

MEMORANDUM

TO: NWABSD Board of Education
Members

DATE: February 24, 2026

NUMBER: 26-083

FR: Office of the Superintendent

SUBJECT: Approval of Proposed
Revisions to BP 5138
Student Possession and
Use of Portable Electronic
Devices Including Cellular
Phones; Second Reading

STRATEGIC PLAN/BOARD GOAL:

Track 1: Operational Improvements
Initiative: Optimize Business Practices

ABSTRACT:

Board policy revisions require Board approval.

ISSUE:

At issue is to approve the second reading of the proposed revisions to BP 5138 Student Possession and Use of Portable Electronic Devices Including Cellular Phones.

BACKGROUND AND/OR PERTINENT INFORMATION:

The Superintendent/designee presents drafts or suggestions for board policy revisions when the law changes or specific needs occur. Policy revisions shall normally be given two readings prior to adoption by the Board.

This is the second reading of the proposed revisions to BP 5138 Student Possession and Use of Portable Electronic Devices Including Cellular Phones within the Students series.

This policy makes a number of changes to the model cell phone policy, in light of HB 57. It provides districts several options on how to regulate cell phones in schools, and provides clarifying definitions.

The Board Policy Committee reviewed the proposed changes and recommends approval.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve the second reading of the proposed revisions to BP 5138 Student Possession and Use of Portable Electronic Devices Including Cellular Phones as presented;
2. Do not approve the second reading of the proposed revisions to BP 5138 as presented;
3. Take no final action.

ADMINISTRATION'S RECOMMENDATION:

The administration recommends the Board approve the second reading of the proposed revisions to BP 5138 Student Possession and Use of Portable Electronic Devices Including Cellular Phones as presented.

BP 5138 STUDENT POSSESSION & USE OF PORTABLE ELECTRONIC DEVICES, INCLUDING CELLULAR PHONES

The School Board recognizes that many students possess and use cell phones and other portable electronic devices. These devices serve an important purpose in facilitating communication between the student and ~~his or her~~their family, as well as serving as tools to access electronic information. In the school setting, portable electronic devices are permitted so long as their use is consistent with this policy and does not interfere with the educational process or with safety and security.

(cf. 5030 - School Discipline and Safety)

Educational Uses

In many instances, there is educational value in utilizing portable electronic devices in the classroom when such devices deliver content, and extend, enhance, and/or reinforce a student's learning process related to the student's learning style, the instructional objectives of the class and/or the learning environment. The appropriateness of in-class use of these devices consistent with the instructional objectives within instructional time will be determined by the classroom teacher with the approval ~~by of~~ the ~~building site~~ administrator.

Use of portable electronic devices for students with disabilities will be outlined in a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 plan, as determined appropriate by the IEP or 504 Team.

(cf. 6159 - Individualized Education Program)

If use of a portable electronic device is required in individual instances (not provided for in an IEP or 504 plan) to assist a student with the student's education, permission must be obtained in writing from a ~~building site~~ administrator prior to use of the portable electronic device at any time when such use would otherwise be prohibited by this policy. In case of an emergency, verbal permission by a teacher or administrator is required in situations where permission can be obtained.

Conditions of Use – Cellular Phones

Note: School boards may select one of the two options for the use of cellular phones in schools. These conditions may be modified as desired.

(Option 1): High school students (grades 9 – 12) may use cellular phones and other personal portable electronic devices before and after school, during passing periods, and during the student's lunch period. Elementary and middle school students (grades K-8) may use such devices only before and after school. Devices should be powered off and put away at all other times.

~~(Option 2): Students may use cellular phones and other personal portable electronic devices only before and after school. Such devices should be powered off and put away at all other times. The School Board shall delegate the responsibility to Advisory School Councils for determining whether students in Middle and/or High School may use cellular phones and other personal, portable electronic devices during their lunch period.~~

~~Students may possess and use portable electronic devices including, but not limited to, cell phones, smartphones, music players, tablets, laptops, etc., subject to limitations of this and other policies of the district.~~

~~Portable electronic devices~~Cellular devices shall ~~not be turned on or used in any way:~~ (1)be powered off during ~~other school sponsored~~instructional time and supervised group activities during the school day (for example, student assemblies, awards, or other public ceremonies, etc.); ~~or (2) when their use is otherwise prohibited by school., unless authorized by supervising~~ personnel.

