

Starting July 1, 2025, New York State Law prohibits students from using “wireless internet enabled devices” on public school property from bell to bell. This includes lunch, passing time, study halls, and class time. It does not apply to hours outside of regular teaching hours (activity period, and after school sports and practices).

The Dryden Technology Committee is assisting the District with a Dryden-specific plan to comply with this law. You can read the [full text of Senate Bill 2025-S3006](#) on the New York State web site. We have also extracted section 2803 (Use of internet-enabled devices during the school day) for you [to download](#).

We are still in the early stages of planning and refining Dryden’s approach to this law. Not every question will be answered in this document at this time.

The Technology Committee

The Dryden CSD Technology committee is made up of administrators and teachers from all buildings as well as parent representative/s. The purpose of this committee is to create and review technology protocols. Over the past six years our team has worked to align our protocols with various state mandates, as well as find and suggest potential solutions that meet the needs of our community.

If you would like to participate in the Technology Committee, please contact [Cheryl Covell](#).

Some Specifics About the Law

What devices are banned?

From the text of the law “Internet-enabled devices” refers to any:

- Smartphone
- Tablet
- Smartwatch
- Other device capable of connecting to the internet and enabling the user to access internet content, including social media applications.

What devices are allowed?

Again from the text of the law: “internet-enabled devices” do not include:

- (i) Non-internet-enabled devices, such as cellular phones or other communication devices that cannot connect to the internet or enable access to internet content; *or*
- (ii) Internet-enabled devices supplied by the school district, charter school, or board of cooperative educational services specifically for educational purposes.

While such devices are permissible, their use must still be in accordance with the [school’s code of conduct](#). For example, students should not use a flip phone to text during the school day.





Exceptions

This law is not intended to negatively impact students whose particular learning abilities or physical conditions require internet-enabled devices. This includes:

Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

If a student has a modification or accommodation on their IEP that cannot be provided on a District owned internet enabled device, but could be accessed on the student's smartphone, the student would still have access to the phone for that purpose.

Medical or Physical Concerns

If a student has a disability or medical concern and they manage their disability or medical issue through an app on their phone (for example hearing aids or glucose monitoring), they would be allowed to keep their phone.

Language Assistance

Students who use their phone to translate educational material will be able to use their device for that purpose.

Primary Caregivers

Students who are a primary family caregiver will be allowed to keep their phone as well.

In all exceptions, students will still be expected to limit their device use to the intended purpose of the exception, and in accordance with the [school's code of conduct](#).

How Dryden Will Approach the Law

Dryden Middle and High Schools

Students will receive a locking [NuKase](#) to store their phones. This case will allow students to keep their phones in their possession, while still complying with NYS law.

Students will be expected to power off and secure their phones in their NuKase by sliding the lock on the case prior to the beginning of the school day. The phone will remain in the case during the school day. Students will be dismissed from 9th period at 2:14 (5 minutes early), allowing time to unlock their case at designated locations in the building and communicate with parents/caregivers as needed.

If a student damages their NuKase or does not bring it to school they will be required to leave their device in the office to be picked up at the end of the school day.

If a student is found using an internet-enabled device during the school day, the student will be required to turn it over to an administrator. A responsible parent or caretaker will need to come to the school to pick up the device. It will not be released back to the student.



The parent/caregiver and the student will sign for the device, which includes acknowledgment of the school's cell phone policy.

Students will not be disciplined for using their phone, but if their subsequent behavior violates the [code of conduct](#) (for example, inappropriate language toward faculty or staff) they will be disciplined for that behavior.

Elementary Schools

All internet-enabled devices (smartphone, computers, tablets, smartwatches, etc.) must be powered off and stored in the student's backpack from arrival to dismissal.

Contacting Your Family Member

Students

Students who need to contact a caregiver will be able to go to the office and use the phone to call a parent.

Students should write down their parent or caregiver's contact information in a safe place; they will not be able to use their phone contact list.

Parents

Parents/caregivers who need to send a message to a student will call the office and leave a message. Office staff will deliver the message to the student.

- **Dryden Elementary:** 607-844-8694 x1888
- **Cassavant Elementary:** 607-838-3522
- **Freeville Elementary:** 607-844-9251
- **Middle School:** 607-844-8694 x4239
- **High School:** 607-844-8694 x5237

Do not try to reach your student by emailing the teacher through SchoolTool. Let the teachers teach, and let the staff administrate.





Helping Families Adjust

Cell phones have allowed us to impulsively reach out at any time of day for any reason. “What do you want for dinner?” “Does our printer print 11x17 paper?” “Is this spam?” “Do you have time to stop at Clark’s on the way home?” “I got done with errands early so I’m going to pick you up at dismissal.”

