

School Device Revisions
2026 GENERAL SESSION
STATE OF UTAH
Chief Sponsor: Lincoln Fillmore
House Sponsor: Doug Welton

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This bill establishes the default standard device use from prohibited during instructional time to prohibited during the school day.

Highlighted Provisions:

This bill:

- establishes the default standard device use from prohibited during instructional time to prohibited during the school day; and
- makes technical and conforming changes.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

None

Other Special Clauses:

None

Utah Code Sections Affected:

AMENDS:

53G-7-227, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, First Special Session, Chapter 9

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:

Section 1. Section **53G-7-227** is amended to read:

53G-7-227 . Cellular device prohibition.

(1) As used in this section:

(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:

[~~(i)~~] (A) a cellular network;

[~~(ii)~~] (B) a satellite network; or

[~~(iii)~~] (C) any other wireless technology.

[~~(b)~~] (ii) "Cellphone" includes:

- 31 [(i)] (A) a smartphone;
- 32 [(ii)] (B) a feature phone;
- 33 [(iii)] (C) a mobile phone;
- 34 [(iv)] (D) a satellite phone; or
- 35 [(v)] (E) a personal digital assistant that incorporates capabilities similar to a
- 36 smartphone, feature phone, mobile phone, or satellite phone.
- 37 [(e) ~~"Classroom hours" means:~~]
- 38 [(i) ~~time during which a student receives scheduled, teacher-supervised instruction~~
- 39 ~~that occurs;~~]
- 40 [(A) ~~in a physical or virtual classroom setting;~~]
- 41 [(B) ~~during regular school operating hours; and~~]
- 42 [(C) ~~as part of an approved educational curriculum;~~]
- 43 [(ii) ~~"Classroom hours" does not include:~~]
- 44 [(A) ~~lunch periods;~~]
- 45 [(B) ~~recess;~~]
- 46 [(C) ~~transit time between classes;~~]
- 47 [(D) ~~study halls unless directly supervised by a qualified instructor;~~]
- 48 [(E) ~~after-school activities unless part of an approved extended learning program;~~
- 49 ~~or]~~
- 50 [(F) ~~independent study time occurring outside scheduled instruction;~~]
- 51 [(d)] (b)(i) "Emerging technology" means any other device that has or will be able to
- 52 act in place of or as an extension of an individual's cellphone.
- 53 (ii) "Emerging technology" does not include school provided or required devices.
- 54 (c) "School hours" means the time from the beginning of the school day, as designated
- 55 by the school's bell schedule, until the end of the school day, as designated by the
- 56 school's bell schedule, including all instructional time, lunch periods, recess, and
- 57 transition times between classes.
- 58 [(e)] (d) "Smart watch" means a wearable computing device that closely resembles a
- 59 wristwatch or other time-keeping device with the capacity to act in place of or as an
- 60 extension of an individual's cellphone.
- 61 [(f)] (e) "Smart watch" does not include a wearable device that can only:
- 62 (i) tell time;
- 63 (ii) monitor an individual's health informatics;
- 64 (iii) receive and display notifications or information without the capability to

- 65 respond; or
- 66 (iv) track the individual's physical location.
- 67 (2) Except as provided in Subsection (3), a student may not use a cellphone, smart watch, or
- 68 emerging technology at a school during school hours.
- 69 [(2)] (3)(a) [An] Notwithstanding this section, an LEA:
- 70 (i) shall establish a policy that allows a student to use a cellphone, smart watch, or
- 71 emerging technology:
- 72 (A) to respond to an imminent threat to the health or safety of an individual;
- 73 (B) to respond to a school-wide emergency;
- 74 (C) to use the SafeUT Crisis Line described in Section 53H-4-210;
- 75 (D) for a student's IEP or Section 504 accommodation plan; or
- 76 (E) to address a medical necessity; and
- 77 (ii) in addition to the exceptions described in Subsection (3)(a)(i), may establish a
- 78 policy that provides for other circumstances when a student may use a cellphone,
- 79 smart watch, or emerging technology during the school day.
- 80 (b) An LEA may establish policies that:
- 81 (i) extend restrictions on student use of cellphones, smart watches, or emerging
- 82 technologies to non-[classroom] school hours[~~during the school day~~], including[~~:~~]
- 83 [(A) lunch periods;]
- 84 [(B) transition times between classes; and]
- 85 [(C) other] school-supervised activities; and
- 86 (ii) impose additional limitations on the use of cellphones, smart watches, or
- 87 emerging technologies beyond those required by this section.
- 88 [~~(3) Except as provided in Subsection (2), a student may not use a cellphone, smart watch,~~
- 89 ~~or emerging technology at a school during classroom hours.~~]
- 90 (4) The state board may create one or more model policies regarding when a student may
- 91 use a student's cellphone, smart watch, or emerging technology in a school during [
- 92 classroom] school hours consistent with this section.

93 Section 2. **Effective Date.**

94 This bill takes effect on May 6, 2026.