~~(cf. 6116—Classroom Interruptions)~~

Instructional time includes the entire period of a scheduled class and other time when students are directed to report to and participate in any instructional activity. The principal site administrator may establish, and school personnel may enforce, additional guidelines limiting or prohibiting the possession and use of portable electronic devices as appropriate to campus needs. The learning environment includes all times that a student is on school grounds during the school day and when school sponsored and supervised group activities are held.

~~Note: The following optional paragraph reflects the guidelines used by the Anchorage School District to specify permitted uses based on grade level. It may be revised or deleted as appropriate.~~

No student may use a cellular phone or portable electronic device in a manner, or at a time, that interferes with or is disruptive of another student's instructional timelearning environment. The learning environment includes all times that a student is on school grounds during the school day and when school sponsored and supervised group activities are held.~~High school students may use cellular phones and other portable electronic devices before and after school and during the student's lunch period. Elementary and middle school students (grades K-8) may use such devices only before and after school. Additionally, no student may use a cellular phone or portable electronic device in a manner, or at a time, that interferes with or is disruptive of other students' instructional time.~~

(cf. 6116 - Classroom Interruptions)

During the school day and school-sponsored activities/instructional time, students will comply with this policy and with administrative and staff member directives regarding use. Students are required to turn cell phones and other portable electronic devices over to school personnel when requested. Students who refuse to do so are subject to disciplinary action.

A cellular phone or portable electronic device that has been confiscated by the District and not turned over to law enforcement will be released/returned to the parent/guardian when no longer necessary for investigation or disciplinary proceedings. As appropriate, the cellular phone or portable electronic device may be returned directly to the student.

The district-District assumes no responsibility for loss or damage to personal property of students, including cell phones and other portable electronic devices, whether in the possession of students or if confiscated by school personnel pursuant to this policy.

Prohibited Conduct

Possession of a cellular ~~tele~~phone or other portable electronic device by students is a privilege. This privilege will be forfeited by any student who fails to abide by the terms of this policy, or otherwise engages in misuse of the device so as to violate the law or any other school or District rule. In addition to those conduct rules set forth elsewhere, the following actions are strictly prohibited and may result in disciplinary action:

1. Accessing and/or viewing an Internet site that is otherwise blocked to students at school.
2. Sending an e-mail, text message or other communication that harasses, intimidates, threatens, bullies, or discriminates against another individual.
3. Taking, sending, downloading or uploading a harassing, threatening, or inappropriate photograph-photo/video of anyone.
4. Using a cell phone/smartphone or camera to take photos/videos in a restroom, dressing room, or locker room, or to take a photo/video of any person who has requested that you not do so.
5. Using a camera or other recording device to record or capture the content of tests, assessments, homework, or class work without express prior permission from the instructor.
6. Hacking or intentionally obtaining, accessing, or modifying files, passwords, or data belonging to others.

Exceptions and Permitted Use

Nothing in this policy shall be interpreted to prohibit the use of cellular phones or other electronic devices when used for medical or translation purposes, or when a teacher or administrator of the District grants permission for a student to use a cellular phone or electronic device for educational purposes.

6.

(cf. 5131 - Conduct)

(cf. 5131.4 - Campus Disturbances)

(cf. 5131.41 - Violent and Aggressive Conduct)

(cf. 5131.42 - Threats of Violence)

(cf. 5131.43 - Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying)

(cf. 5131.9 - Academic Honesty)

(cf. 5137 - Positive School Climate)

(cf. 6161.4 - Internet)

(cf. 6161.5 - Web Sites/Pages)

Searches

The contents of a cell phone/~~smartphone~~, camera, or other portable electronic device may be searched to determine ownership, to identify emergency contacts, or upon reasonable suspicion that a school or District rule or the law has been violated.

(cf. 5145.12 - Search and Seizure)

Legal Reference:

ALASKA STATUTES

14.33.300 Wireless telecommunications device policy

~~Revised: November 27, 2012~~

Adopted: November 23, 2010

Revised: November 27, 2012

Revised: