

Prepared by Dr. Jeffrey Alstadt

New Illinois Cell Phone Law and District Policy

Purpose

To provide the Board of Education with an update regarding newly enacted Illinois legislation (Senate Bill 2427) governing student wireless communication devices in public schools, cross-reference the statute with our current District handbook policies, and outline our collaborative process with our Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB) policy consultant to ensure full compliance.

Legislative Overview and Handbook Cross-Analysis

Illinois Senate Bill 2427 requires public school districts to implement policies restricting student personal wireless device usage during the school day. The statute mandates exemptions for teacher-approved instruction, health emergencies, documented medical needs, individual special education accommodations, and multilingual translation support. The law prohibits enforcing these policies through financial fees or law enforcement officers and requires formal policy reviews every three years.

A review of our student handbooks confirms that District 44 is already in substantial compliance with these expectations.

- Our current handbook requires all cell phones, smartwatches, and wireless audio devices to remain powered off and secured in student lockers throughout the day. Existing policies explicitly accommodate medical care plans, special education frameworks, instructional exemptions, and safety emergencies.
- District disciplinary measures rely strictly on internal behavioral interventions rather than fines or law enforcement, ensuring our local operations will experience minimal impact.

IASB Collaboration and Next Steps

District leadership and the board is collaborating with our IASB Policy Customization Consultant to formally integrate these requirements into our Board Policy Manual.

- We will refine current policy language to include the statutory definitions of wireless communication devices.
- We will also incorporate the explicit exemption criteria for multilingual learners across all building handbooks.
- Administrative team members will schedule the required triennial policy review cycle into our long-range governance calendar.

Administrative Recommendation

This report is provided for informational purposes to keep the Board of Education fully apprised of new state mandates and proactive compliance efforts. Updated policy drafts will be presented to the Board for a first reading at a future meeting.