

Lincoln Fillmore proposes the following substitute bill:

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:

This bill provides a special effective date.

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.

30 ~~[(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;

(iii) receive and display notifications or information without the capability to respond; or

(iv) track the individual's physical location.

(2) Except as provided in Subsection (3), a student may not use a cellphone, smart watch, or emerging technology at a school during school hours.

[(2)] (3)(a) ~~An~~ Notwithstanding this section, an LEA:

(i) shall establish a policy that allows a student to use a cellphone, smart watch, or emerging technology:

(A) to respond to an imminent threat to the health or safety of an individual;

(B) to respond to a school-wide emergency;

(C) to use the SafeUT Crisis Line described in Section 53H-4-210;

(D) for a student's IEP or Section 504 accommodation plan; or

(E) to address a medical necessity; and

(ii) in addition to the exceptions described in Subsection (3)(a)(i), may establish a policy that provides for other circumstances when a student may use a cellphone, smart watch, or emerging technology during the school day.

(b) An LEA may establish policies that:

(i) extend restrictions on student use of cellphones, smart watches, or emerging technologies to non-[classroom] school hours~~[-during the school day]~~, including[:]

~~[(A) lunch periods;]~~

~~[(B) transition times between classes; and]~~

~~[(C) other] school-supervised activities; and~~

(ii) impose additional limitations on the use of cellphones, smart watches, or emerging technologies beyond those required by this section.

[(3) ~~Except as provided in Subsection (2), a student may not use a cellphone, smart watch, or emerging technology at a school during classroom hours.~~]

(4) The state board may create one or more model policies regarding when a student may use a student's cellphone, smart watch, or emerging technology in a school during [~~classroom~~] school hours consistent with this section.

Section 2. **Effective Date.**

This bill takes effect on July 1, 2026.