

SESSION OF 2026

**SUPPLEMENTAL NOTE ON SENATE SUBSTITUTE FOR
SUB. FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 2299**

As Recommended by Senate Committee on
Education

Brief*

Senate Sub. for Sub. for HB 2299 would require each school district and accredited nonpublic school, as defined in the bill, to adopt policies and procedures regarding the use of personal electronic communication devices (personal devices) and social media platforms. The bill would also provide indemnity for lost or damaged devices, exempt virtual schools, and add language regarding nonpublic school accreditation and the rights of certain accredited nonpublic schools.

Cell Phone Policies (New Section 2)

Required Policy

The bill would require all school districts and accredited nonpublic schools, defined as a nonpublic school accredited by the State Board of Education (State Board), to adopt policies and procedures regarding student use of personal devices during the school day, including:

- Prohibiting student access and use of personal devices during the school day;
- Requiring all personal devices be turned off and securely stored in a location that is:
 - Not on the student's person; and

*Supplemental notes are prepared by the Legislative Research Department and do not express legislative intent. The supplemental note and fiscal note for this bill may be accessed on the Internet at <https://klrd.gov/>

- Inaccessible;
- Authorizing students to not bring personal devices to school by leaving the devices at home or in a vehicle, even if such vehicle is on school grounds;
- Setting enforcement procedures and disciplinary actions for violations of the policies;
- Authorizing students to use personal devices during the school day if such use is:
 - Required to implement a student's individualized education plan (IEP) or 504 plan or approved by a licensed physician as a medical necessity to support the health or well-being of the student; and
 - The intervention of last resort after determining there is no other reasonable alternative option available for such student; and
- Designating and making available a school telephone or other communication device that a student is allowed to use to contact a parent or person acting as parent.

Optional Policy

The bill would also permit school districts and accredited nonpublic schools to adopt policies and procedures to limit or prohibit student use of personal devices during school-sponsored events or events occurring outside of the school day.

Exemptions

The bill would exempt any time associated with a student's travel to or from a learning experience not located on the school premises from both the required and optional

policies and procedures discussed previously. Such learning experiences would include:

- Any postsecondary educational course;
- Career Technical Education (CTE) course;
- Work-based learning program; or
- Other alternative educational opportunity.

Definitions

The bill would define:

- “Accredited nonpublic elementary or secondary school” to mean a nonpublic elementary or secondary school that is accredited by the State Board. “Accredited nonpublic elementary or secondary school” would include any nonpublic elementary or secondary school that is dually accredited by the State Board and an accrediting entity other than the State Board;
- “Personal electronic communication device” to mean any wireless electronic communication device that:
 - Provides for voice, text, or video communication between two or more parties, including, but not limited to, a mobile or cellular phone, tablet, computer, watch, wireless headphones or earbuds, text messaging device, or personal digital assistant; and
 - Is not owned or issued to students by the school district or accredited nonpublic elementary and secondary school; and

- “School Day” to mean the time from the start of school until dismissal at the end of the day on the school premises, including, but not limited to, in any classroom, structured or unstructured learning setting, recess, lunch, or passing period.

Social Media Policies (New Section 3)

Required Policy

The bill would require all school districts and accredited nonpublic schools to adopt policies and procedures to prohibit:

- School employees from privately or directly communicating with any students via social media platforms; and
- Requiring the use of social media for any assignment or extracurricular activity.

The bill would allow school districts and accredited nonpublic schools to approve a social media platform to be used for official school purposes, which would be defined:

- To mean the broadcasting or posting of public, one-way communications that pertain to school functions, activities, or events; and
- To exclude private communications, direct communications, or two-way communications with any student.

Definition of Social Media

The bill would define the term “social media platform” to mean an online website or application that permits a person to become a registered user and create an account or profile for the primary purpose of creating, sharing, or interacting

with user-generated content that it is publicly viewable by users. Such term would include, but not be limited to, Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook, X, and TikTok.

The bill would also state that the term “social media platform” does not include:

- Any online website or application whose primary purpose is educational;
- Any platform approved by the board of education or governing authority of an accredited nonpublic school that:
 - Is owned, licensed, or contractually controlled by the school district or nonpublic school;
 - Allows for required user accounts;
 - Allows communications to be monitored, archived, retained, or audited in compliance with policy or law;
 - Is accessible to parents or guardians; and
 - Is used by employees in accordance with policy;
- Email;
- Direct messaging services that only share messages between a sender and named recipient and does not display or post messages publicly or to users not identified as recipients by the sender of the message; and
- Any online product or service that does not have school-specific features or identifiers and the predominant purpose is to post educational materials, news, or resources, and user comments or other interactive functionality is incidental to such predominant purpose.

Certification Requirement (New Section 4)

The bill would require the governing body of each school district and accredited nonpublic school to submit certification to the State Board on or before September 1, 2026, that they have adopted the policies and procedures required by the bill. The certification would be submitted in a form and manner prescribed by the State Board.

Indemnity Provision (New Section 5)

The bill would state that no school district, accredited nonpublic school, or employees or agents thereof would be liable for any damage to or storage of personal electronic devices brought to school.

Virtual Schools (New Section 6)

The bill would state that none of the policies and procedures required by the bill would apply to any virtual school as defined by law.

