart devices similar to other regulated products/privileges (tobacco, vaping, alcohol, driving etc.)

-What role do parents in play in monitoring/prohibiting student technology use?

-Most cell phone related issues that we deal with occur after school hours.

Key Components of the Law

- ▶ Bell to bell ban defined by the instructional school day (after school periods are not included nor are buses).
- ▶ Prohibits ALL internet-enabled devices (smart phones, smart watches, tablets, ear buds, headphones, etc.).
- ▶ Requires that parents have at least one mechanism to communicate with students during the day.
- ▶ Requires that schools provide at least one mode of storage for internet-enabled devices which may include student lockers.
- ▶ Includes some exceptions (SPED, 504, ELL, care-givers, emergencies).
- ▶ Schools cannot suspend students for violation of the cell phone ban.
- ▶ Schools must track/document violations of the policy and submit data to NYS annually.

A Challenging Timeline

- ▶ No later than August 1st, 2025, school districts must adopt a policy that aligns to the new cell phone ban legislation.
- ▶ Code of Conduct and Student Handbooks must be updated.
- ▶ The new law goes into effect at the beginning of the 2025-26 school year (September).
- ▶ We will assess practices/policies implemented going forward.

Guiding Thoughts

- ▶ We have great students here at NCS who for the most part, show respect and the ability to follow expectations. As such, it is my hope that we can implement this law in a manner that is reasonable.
- ▶ This cannot be something that defines our school day nor alters completely our school culture. We cannot allow it to diminish relationships.
- ▶ All of us (administrators, teachers, students, staff, parents) must have a role in implementing this policy in a manner that is reasonable and manageable.
- ▶ Confiscating/Collecting student devices from all students daily is not the preferable option at this point in time.

Gathering Stakeholder Feedback

Guiding Questions:

- 1.) *What could storage options look like for students?*
- 2.) *How can we help students make good decisions regarding this ban?*
- 3.) *How can we be progressive in our approach to consequences?*
- 4.) *How could we easily track violations without disruption?*
- 5.) *What is a reasonable method for parents to contact students?*
- 6.) *What opportunities could be provided during lunches to assist students with this shift?*
- 7.) *What additional questions might you have?*

Next Steps

- ▶ Come to consensus on discussion questions.
- ▶ District will look to adopt policy prior to August 1st.
- ▶ District will update code of conduct this summer.
- ▶ Buildings will update student handbooks this summer.
- ▶ Communications will go out to parents and students over the next few months regarding the upcoming shifts and changes to prepare for September.