

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HOUSE BILL NO. 225

BY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

AN ACT

1 RELATING TO EDUCATION; PROVIDING LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND LEGISLATIVE IN-  
2 TENT; AMENDING CHAPTER 9, TITLE 33, IDAHO CODE, BY THE ADDITION OF A NEW  
3 SECTION 33-919, IDAHO CODE, TO ESTABLISH THE SCHOOL MOBILE DEVICE POL-  
4 ICY FUND; PROVIDING A SUNSET DATE; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY AND PRO-  
5 VIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.  
6

7 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Idaho:

8 SECTION 1. LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND INTENT. (1) The Legislature finds  
9 that:

10 (a) Student use of mobile devices in schools has had a multitude of  
11 negative effects on student outcomes. Mobile devices can be a constant  
12 distraction that disrupts the learning environment for all students.

13 (b) Mobile devices can increase harm to students' mental health by  
14 recording students without consent or through increased cyberbullying.  
15 Idaho students are still recovering from the massive effects of school  
16 closures during the COVID-19 pandemic, including severe learning loss  
17 and troubling trends in student mental health.

18 (c) Student mobile device use should be as limited as possible during  
19 school hours to reduce mobile device-related distractions in classroom  
20 settings.

21 (2) It is the intent of the Legislature to encourage and assist school  
22 districts and public charter schools in adopting bell-to-bell mobile device  
23 restriction policies for K-12 students in Idaho. A bell-to-bell mobile de-  
24 vice policy is a school policy that restricts access to a mobile device by  
25 students in school from the beginning of the school day until the time stu-  
26 dents are released from school at the end of the day, with certain exceptions  
27 when devices may be required for educational purposes or for student health  
28 and medical needs. This act creates the School Mobile Device Policy Fund  
29 and a grant program to assist school districts and public charter schools  
30 with the costs of purchasing equipment to store students' phones during the  
31 school day and related services.

32 SECTION 2. That Chapter 9, Title 33, Idaho Code, be, and the same is  
33 hereby amended by the addition thereto of a NEW SECTION, to be known and des-  
34 ignated as Section 33-919, Idaho Code, and to read as follows:

35 33-919. SCHOOL MOBILE DEVICE POLICY FUND. (1) There is hereby estab-  
36 lished in the state treasury the school mobile device policy fund to which  
37 shall be credited all moneys that may be appropriated, apportioned, allo-  
38 cated, and paid back to such fund. Moneys in the fund shall be distributed  
39 as need-based grants to school districts and public charter schools for the  
40 purpose of offsetting costs associated with implementing polices that limit  
41 the access to and use of mobile devices by students during school hours as

1 provided in this section. Grants from such fund shall be distributed to  
2 school districts as provided in this section. The fund shall be managed by  
3 the office of the state board of education.

4 (2) For the purposes of this section:

5 (a) "Bell-to-bell mobile device policy" means a school policy that  
6 restricts access to a mobile device by students in school from the be-  
7 ginning of the school day until the time students are released from  
8 school at the end of the day and may include exceptions when devices may  
9 be required for educational purposes or for student health and medical  
10 needs; and

11 (b) "Mobile device" means any personal portable wireless device not  
12 provided by a school or school district that has the capability of pro-  
13 viding email, text, audio, visual, or other data communication between  
14 two (2) or more parties.

15 (3) To be eligible to apply for funds under this section, a school dis-  
16 trict or public charter school shall:

17 (a) Adopt and implement a bell-to-bell mobile device policy; and

18 (b) Demonstrate sufficient financial need to require assistance in  
19 purchasing the necessary equipment or services required to implement  
20 the bell-to-bell mobile device policy.

21 (4) The grant application process shall be administered as follows:

22 (a) A school district or public charter school demonstrating financial  
23 need may apply to the office of the state board of education to receive  
24 grant funds from the school mobile device policy fund to finance the  
25 purchase of equipment and services necessary to implement school poli-  
26 cies to restrict the access to and use of mobile devices as provided in  
27 subsection (3) of this section. An application for such grant shall be  
28 submitted to the office of the state board of education and shall in-  
29 clude the following information:

30 (i) The contact information of the applicant school district or  
31 public charter school;

32 (ii) A copy of the proposed bell-to-bell mobile device policy;

33 (iii) A detailed plan that outlines the specific equipment or ser-  
34 vices that the school district or public charter school intends to  
35 purchase, which shall include a detailed explanation of how such  
36 equipment or services are necessary to implement the policy;

37 (iv) The projected cost of the equipment or services; and

38 (v) Relevant details regarding the financial need of the appli-  
39 cant school district or public charter school.

40 (b) The office of the state board of education shall review all appli-  
41 cations for grant funds pursuant to this section to determine whether  
42 to approve any such application and shall notify the state board of ed-  
43 ucation whether a school district or public charter school's applica-  
44 tion was granted. In determining which applicants shall have priority  
45 to receive grant funds, the office of the state board of education shall  
46 consider the applicant school district's or public charter school's fi-  
47 nancial need in relation to the financial need of other applicants, the  
48 cost of the equipment or services a school is proposing to purchase, and  
49 the number of students who will benefit from a grant distribution.

1 (c) The office of the state board of education shall prescribe forms for  
2 applying for the grant pursuant to this section.

3 (5) The office of the state board of education shall make reasonable ef-  
4 forts to communicate and coordinate with school districts and public char-  
5 ter schools in the state of Idaho to secure statewide contracts for the pur-  
6 chase of equipment and services commonly used by schools around the state to  
7 implement policies that limit the access to and use of mobile devices by stu-  
8 dents during the school day when such contracts will result in equipment and  
9 services being purchased at a lower cost. The office of the state board of  
10 education may distribute such equipment or services directly to a grant ap-  
11 plicant in lieu of distributing grant funds if such equipment or services are  
12 of the type that the grant applicant is proposing to purchase with the grant  
13 funds.

14 (6) The state board of education shall compile data from each recipi-  
15 ent school district and public charter school related to suspensions, expul-  
16 sions, ISAT scores, Idaho reading indicator scores, and high school grade  
17 point average for three (3) years before the date of such school's applica-  
18 tion for grant funds until three (3) years after it receives any benefit from  
19 the grant program. No later than December 1 of each year, the state board  
20 of education shall review the data from the previous school year for each  
21 recipient school district and public charter school and shall prepare and  
22 submit a report to the joint finance-appropriations committee, house edu-  
23 cation committee, and senate education committee of the Idaho legislature,  
24 which report shall summarize the data received and provide an assessment re-  
25 garding the effectiveness of the mobile device policies in terms of the im-  
26 pact such policies have had on student suspensions, expulsions, ISAT scores,  
27 Idaho reading indicator scores, and high school grade point average for the  
28 recipient schools.

29 (7) All payments from the school mobile device policy fund shall be paid  
30 out directly to the school district or public charter school in warrants  
31 drawn by the state controller upon presentation of proper vouchers from the  
32 office of the state board of education. Idle moneys in the school mobile  
33 device policy fund shall be invested by the state treasurer in the same man-  
34 ner as provided pursuant to section 67-1210, Idaho Code. Interest earned on  
35 moneys in the fund shall be returned to the school mobile device policy fund.

36 SECTION 3. The provisions of Section 2 of this act shall be null, void  
37 and of no force and effect on and after July 1, 2028.

38 SECTION 4. An emergency existing therefor, which emergency is hereby  
39 declared to exist, this act shall be in full force and effect on and after  
40 July 1, 2025.