

Zionsville Community Schools

Board of School Trustees Meeting “Item for Consideration”

New Business 7b • Date: May 11, 2026

Policy Revision – First Reading – No Action

Category:

<input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources, Personnel/Staffing	<input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment	
<input type="checkbox"/> Finance, Budgeting, Accounting	<input type="checkbox"/> Student Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Board Policy
<input type="checkbox"/> Facilities, Transportation, Nutrition	<input type="checkbox"/> Community Relations	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

Type of Board of Trustees Consideration Sought:

Action	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discussion	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Report	<input type="checkbox"/>

Facts of this Matter:

Following the 2026 Indiana Legislative Session, ISBA provided school districts with guidance on updating policy to comply with SEA 78.

SEA 78 amends IC 20-26-5-40.7 to require Indiana school corporations to adopt a policy governing student use of wireless communication devices during the school day. A “school day” is defined in the law as the time a student is present on school property for instruction. The Act also amended the definition of wireless communication devices to include cell phones, tablets, laptops, gaming devices, and certain smartwatches capable of voice, messaging, or data communication. It also added a definition of a school-sanctioned wireless communication device as a student- or vendor-owned device approved for instructional use and subject to school-managed network controls, but it may not be a phone, gaming device, or smartwatch.

The Act requires school boards to adopt a policy that:

1. Prohibits student use of wireless communication devices during instructional time and throughout the school day; and allows teacher-directed instructional use only on school-supplied or school-sanctioned devices if the school does not provide devices for the next two school years (2026-2027 and 2027-2028). After June 30, 2028: school-supplied devices may only be used for teacher-directed instruction; and
2. Requires the devices to be powered off, stored, and inaccessible to the student for the school day or prohibits students from bringing such devices to school.

The law also provides mandatory exceptions. The policy may not prohibit device use when it is:

- Required by an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a Section 504 Plan
- Necessary to manage a documented medical condition with provider authorization
- Authorized by the superintendent during an emergency
- Needed for language translation for multilingual learners, prioritizing school-managed devices where available
- An audio recording device used by a student that is unobtrusive and used for personal educational notetaking if the device is designed only for spoken-word capture, does not record images or video, is visible to school staff, is available for inspection upon request, and complies with consent laws and recordings made by such devices may not be used for disciplinary or evaluative purposes against students or employees.

Schools may still regulate these devices including time and location of use, use during assessments, live streaming, and recording using wireless devices.

School boards must publish their wireless device policy on their website. School corporations and school personnel are immune from civil liability for actions taken in good faith to comply with this law, except in cases of gross negligence or intentional misconduct.

Objective POSITIVES:

Changes considered at this time will allow for adequate parent and student communication during prior to the start of the 26-27 school year.

Objective NEGATIVES:

Of note, the Indiana Department of Education has not released their model policy language and implementation guidance as they are required to do so under the law.

Financial Implications related to this item or approach:

None. Staff are not recommending the purchase of secured storage for implementation of this policy.

Suggested Wording for a Motion, if any:

No action is requested for this first reading. The Board of School Trustees annually reviews and carefully considers matters related to changes in legislation that impact the corporation. The board's suggestions and revisions will be included in the June meeting for final approval.