

2025 SENATE EDUCATION

SB 2300

2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Education Committee
Room JW216, State Capitol

SB 2300
1/29/2025

Relating to the mandatory secure storage of a student's personal electronic device during the school day; and to provide an appropriation.

10:00 a.m. Chairman Beard called the hearing to order.

Members Present: Chairman Beard; Vice-Chairman Lemm; Senators: Axtman, Boschee, Gerhardt, and Wobbema.

Discussion Topics:

- Social media organizations addicting
- Phone policy implementation

10:00 a.m. Senator Wobbema, District 24, testified in favor and submitted testimony #32547.

10:30 a.m. KrisAnn Norby-Jahner, In House Legal Counsel ND School Boards Association, testified in opposition and submitted testimony #32264.

10:38 a.m. Dr. Aimee Copas, Executive Director ND Council of Educational Leaders, testified in opposition and submitted testimony #32443.

Additional written testimony:

Erin Price submitted testimony #32121 in opposition.

Faye Seidler, Suicide Prevention Advocate, submitted testimony #32374 in opposition.

10:42 a.m. Chairman Beard closed the hearing.

Susan Helbling, Committee Clerk

I am writing to **strongly oppose SB 2300** which would mandate the secure storage of students' personal electronic devices during the school day. As a local educator of nearly twenty years, and even more importantly, a concerned parent of an elementary school student here in Bismarck, I believe this bill puts our children at unnecessary risk, and I urge you to vote **DO NOT PASS**.

While I understand the intent of this bill may be to reduce distractions and maintain order in the classroom, there are far more pressing safety concerns that make access to personal electronic devices, particularly cell phones, a critical tool in the event of emergencies.

As we have seen in recent years, the tragic rise of school shootings and other emergencies necessitates immediate communication between students, parents, and law enforcement. In these situations, a student's ability to call for help or contact a loved one is invaluable and could be lifesaving. It is crucial that students have their phones on hand during the school day to ensure they can access assistance quickly if they find themselves in a dangerous or emergency situation.

In addition to safety concerns, limiting students' access to their phones may cause unnecessary anxiety. Parents rely on their children's ability to reach them at a moment's notice, especially given the unpredictable nature of the world we live in today. Our children should not have to face the added stress of wondering whether they will be able to communicate with their parents or receive important information in an emergency.

I recognize the need to create policies that promote a positive learning environment and minimize distractions. However, this bill fails to address the far more significant issue of student safety. Instead of mandating that electronic devices be stored away, I urge you to explore policies that balance both the need for security and the right of students to have access to their phones during the school day.

Please, do not pass SB 2300. The safety of our children must be the top priority, and in today's world, that includes ensuring they have the tools they need to stay connected in times of crisis.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Erin Price
Bismarck, ND



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SB 2300

**Testimony of KrisAn Norby-Jahner
Senate Education
January 29, 2025**

Chair Beard and members of the Senate Education Committee, for the record my name is KrisAnn Norby-Jahner. I am in-house legal counsel for the North Dakota School Boards Association. The NDSBA represents all 168 North Dakota public school districts and their boards. I am here today in opposition of SB 2300.

The NDSBA is supportive of keeping students focused during instructional time and free from distraction by *anyone* in a classroom is using a personal electronic device for a non-educational or other improper use. However, this Bill does not acknowledge or recognize acceptable exceptions that must be made in accordance with federal law when students with disabilities need access to electronic devices. Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), some students have specific Individual Education Programs (IEPs) that allow for or require the use of electronic devices in order to provide specific supports during special education instructional time. School district personnel must legally comply with IEPs drafted in accordance with federal law. Likewise, under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and under the Americans with Disabilities Act, some students have 504 plans, Behavior Intervention Plans, or medical plans that outline certain circumstances under which electronic device use or access in the school building (both during instructional and non-instructional time) has to be allowed under federal law. The bill does provide an exception for “medical reasons,” but does not provide an exception under other disability and special education laws or other emergencies that might arise.