Take inventory of the kinds of conversations you have had with your child during the course of a school day over the past year. Have an honest conversation with each other about the subject material. For example, if you’ve needed to send pictures of homework, or deliver a forgotten instrument, then find a way to organize (create a plan or checklist).

Students, think about how you use your phone as a productivity tool during the day: if you use it as a planner, can you use one of the Google workspace tools instead, like Tasks or Calendar? School faculty will be happy to assist your child in developing a planning or organizational system that meets their needs without the use of a personal electronic device. Ask them for suggestions if you struggle in this area!

Some of our youth are addicted to their phones. For these individuals, the NYS Cell phone ban [could have serious, negative consequences](#) if not addressed. Faculty and caregivers are in the best position to notice if a child is struggling badly with these phone restrictions.

[IthacaCrisis.org](#) offers resources to help families and individuals struggling with these kinds of negative impacts. [Know the Warning Signs & How to Get Help](#) and the [Resource Center](#) can help everyone navigate a difficult situation. The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline connects you to trained crisis counselors 24/7. They can help anyone feeling any kind of emotional distress.

Cell Phones and School Safety

It is every caregiver, faculty, and staff member’s nightmare to imagine a Columbine or Uvalde experience happening to us. We don’t want to wait for officials and law enforcement to tell us our child is safe, we want to know it RIGHT NOW, which students cannot do with their phones locked away.

In 2024, Dryden brought in [School Resource Officer Rob Reyngoudt](#) to the District. The Technology Committee asked him to share his knowledge and perspective about cell phones and school safety.

Overview

During a school crisis, cell phone use can inadvertently spread misinformation, leading to increased panic and hindering emergency response efforts. Examples include students using social media to share unverified information, which can cause unnecessary worry among parents and even create false narratives about the situation. Additionally, students may focus on communicating with family instead of following safety instructions, and the influx of communication can and has overwhelmed cellular towers.



Distraction and Misinformation:

Students on their phones during a crisis may be less focused on official instructions from teachers or emergency personnel. They may also be more likely to see and spread unverified information, including rumors and speculation, on social media and messaging apps.

Jamming Communication Networks:

The sheer volume of calls and texts during a crisis can overwhelm cellular networks, making it difficult for emergency responders to communicate with each other and with those inside the school.

Hindering Evacuation and Reunification:

Parents rushing to the school after receiving texts from their children can impede evacuation efforts and make it harder for authorities to manage the situation safely. It can also make it more difficult to reunite families with their children after the crisis has passed.

Revealing Hiding Places:

In active shooter scenarios, cell phones can potentially give away students' hiding places if they ring or vibrate. Additionally, if students are using social media to communicate their location, they could be exposing themselves to the shooter.

Increased Anxiety and Panic:

Rumors and misinformation spread through social media and texting can heighten anxiety and panic among students and parents, potentially leading to irrational decisions and actions.

Cyberbullying:

Cell phones can be a major distraction in the classroom, but beyond that, they present serious safety and social concerns. A continually growing concern among students is cyberbullying, which often occurs through text message and social media. Peer on peer school fights are often coordinated and even recorded through the use of cell phones.

Staff/Faculty Phone Use

This prohibition does not apply to faculty and staff. However, Dryden faculty and staff will model professional behavior with wireless internet enabled devices.





What You Might See

Based on academic research and real-world results from peer schools, you and the District expect to see the following during the 2025-2026 school year:

Students

- Spending more time with your peers face-to-face.
- More focused in class.
- Improved grades.
- Increased creativity.
- Decreased cyberbullying at school.

Faculty

- Fewer phone-based distractions from teaching.
- Deeper participation.
- Improved focus.
- More social interaction.
- Better classroom cohesion.
- Decreased behavioral issues.
- Lower student anxiety.

Parents

- Improved grades.
- Better organizational skills.
- More age-appropriate behavior.
- More personal engagement.
- Increased phone usage at home to “make up for” time “lost” at school.
- More visibility into cyberbullying.

Share Your Thoughts

Now that you have reviewed the material above, please take time to share your thoughts through [this form](#). This form is not an opinion form (see the next section). We are asking for your constructive contribution to completing the task that New York has set for all schools in the state.

The committee expects that you will share thoughtful, respectful, and detailed feedback with us. We will disregard any contributions that do not align with the District’s philosophy of treating everyone with respect, compassion, and dignity.



