House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 591

January Session, 2025

House Bill No. 6923

House of Representatives, April 8, 2025

The Committee on Education reported through REP. LEEPER of the 132nd Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF SMART DEVICES IN SCHOOLS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. Section 10-233j of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

(a) No student in a public school in the state shall possess or use a remotely activated paging device unless such student obtains the written permission of the school principal for such possession and use. The principal shall grant such permission only if the student or his parent or guardian establishes to the satisfaction of the principal that a reasonable basis exists for the possession and use of the device.

(b) A local or regional board of education may restrict the student possession or use of cellular mobile telephones in the schools under its jurisdiction. In determining whether to restrict such possession or use, the local or regional board of education shall consider the special needs of parents and students.

(c) For the school year commencing July 1, 2025, and each school year thereafter, each local and regional board of education shall adopt a policy, in addition to any restrictions pursuant to subsection (b) of this section, limiting the use of smart devices in the schools governed by such board of education using the policy guidance developed by the Department of Education. As used in this subsection, "smart device" means a cellular mobile telephone or other wearable or portable technology that can connect to the Internet, collect, process and transmit data, and communicate with other devices and networks.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	*July 1, 2025*	10-233j

ED *Joint Favorable*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact: None

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill has no fiscal impact to local or regional school districts. It requires districts to adopt a technology policy using existing guidance from the State Department of Education. It is anticipated they can meet this requirement with existing resources.

OLR Bill Analysis

HB 6923

AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF SMART DEVICES IN SCHOOLS.

SUMMARY

This bill requires local and regional boards of education ("school boards") to adopt a policy each school year, starting with the 2025-26 school year, limiting smart device use in the schools they oversee. School boards must use policy guidance published by the State Department of Education (SDE) to develop their policy.

This policy must be in addition to any restrictions a school board has adopted pursuant to the existing law authorizing them to restrict student cell phone possession or use in their schools. Under that law, school boards must consider parents' and students' special needs when deciding whether to impose cell phone restrictions.

Under the bill, a smart device is a cellular mobile telephone or other wearable or portable technology that can connect to the internet; collect, process, and transmit data; and communicate with other devices and networks.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

BACKGROUND

Policy Guidance

In August 2024, the State Board of Education (the agency head of SDE) released a position statement and policy guidance entitled "Personal Technology Use in Connecticut Schools: Impact of Social Media and the Use of Cell Phones on Student Learning and Mental Health." In the guidance, the board strongly recommends that school board policies restrict cell phone use during the day to ensure student

engagement in learning; support emotional well-being; and strengthen students' interpersonal skills, peer interaction, and social communication.

Among other things, the guidance recommends that cell phone use be (1) fully restricted during the school day for elementary and middle school students and (2) limited during the day for high school students. The guidance also outlines the recommended roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders in developing and implementing a policy, including the school board, school administrators, teachers, students, and families.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Education Committee

Joint Favorable
Yea 33 Nay 11 (03/21/2025)