Even outside of special education and disability law, there are some teachers who allow and even require electronic devices and related technology use during instructional time as part of assignments, such as those in English class that require videography and related editing. Smaller school districts, in particular, do not always have the same resources or ability to provide district-issued electronic devices, and they may need to rely on students being able to use personal electronic devices for educational purposes. There are variety of useful, valuable, and education-focused reasons to allow students to use personal electronic devices during

the school day. This bill does not recognize, provide exception, or all for school districts to maintain local control over those specific uses.

SB 2300 is too restrictive, overbroad, and unnecessary. Electronic device use is already appropriately handled under school district policies and codes of conduct at the local level in each school district according to the needs of the students in the particular district. Policy development at the local level allows school districts to meet the individuals needs of their students and of their community. Local control allows school boards and administration to survey parents and determine the direction each school district wants to take in handling electronic devices in the school building. SB 2300 takes all local control away from individual school districts and places a heavy burden on schools to “police,” confiscate, store, and keep safe electronic devices that are not school district property, but rather are individual property. The NDSBA has worked directly with the sponsors of [HB 1160](#), which now includes amendments that would maintain local control and require school boards to adopt a policy governing the use of electronic devices during instructional and noninstructional time, with appropriate exceptions outlined in compliance with the law. We would support HB 1160 over SB 2300.

Based on the foregoing reasons, NDSBA asks this Committee to issue a **do not pass** recommendation on SB 2300. Thank you for your time.

Senate Education Committee
Jan 28th, 2025 HB 2300
Testimony in Opposition

Dear Chair Beard and the members of the Senate Education Committee,

I urge a "Do Not Pass" on HB 2300

Key Point - I believe [SB 2354](#) is a much better direction for cell phone policies, which allows much more local control. But regardless, I protest that our legislative body is not the appropriate place to solve this problem.

General Testimony - I understand the frustration that we hear about within the state as it relates to cell phone use within the classroom. I have been following the research on it for the last few years, and if asked, I would say that a cell phone ban would ultimately do more good than it would harm.

Phones by themselves can open youth up to bullying, developing unhealthy parasocial relationships, or a dependency on the device. Not strictly the phones, but there is very clear research indicating the psychological harm of certain apps in perpetuating unrealistic body standards for young girls who struggle already with mental health and anxiety.

One could very easily google this topic to become convinced the answer is to remove the device entirely and immediately. Yet, when I said these bans would do more good than it would harm, what I want to focus on is the word harm.

Students who don't right now have any other access to support, who use their devices to dissociate or cope because they struggle with high levels of trauma or suicidality. There are many students who won't suddenly become attentive because their phone is gone, but instead disruptive.

I don't have the answers, but I don't think anyone does right now. I would strongly caution taking phones away without clear plans to replace the emotional support they do provide to some students. I would prefer this was a local issue, even if it was mandatory for each school board to create a policy around this. I would also prefer we did a study into it first.

My work is suicide prevention, so I think about the kids who struggle with that more than anything. And when I think about the complaints we have around phones, I very often see it as generational tension and anxiety that projects the modern problems our youth face through the culprit of new technology.

We do need to figure this modern challenge out in a way to maximize the benefits and reduce the consequences of phone use, but I don't think a blanket ban achieves this.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and service to our state,
Faye Seidler - Fayeseidler@gmail.com



NDCEL Testimony in Opposition to Senate Bill 2300

Chairman Beard and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. On behalf of the North Dakota Council of Educational Leaders (NDCEL), I am here to express our opposition to Senate Bill 2300, which mandates the secure storage of student personal electronic devices during the school day.

Local Control and Flexibility

This bill removes decision-making authority from local school boards and administrators who are best positioned to establish policies that reflect the unique needs of their schools and communities. Each school district in North Dakota serves a different student population, and what works in one district may not be appropriate in another. Local boards and school leaders should retain the authority to develop reasonable and enforceable policies for managing personal electronic devices, rather than being subject to a statewide mandate. The districts that have implemented good policy have had great results. HB 1600 is a better bill to provide guidance with local control.