I Disagree With This Law

The District receives **half of its operating budget** from State and Federal Revenue Streams. The District **cannot operate** without that revenue. Compliance is the only option for DCSD. If you disagree with the law, advocate for change with the appropriate state officials. Some contact information follows.

Anna Kelles

Assembly District 125
607-277-8030
kellesa@nyassembly.gov

Lea Webb

Senator
518-455-2170
leawebb@nysenate.gov

Research

The following links share some research about the issues that drove the implementation of this ban in New York State. This is not exhaustive; for additional academic research you can [start with these papers](#) (not all may have their full text freely available).

The Law Has Support Across the Political Spectrum

Sienna College Poll, February 3, 2025.

Hochul State of the State & Budget Proposals					
		Total	Dems	Reps	Ind
Providing free breakfast and lunch to every public school student in New York	Support	77%	86%	62%	75%
	Oppose	13%	7%	24%	14%
Ensuring the presence of a uniformed police officer on every NYC subway train between 9pm and 5am for the next 6 months	Support	71%	70%	74%	70%
	Oppose	12%	15%	10%	9%
Increasing the average child tax credit from \$472 to \$943, budgeted at \$825 million	Support	63%	71%	53%	56%
	Oppose	19%	13%	28%	23%
Requiring all school districts to restrict smartphone use by students in K-12 schools throughout the entire school day	Support	62%	63%	65%	56%
	Oppose	21%	22%	18%	23%
Sending checks of \$300 for individuals and \$500 for couples to	Support	56%	66%	45%	46%
	Oppose	22%	13%	24%	23%

Experiences From New York State Schools with Bans Already in Place

Students say their New York school's cellphone ban helped improve their mental health

Excerpt (December 2023)

Newburgh, New York — At Newburgh Free Academy in New York, cell phones are locked away for the entire school day, including lunch.

Students like Tyson Hill and Monique May say it is a relief after constantly being on their phones during the COVID-19 lockdown, when screen time among adolescents more than doubled, according to a study

last year in the Journal of the American Medical Association Pediatrics.

"I blame my darkest moments because of my phone," Tyson told CBS News.

May said phone and social media use during this time was entirely to blame for her mental health struggles.

"All of it, for me personally," May said.

'It's super important': Some Western New York schools prohibit phones in classrooms

June 2024, Gaskill and Wellsville Schools (Niagara area).



#LIONPRIDE

[NY Students Banned From Using Phones First Hated, Then Loved It](#)

Excerpt from July 2024 (Newburgh and Bronx)

Signs of withdrawal began to show immediately.

At a high school in upstate New York that had banned mobile phones, a student was constantly reaching for her non-existent device and grabbing air. Hallways rang with the sound of kids trying to smash locks and get to their devices. At another school in the Bronx, students plotted a protest.

Eventually, though, the symptoms faded and behavior changed. At KIPP NYC College Prep high school, AP test scores increased and grades bounced back to pre-pandemic averages, according to Principal Monica Samuels. She said some students even covertly thanked her for instituting the ban, which made it easier for them to focus. And the school saw changes after hours, too: Attendance at sporting events and other activities jumped by 50%.

Improved Academic Performance & Reduced Achievement Gaps

A [London School of Economics study](#) found a 6.4% increase in test scores post-ban—equivalent to gaining five extra school days—with low-achieving students seeing gains twice as large

[U.S. evidence](#) from the Yondr pouch rollout highlights a 6.27% increase in academic success, 44% fewer behavior referrals, and 74% of teachers reporting better attention and engagement

Enhanced Classroom Engagement & Reduced Disruption

In Arkansas's Bentonville district, [86% of teachers saw improved student engagement](#), 75% noted more social interaction, and disciplinary incidents (e.g. aggression, drug-related offenses) decreased by over 50%

A [Study.com](#) poll reported 76% of teachers associate strict bans with higher engagement and safer learning environments

Decrease in Bullying, Cyberbullying & Disruptions

In New South Wales and South Australia, [87% of students reported less distraction](#), and behavior incidents dropped by over 50% after statewide bans

[Research in England and Norway](#) also linked phone restrictions to a drop in bullying

Improved Social Interaction & School Climate

[Bans encourage face-to-face engagement](#), with schools in Scotland, Sweden, and the Netherlands all seeing greater student communication and stronger teacher-student relationships

Mental Health Gains

Girls in Norwegian schools saw a [60% drop in visits for psychological symptoms](#) after bans were implemented.

[Cellphone Bans Can Ease Students' Stress and Anxiety](#), Educators Say (16 Oct. 2023).
Langreo, L. Education Week.



#LIONPRIDE