

BOARD AGENDA ITEM

November 19, 2024

SUBJECT:

Policy JICJ Paging Devices, Cell Phones, and Other Personal Electronic Devices, First Reading

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Recently, South Carolina Budget Proviso 1.103 was approved, which prohibits student access to personal electronic communication devices during the school day. The proviso defines a personal electronic communication device as a device not authorized for classroom use by a student, utilized to access the Internet, wi-fi, or cellular telephone signals. The Proviso requires the School Board to establish a policy which is consistent with the Policy issued by the State Board of Education regarding this requirement.

ADMINISTRATIVE CONSIDERATION:

Administration has collaborated with school principals on the draft Policy JICJ Paging Devices, Cell Phones, and Other Personal Electronic Devices, which includes the requirements of Proviso 1.103.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Approve Policy JICJ Paging Devices, Cell Phones, and Other Personal Electronic Devices, First Reading

ATTACHMENT:

Policy JICJ Paging Devices, Cell Phones, and Other Personal Electronic Devices, First Reading

PREPARED BY:

Dr. Salvatore Minolfo

PAGING DEVICES, CELL PHONES, AND OTHER PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Code JICJ Issued **7/22/24**

~~Purpose: To establish the basic structure for any possession/use by students of paging devices, cell phones, and other personal electronic devices, including smartwatches and tablets, in school.~~

~~Consistent with South Carolina Budget Proviso 1.103, the Board prohibits access to personal electronic communication devices by students during the school day. The proviso defines a personal electronic communication device as a device not authorized for classroom use by a student, utilized to access the Internet, wi-fi, or cellular telephone signals. The administration shall establish an administrative rule which is consistent with the Policy issued by the State Board of Education regarding this requirement.~~

Definitions for Purposes of this Policy

~~• A *paging device* is defined in South Carolina law as a telecommunications device, to include a mobile telephone (cell phone) that emits an audible signal, vibrates, displays a message, or otherwise summons or delivers a communication to the possessor.~~

~~• A *cell phone*, while included in the general definition of a paging device, also includes any digital or analog portable communication device or multi-function device that has two-way communication capability (whether aural, visual or a combination thereof) and operates through a cellular telecommunication system, a global satellite system or an AM or FM two-way radio system.~~

~~• A *personal electronic device* includes any digital or analog portable electronic device that can capture, store, or transfer visual images such as a iPhone (or similar smart phone), laptop computer, tablet, iPads (with or without wireless (WiFi) or cellular interface capability), and digital (or film-type) camera, but does not include a calculator or device utilized strictly for computational purposes.~~

~~A *violation* is the activation on school grounds during the school day of any paging device, cell phone, tablet, iPad, or any other personal electronic device, including smartwatches, except as authorized by this policy.~~

- ~~• “Personal electronic device,” hereinafter referred to as “device,” means any device utilized to access the internet, wi-fi, cellular telephone signals, or to capture images or video. This includes, but is not limited to, cell phones, smart watches, tablets, and gaming devices.~~
- ~~• “Personal Electronic Device accessories,” hereinafter referred to as “device accessories,” include any wired or wireless accessory or wearable technology that connects to a device and any other accessory commonly used in conjunction with a personal electronic device.~~
- ~~• “School day” is defined as the period of time that a student is present on the school campus from the beginning of the instructional day until afternoon dismissal at the end of the instructional day.~~
- ~~• “Access” is defined as viewing, holding, wearing, or otherwise using a~~

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device for the purpose of communication, internet access, gaming, recording, or any other function commonly associated with devices. During the school day, devices should be powered off and stored as directed by the school district. Exceptions granted for medical necessity, authorized for classroom use, or other authorized reasons should be in writing and are not considered violations of this definition.

- “Authorized for Classroom Use” is defined as the use of a personal electronic device that is explicitly approved by the District Superintendent or his/her designee in writing. This approval must include alignment with a standards-aligned educational objective that cannot be reasonably achieved using district-owned devices. Students must be provided with clear instructions on the appropriate use of devices and ensure that their use aligns with the approved educational objectives. The District Superintendent or his/her designee may revoke approval at any time if it is determined that their use does not meet the intended educational objectives or is causing disruption.