Practical and Logistical Challenges

SB 2300 presents significant logistical challenges for schools.

- **Implementation Burden:** Schools will be responsible for distributing, managing, and ensuring the security of storage containers for thousands of devices daily. This adds an administrative burden and diverts time and resources from educational priorities.
- **Storage Concerns:** The bill does not specify how schools are expected to safely store and track devices throughout the day. If students are required to keep secure containers on their person, the issue of distraction is not truly resolved.
- **Classroom Integration:** Many schools utilize devices for educational purposes. Locking up student technology may hinder access to valuable learning resources and instructional tools.

Financial Concerns and Questionable Use of Funds

This bill proposes a \$1.89 million appropriation for secure storage. Given the financial demands on North Dakota's education system, these funds could be better utilized to support direct student learning, teacher retention, or school security enhancements that address broader safety concerns. Mandating and funding storage containers for devices that schools may already have effective policies for managing is not a prudent investment.

Existing Policies Are Working

Many North Dakota schools already have established and effective policies for managing personal electronic devices in classrooms. These policies, developed in collaboration with school



1 leaders, teachers, parents, and students, strike a balance between minimizing distractions and
2 allowing reasonable access when necessary. A statewide mandate undermines these efforts and
3 removes local discretion.

4 **Conclusion**

5 We urge the committee to reject Senate Bill 2300 and instead trust North Dakota's school leaders
6 to continue making informed, community-based decisions about personal electronic devices.
7 Schools need flexibility to create policies that work best for their students, rather than a one-size-
8 fits-all mandate that introduces logistical challenges, unnecessary costs, and potential safety
9 concerns. Again HB1600 is a good bill and should be passed.kj



North Dakota Senate

STATE CAPITOL
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Senator Mike Wobbema

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COMMITTEES:

Education
Workforce Development (Chair)

29 January 2025

Chairman Beard and members of the Senate Education Committee. For the record, I am Senator Mike Wobbema, District 24.

This past summer and fall, I attended conferences that spoke to the issue of students having access to personal electronic devices in school. It was a topic of special emphasis, expressing the level of concern, and desire for solutions. The results of reducing, or eliminating, the use of those devices in schools has shown positive and promising results.

Social media organizations have admitted that their products are intended to be addicting. Data shows that the average American teen spends nearly 5 hours a day on social media, usually on their phones, often in schools. Spending three or more hours a day on social media doubles kids' risk of mental health problems. Since smartphones became widespread, suicide rates have tripled among teens, self-harm among girls has gone up nearly 200%, and depression among teenagers has increased 150%.(1) Further, school leaders have also told us that there is a need for more mental health services.(2) A shortage of mental health professionals makes addressing this trend even more difficult. School halls are quiet as students shuffle from one class to another with their eyes glued to a screen. To quote US Surgeon General, Vevek Murthy; "We are in the middle of a national youth mental health crisis, and I am concerned that social media is an important driver of that crisis -- one that we must urgently address." From School Climate & Safety; "Digital distractions in class linked to lower academic performance." From NEA News; "The Epidemic of Anxiety Among Today's Students: By high school and college, many students have run out of steam. Anxiety -- the mental-health tsunami of their generation -- has caught up with them. And from an article by Sarah P. Weeldreyer; "Social media and smartphones have tipped an entire generation into anxiety and depression. Is there anything to be done?"

But there are success stories out there. At these conferences, story after story told of significant improvement of student engagement when personal electronic devices were secured. Mental health issues reduced, personal interaction increased and improved, participation in class improved, there was an increase in engagement in school activities such as clubs and sports, academic progress improved, and the general mood in the whole school was noticeably more positive. Just yesterday, I spoke with the Superintendent of the Valley City Public School system. They have implemented a no phone policy, and the results have been very promising. Even the students have come to him expressing their appreciation for implementing their program. But we must do more.

