
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO EDUCATION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that teachers and
2 administrators across the nation are battling against the
3 overuse of cell phones. Nearly ninety-seven per cent of
4 teenagers report using their phones during the day and receiving
5 up to two hundred thirty-seven notifications a day. Teachers
6 and administrators report constantly redirecting students and
7 confiscating phones which drastically cuts into instructional
8 time. According to a 2024 National Education Association poll,
9 eighty-three per cent of teachers support prohibiting the use of
10 cell phones at school use during the entire school day, with
11 school-approved exceptions.

12 Access to social media is an identified culprit that keeps
13 students addicted to their devices. A recently published study
14 in the International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction stated
15 a link between social media use and mental health. The report
16 concluded that people with higher rates of depression tend to
17 use social media more and that excessive social media use is



1 linked to unhealthy behaviors that not only affect mental health
2 but also physical health. The addictively curated content
3 keeping social media users glued to their phones all day bombard
4 users with images, sounds, and stimuli that interfere with the
5 capacity to concentrate resulting in decreased learning and
6 inevitably declining academic performance.

7 In recent years, states have passed laws or enact policies
8 that ban or restrict students' use of cell phone in schools
9 statewide. Louisiana and South Carolina allow students to
10 possess their electronic telecommunication devices on their
11 person throughout the instructional day, but it must be stowed
12 away. Currently in Hawaii, individual schools are left to
13 create their own policies, but enforcement has proven difficult.
14 The legislature finds that a cell phone ban in schools can help
15 curtail this pervasive issue and support students, teachers, and
16 administrators in creating and cultivating healthy and
17 productive school environments. Accordingly, the purpose of
18 this Act is to:

- 19 (1) Develop a cell phone use ban in schools across the
20 State; and



(2) Launch an educational campaign for students in grades six through twelve about the social, emotional, and physical effects of social media.

SECTION 2. Chapter 302A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

"§302A- Cell phone use. (a) Effective beginning with the 2025-2026 school year and thereafter, no student, unless authorized by the school principal or the principal's designee, shall use or operate any electronic telecommunication device, including any mobile telephone service, during instructional hours, whether on campus or off-campus for a school related activity.

(b) Effective beginning with the 2025-2026 school year and thereafter, no student shall possess, an electronic telecommunication device throughout the instructional day. If a student brings an electronic telecommunication device in any public school building or on the grounds thereof during an instructional day, the electronic device shall either be turned off and properly stowed away for the duration of the



1 instructional day or prohibited from being turned on and used
2 during the instructional day.

3 (c) Effective beginning with the 2025-2026 school year and
4 thereafter, no student shall access social media platforms with
5 internet access provided by the school district, except when
6 expressly directed by a teacher solely for educational purposes;
7 and

8 (d) The provisions of this section are not applicable to a
9 student whose individualized education program, individualized
10 accommodation plan, section 504 plan, or individualized health
11 plan requires the student's use of an electronic
12 telecommunication device.

13 (e) The provisions of this section shall not apply when a
14 student is expressly authorized by a teacher to use their cell
15 phone for instructional purposes.

16 (f) The provisions of this section shall not apply when it
17 is necessary to use an electronic telecommunication device to
18 respond to an emergency situation.

19 (g) The department shall adopt rules under chapter 91 to
20 carry out the purposes of this section."



1 SECTION 3. Chapter 302A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
2 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated
3 and to read as follows:

4 "§302A- Social media education. (a) The department
5 shall establish and administer a comprehensive age-appropriate
6 and developmentally appropriate K-12 instruction on:

7 (1) For students in grades six through twelve, the social,
8 emotional, and physical effects of social media. This
9 component must include, but need not be limited to:

10 (A) The negative effects of social media on mental
11 health, including addiction;

12 (B) The distribution of misinformation on social
13 media;

14 (C) How social media manipulates behavior;

15 (D) The permanency of sharing materials online;

16 (E) How to maintain personal security and identify
17 cyberbullying, predatory behavior, and human
18 trafficking on the internet; and

19 (F) How to report suspicious behavior encountered on
20 the internet.



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(b) The department shall make available online the instructional material being used pursuant to this section, and each school shall notify parents of its availability.

(c) The department shall adopt rules under chapter 91 to carry out the purposes of this section."

SECTION 4. New statutory material is underscored.

SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

INTRODUCED BY:

James M. Shring
[Signature]
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Jan M. White
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Report Title:

DOE; Cell Phone Use; Social Media Education; Minority Caucus
Package

Description:

Requires the department of education to prohibit cell phone use during the instructional day, prohibit student access to social media through the school's internet, and implement a social media education campaign. Creates exemptions for students requiring accommodations, emergency situations, and teacher authorizations.

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.