The Aiken County Board of Education allows possession (but not access or use) of personal ~~telecommunications~~ electronic devices by students during the school day. ~~in order to reflect societal trends and a relaxation in state law. However, the~~ ~~The board~~ Board of education finds that the access, activation and/or use of personal communication devices by students during the school day, as facilitated by, but in violation of the possession-only policy, has an adverse effect on classroom instruction, student punctuality, test security, personal student privacy, the ability of school officials to maintain discipline generally, and maintaining order during times of emergency. Therefore, this policy is intended to set forth the specific circumstances under which a student may bring and personally possess a paging device, cell phone, and/or other electronic communications device onto school grounds and to establish clearly the consequences for violations.

Although Mmiddle and high school students may possess a ~~paging device, cell phone, tablet, iPad, or other electronic communications device, including smartwatches~~ personal electronic device, on school grounds, ~~provided that~~ such device is not ~~should not be~~ activated and/or utilized for any function unless specifically authorized as part of an instructional directive by a teacher or other classroom supervisor. The administration and teachers at school sites will direct any use of ~~cell phones, tablets, or iPads~~ personal electronic devices for academic purposes in classrooms or around the school. In all cases, unless school-specific rules apply, the above specified devices should be turned off and placed out of sight and not on the student's person (for example, in a pocket) ~~during class time~~ the instructional day. This rule applies during the school day hours and at off-campus activities during the school day ~~hours.~~

~~High schools may establish zones where open cell phone use for other than academic reasons is appropriate and permitted in areas such as common areas and cafeterias, excluding hallways.~~

Devices may be activated during school bus rides to and from school unless specifically prohibited by the driver for safety reasons such as excessive noise or disruption.

Elementary school students may not bring a ~~paging device, cell phone, or other electronic device~~ personal electronic devices, including smartwatches, to school unless part of an instructional

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directive or under a “bring your own device” type program. (A principal may approve an occasional exception to this general prohibition by prior written permission.)

Cell phones or paging devices are permitted at school events during non-school hours.

~~A first unauthorized activation with no related infraction will result in a device otherwise permitted under this policy being taken by the school administrator for the remainder of the day and a warning being issued. The student must sign a “Condition for Return” acknowledgement and agreement before being able to bring the cell phone, pager, or electronic device back on the school campus.~~

~~A second unauthorized activation with no related infraction will result in a loss of the privilege for 10 school days and further warning.~~

~~A third unauthorized activation with no related infraction will result in loss of the privilege for the remainder of the school year, and at least one day of suspension [in school (ISS) or out of school (OSS)].~~

~~Should any unauthorized activation also involve other violations of the code of student conduct (such as cheating, invasions of personal privacy, videoing a fight, etc.), more serious disciplinary consequences may be imposed as appropriate to the gravity of the violation (up to an expulsion recommendation for serious associated violations), but in no event with less than a minimum of three days OSS.~~

~~A student needing a device or cell phone for a documented temporary or permanent medical need or accommodation or for volunteer service on a fire or emergency services team (for 18 year old students or younger students who are interns in such programs and demonstrate that possession of such device is necessary to fulfilling his/her program requirements) may be exempted from the prohibition of this policy as approved in writing by the principal.~~

Policy Implementation and Enforcement

During the school day, students are prohibited from accessing their personal electronic devices, unless authorized for classroom use. Students may not wear or access device accessories during the school day. Students must store their devices and device accessories in lockers, backpacks, or otherwise as directed by the school district during the school day.

If explicitly required by a student’s IEP, Medical Plan, or 504 plan, the student shall be allowed to access an personal electronic device for medically or educationally necessary purposes described and required for administration of the IEP, Medical Plan, or 504 Plan.

A student who is a member of a volunteer firefighting organization or emergency organization may be authorized to carry a device with written permission from the District Superintendent or his/her designee.

If a student violates the preceding rules during the school day, the student will be subject to progressive consequences in the student code of conduct and disciplinary enforcement procedures.

All ~~cell phones and~~ personal electronic devices, such as cell phones, smartwatches, tablets, or iPads, permitted under this policy are brought at the risk of the possessor/owner thereof and the district cannot be liable for the loss, destruction, or theft of the device.

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Adopted 5/22/07; Revised 8/11/09, 12/8/15, 2/23/21, 7/12/22, 12/10/24

Legal References:

A. S.C. Code of Laws, 1976, as amended:

1. Section 59-63-280 - Requires board to adopt a policy on student use of electronic devices.