Addiction by its very nature requires intervention of some sort. An addict isn't capable of self-control in eliminating or reducing their need for a fix. For some students, merely saying that they must turn off their personal electronic devices or leave them in their locker won't be the necessary step to gain compliance. They can't help it... By taking the steps outlined in SB 2300, we set the stage for our students' success in improving so many aspects of their lives that cause us concern and are the subject of discussion in these halls. This is a Bill about our students. Their mental health, their academic success, their ability to positively interact with each other and society, along with other concerns we frequently strive to address in the halls of the State Legislature.

By enacting the requirements of this piece of legislation, we are setting the stage for improving personal responsibility as the student retains their own personal electronic devices in a secure inaccessible container. We take the burden of control of these valuable assets out of the hands of a teacher or school administration, thereby reducing stress on both ends. Other concerns such as security and access between parent and child are diversions from the real issue. Having access to personal electronic devices is not a necessity and presents the probability of being a hindrance in either of these cases. This Bill is not intended to restrict legitimate necessary access during the school day for those students who may need unique consideration. On the other hand Is it perfect? Probably not. In that light, I offer an amendment to fix some errors of omission that have been brought to my attention. Sometimes we must make hard decisions here. I strongly believe this is one of those times. SB 2300 does that.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. I will stand for any questions.

1: Letter from Governor of Arkansas, Sarah Huckabee Sanders to Arkansas Superintendents

2: Ibid

Offered Amendment to SB2300:

P1.L12-13 -- Change to: 2. The superintendent of public instruction shall provide a school with a secure container that permits the student to retain possession of their personal electronic device for the duration of the schoolday.

P1.L18 -- Consider striking 4. Completely -- or change "may" to "shall"

P1.L19 -- Change "may" to "shall"

P1.L21 -- Change "may" to "shall"

P2.L3 -- Insert: 7. (Or change 6. to add "a.", "b.", etc... and reword accordingly) A school principal shall permit a student to access their personal electronic device as necessary and according to a student's individualized education program or plan developed under section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 [29 U.S.C.794], or other relevant federal law.

PHONE-FREE EDUCATION ACROSS THE NATION

AMERICA'S SCHOOLS ARE GOING PHONE-FREE

The push to create a phone-free education for students in grades K-12 is accelerating nationwide, with states rolling out laws and funding to address mental health concerns, safety, and the need to boost overall academic performance.

For over 10 years, Yondr has been instrumental in creating phone-free schools. We have partnered with educators in all 50 states and in more than 35 countries. Millions of students use Yondr every day.

School partners that implement the Yondr Program as recommended report dramatic improvements in student behavior and well-being.

“

“We saw drastic changes in engagement levels. Student disengagement dropped from 20% to around 8%.”

— James Villa,
Principal,
La Vega High School,
Texas

“Yondr pouches were one small step that has led to big changes in the climate and culture of our schools.”

— Mit Foley,
Assistant Superintendent,
Saginaw Public Schools,
Michigan

“I feel like I have a chance as a teacher now. Before, it was like, it doesn't really matter what I do, they're not listening or watching.”

— Laura Leonard,
Teacher,
Glenclyff Public Schools,
Tennessee

”

RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION

Yondr partners commit to an all day phone-free practice model. Our unique, lockable pouch means that students keep their phones on their person, but cannot access it for the full school day. Teachers no longer have to be the phone police, and students get a much needed 6-8 hour break from digital distractions.

MILLIONS OF STUDENTS USE YONDR EVERY DAY
VISIT [EVERYONDR.COM/PHONE-FREE-SCHOOLS](https://everyondr.com/phone-free-schools) TO LEARN MORE

WITH YONDR, IT'S MORE THAN JUST A POUCH

All Yondr partners receive a proven program, patented products, and best-in-class support. All of these components work together to support you in creating a phone-free school or district for students.



