



ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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Senate Bill 18

Cell Phone Policies in Schools

Sponsor Statement

Senate Bill 18 seeks to improve the learning environment of Alaskan schools by asking each school district to create policies that prohibit the use of telecommunications devices, specifically cell phones, during school hours. Cell phone use in schools is a major source of distraction, hindering academic focus, and negatively impacting student mental health. As more students have access to personal telecommunications devices, it is evident that there is an impact on students' ability to maintain attention and engagement in classrooms. A growing body of research has shown that the usage of mobile devices in school-aged children may be associated with depression, anxiety, and behavioral problems.

It has become easy for students to check their cell phones repetitively while at school, and without a set policy on cell phone use, it can be difficult for teachers to monitor in their classrooms. This bill aims to give school districts the ability to curate a cell phone policy that works for their community.

This bill also asks the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development to create a model policy for school districts to refer to when creating their own policies.

As of October 2024, at least twenty-nine states have introduced legislation regarding cell phone use in schools, and at least eighteen of those states have introduced legislation requiring districts to adopt local policies on cellphone use. Across the nation, eight states have passed legislation restricting phone use in schools.

Prohibiting cell phone use in schools will foster educational spaces for students to be engaged and focused as well as contributing to healthier habits and social interactions. By having each district craft their own cell phone policy, we allow communities to consider this issue and address it in the way that best fits their students, teachers, and communities. These cell phone policies will create a better educational environment for all students in Alaska.