Accredited Nonpublic Schools (New Section 1 and Sections 7–8)

General Definition (New Section 1)

The bill would state that whenever the terms “accredited nonpublic school,” “accredited nonpublic elementary or secondary school,” “accredited nonpublic high school,” “accredited private schools,” or words of like effect are referred to or designated by statute in Chapter 72 of the *Kansas Statutes Annotated*, and amendments thereto, those references or designations would mean a nonpublic school accredited by the State Board unless otherwise indicated in such statute.

School District Accreditation System (Section 7)

The bill would amend statute regarding the school district accreditation system to state that:

- Accreditation by the State Board is voluntary for nonpublic schools operating in Kansas;
- Nonpublic schools accredited by the State Board may also be accredited by a regional or national accrediting agency; and
- Nonpublic schools accredited by a regional or national accrediting agency are to be entitled to the same rights as nonpublic schools accredited by the State Board.

Kansas State High School Activities Association (Section 8)

The bill would amend statute regarding the Kansas State High School Activities Association (KSHSAA) to require the organization to recognize and accept nonpublic schools that are accredited by a regional or national accrediting agency.

Background

The Senate Committee on Education recommended a substitute bill incorporating provisions pertaining to the prohibition of electronic communication devices in K-12 schools (amended provisions of SB 302). The original provisions were removed from the bill.

Sub. for HB 2299, as recommended by the Senate Committee of the Whole, would have declared antisemitism and antisemitic acts to be against public policy and establish a statutory definition of such terms. [*Note:* Similar provisions were included in 2025 SB 44, which has passed the Legislature.]

SB 302

The bill was introduced by Senator Blasi, Senator Sykes, and 26 other Senators.

Senate Committee on Education

In the Senate Committee hearing on January 15, 2026, **proponent** testimony was provided by representatives of Alliance for a Healthy Kansas, ExcelinEd in Action, Kansas Action for Children, Kids Digital Health Hub, KS Coalition for Distraction Free Schools, Screen Guardians, Smartphone Free Childhood US, and five private citizens, one of whom self-identified as a current member of a local board of education. The proponents generally stated that the bill would help protect student mental health and increase academic performance by restricting student access to cell phones during school. Proponents cited a variety of studies that connected cell phones to increased negative social behavior such as cyberbullying or negative cognitive abilities such as decreased attention span and loss of concentration.

Written-only proponent testimony was provided by representatives of Aligned, Johnson County Mental Health Center, Kids Digital Health Hub, Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, Screen Guardians, USD 270 (Plainville), and 13 private citizens.

Neutral testimony was provided by representatives of the Kansas National Education Association, Kansas State Board of Education, Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE), and United School Administrators. The conferees generally stated support for the policy but expressed concern with a broad, one-size-fits-all policy and with various terms utilized in the bill. Conferees also noted vague terms in the social media prohibition that could include learning management systems currently utilized by school districts.

Written-only neutral testimony was provided by a representative of USD 259 (Wichita).

Opponent testimony was provided by representatives of the Kansas Association of School Boards, Kansas PTA, and two private citizens, one of whom self-identified as both a former legislator and former member of the Kansas State Board of Education. The opponents generally stated that most school districts in the state currently have personal device policies and that the bill would override the local control of school boards to craft policies that meet the needs of their communities.

Written-only opponent testimony was provided by representatives of USD 229 (Blue Valley), USD 233 (Olathe), USD 327 (Ellsworth), USD 377 (Atchison County), USD 497 (Lawrence), USD 512 (Shawnee Mission), and 31 private citizens.

The Senate Committee amended the bill to:

- Include a definition of “accredited nonpublic elementary or secondary school” for purposes of the bill;
- Establish a general definition of “accredited nonpublic elementary or secondary school” and like terms in Chapter 72 of the *Kansas Statutes Annotated*;
- Add language regarding the accreditation of nonpublic schools in statute regarding the school district accreditation process;
- Add language requiring the recognition and acceptance of nonpublic schools accredited by a national or regional accreditation agency by KSHSAA;

- Change the term “instructional time” to “school day” and provide for a definition thereof;
- Add clarification that the use of a personal device in service of an IEP or 504 plan must be an intervention of last resort;
- Establish certain exemptions to personal device limitation or prohibition policies adopted by a school district or accredited nonpublic school;
- Prohibit a school district or accredited nonpublic school from requiring the use of social media for an assignment or extracurricular activity;
- Amend the definition of “social media platform” and include items expressly not considered part of the term; and
- Add an indemnity clause that school districts, accredited nonpublic schools, and employees and agents of such organizations would not be liable for any damage to or storage of personal devices brought to school.

Fiscal Information

According to the fiscal note prepared by the Division of the Budget (DOB) on SB 302, as introduced, KSDE indicates that the bill would have no fiscal effect on state aid to school districts or the agency’s administrative costs.

The agency also indicates that there could be a cost for school districts to implement the bill, but that it cannot estimate a cost.

DOB notes that, for illustrative purposes only, one option could be to utilize fabric pouches made to hold cell phones and require a special device to unlock the pouch. DOB states these pouches cost approximately \$30 per student for the

pouch, including training and support, and that issuing one to each student, using the Fall 2025 Education Consensus of 446,000 weighted FTE enrollment, would cost approximately \$13.4 million.

DOB further notes that district cost would vary as the bill does not prescribe specific methods of ensuring students do not have access to or use of personal devices and that any additional costs incurred would be funding within a district's general fund budget.

Education; K-12 schools; public schools; cell phones; electronic communication devices; prohibition; accredited nonpublic schools; accreditation