PHONE-FREE EQUIPMENT

These tools will help your students avoid distractions and stay engaged during class.

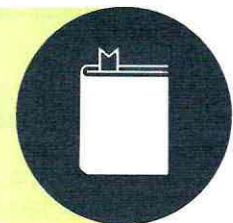
- Student Pouches
- Medical Pouches
- Unlocking Bases
- Handheld Magnets
- Storage Equipment
- Magnet Lockbox



TRAINING & SUPPORT

Regular meetings throughout the year with your Yondr Team ensure program success.

- Pre-Implementation Planning
- Pre-Launch Check-In
- Post-Launch Check-In
- Mid-Year Success Check-In
- End-of-Year Review and Planning



CURRICULUM RESOURCES

The Yondr Program includes additional resources teachers and parents can use to continue building healthy digital habits with students.

- Customizable Presentations, Videos, and Handouts
- Lesson Plans
- Phone-Free Activity Guides



PHONE-FREE FOCUS, PROVEN RESULTS

15% Increase in the probability of passing grades.

44% Decrease in average monthly behavioral referrals.

*Independent Study Results

84%

Saw a positive change in student engagement.

72%

Saw a positive change in student behavior.

68%

Saw a positive change in academic performance.

MILLIONS OF STUDENTS USE YONDR EVERY DAY
VISIT [EVERYONDR.COM/PHONE-FREE-SCHOOLS](https://everyondr.com/phone-free-schools) TO LEARN MORE

2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Education Committee
Room JW216, State Capitol

SB 2300
1/29/2025

Relating to the mandatory secure storage of a student's personal electronic device during the school day; and to provide an appropriation.
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2:53 p.m. Chairman Beard called the hearing to order.

Members Present: Chairman Beard; Vice-Chairman Lemm; Senators: Axtman, Boschee, Gerhardt, and Wobbema.

Discussion Topics:

- Secure storage containers

2:53 p.m. Senator Wobbema showed an example of the electronic storage container for the committee to see.

2:57 p.m. Chairman Beard closed the hearing.

Susan Helbling, Committee Clerk

2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Education Committee
Room JW216, State Capitol

SB 2300
2/5/2025

Relating to the mandatory secure storage of a student's personal electronic device during the school day; and to provide an appropriation.
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3:03 p.m. Chairman Beard called the hearing to order.

Members Present: Chairman Beard; Vice-Chairman Lemm; Senators: Axtman, Boschee, Gerhardt, and Wobbema.

Discussion Topics:

- Storage containers
- Local control

3:03 p.m. Committee discussion regarding combining with another bill.

3:15 p.m. Chairman Beard closed the hearing.

Susan Helbling, Committee Clerk

2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Education Committee Room JW216, State Capitol

SB 2300
2/10/2025

Relating to the mandatory secure storage of a student's personal electronic device during the school day; and to provide an appropriation.

3:52 p.m. Chairman Beard called the hearing to order.

Members Present: Chairman Beard; Vice-Chairman Lemm; Senators: Axtman, Boschee, Gerhardt, and Wobbema.

Discussion Topics:

- Committee Action

3:52 p.m. Senator Wobbema moved a Do Not Pass.

3:52 p.m. Senator Lemm seconded the motion.

Senators	Vote
Senator Todd Beard	Y
Senator Randy D. Lemm	Y
Senator Michelle Axtman	Y
Senator Josh Boschee	Y
Senator Justin Gerhardt	Y
Senator Mike Wobbema	Y

Motion Passed 6-0-0

Senator Wobbema will carry the bill.

3:54 p.m. Chairman Beard closed the hearing.

Susan Helbling, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE
SB 2300 ([25.0850.03000](#))

Education Committee (Sen. Beard, Chairman) recommends **DO NOT PASS** (6 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2300 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar. This bill does not affect workforce development.