

Policy 5695: Student and Personal Electronic Devices Survey Analysis



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Background

- In accordance with Education Law § 2803, all New York State public schools are required to adopt a ‘bell-to-bell’ ban on student use of personal electronic devices during the school day, effective Fall 2025. To ensure that Brentwood UFSD’s policy reflected community needs and values, the district conducted three parallel surveys in June 2025, receiving responses from:
 - 2,282 students (Grades 6–12)
 - 542 professional staff, and
 - 532 parents/guardians



Executive Summary

- Survey results reveal strong alignment around key priorities:
 - access to communication with family
 - structured and equitable storage expectations
 - limited exceptions for health or special education needs, and,
 - fair, progressive enforcement
- Students advocated for responsible use and access during non-instructional time, while staff and parents emphasized safety and the need for instructional time with limited distraction
- Draft Policy 5695 reflects this input through tiered expectations by grade level, a limited exception framework, clear communication procedures, and annual equity reporting



Reasons Cited for Less or More Restriction

- **Primary Reasons for Less Restriction**
 - Family communication during emergencies and transitions (before/after school)
 - Mental health support: music, calming apps, private breaks
 - Educational tools: calculators, research, academic apps
 - Respect for student agency and digital responsibility
- **Primary Reasons for More Restriction**
 - Distraction from instruction and reduced academic engagement
 - Social concerns: cyberbullying, inappropriate recording
 - Mental health impacts of screen addiction and social media
 - Inequity in access creating feelings of exclusion
 - Burden on staff to enforce inconsistent classroom rules



Analysis of Open-Ended Survey Feedback

- Student Themes
 - Students emphasized safety and the importance of being able to reach family
 - Many cited music and brief app use as coping tools for stress and anxiety
 - Some acknowledged phones are distracting, but advocated for personal responsibility
 - Frequent suggestion: allow use during lunch or with teacher permission



Analysis of Open-Ended Survey Feedback

- Staff Themes
 - Support for limiting access during instructional time
 - Concern about time lost managing phone-related behavior
 - Support for medically necessary or IEP/504-based exceptions
 - Calls for centralized, consistent enforcement



Analysis of Open-Ended Survey Feedback

- Parent/Guardian Themes
 - Strong support for access in emergencies, via structured systems (e.g., main office, web portal)
 - Emphasis on equity in enforcement and consistent expectations
 - Support for medically documented and legally required exceptions
 - Varied opinions on allowing devices in middle and high school, with many preferring stricter limits in earlier grades



Survey Highlights - Students

2,282 responses

- 84% bring smartphones; 71% want access to contact family
- 1,096 oppose forced storage
- 13% support full-day ban; 44% understand with concerns



Survey Highlights - Staff

542 responses

- Support for storage: classroom caddies (193), lockers (142), locking pouches (168)
- 73% confident in managing exceptions
- Emphasized fairness and consistency



Survey Highlights – Parents/Families

532 responses

- 76% say contact with children during the day is 'very important'
- 64% support students bringing phones
- Top storage preferences: classroom bins (297), lockers (149)



Policy 5695 Alignment with Stakeholder Feedback

Survey Theme	Policy 5695 Response
Family Communication	Permitted via school offices and district-owned/operated platform(s)
Storage Preferences	Tiered by level; lockers, district provided laptop cases and locking pouches (scaffold implementation) allowed in MS/HS; bookbags (HS)
Exceptions	Allowed for IEP/504 and documented medical needs (e.g., asthma, diabetes)
Educational Use	When authorized in IEP or as medical accommodation
Progressive Enforcement	No OSS for violations alone; consistent administrative follow-up; educational and restorative approach
Equity & Transparency	Annual report on demographic enforcement data and disparities



Summary of Policy 5695 Provisions

- Draft policy 5695 establishes grade-level appropriate expectations for student use of personal electronic devices, informed by stakeholder input and grounded in the NYS bell-to-bell mandate



Storage Requirements

- **Elementary School:** Personal electronic devices may not be brought to school
- **Middle School:** Students are discouraged from bringing devices to school. If brought to school, student devices must be silenced and stored in a district provided locking pouch, a district provided laptop case, or school locker
- **High School:** Students are discouraged from bringing devices to school. If brought to school, student devices must be silenced and stored in a district provided locking pouch, a district provided laptop case, school locker, or backpack



Communication Between Families and Students

- Communication is permitted via school offices, and/or through district owned/operated software platforms
- Students will not have direct access to phones during the school day, except as permitted under policy exceptions



Allowable Policy Exceptions

- Students with an IEP or 504 Plan that specifically references device use
- Students with documented medical needs that require access to a device (e.g., diabetes monitoring, asthma management)

Use of Non-Internet-Connected Devices

- Students are discouraged from bringing other personal electronic devices to school. If students do bring such devices to school, they must be stored for the entire school day in bookbags (HS), lockers, district provided laptop cases and/or pouches, and they must be silenced and not used unless permission is granted by the principal
- These devices may only be used during authorized times, consistent with building expectations



Next Steps

- Finalize and adopt policy
- Translate and distribute to families
- Launch locking pouch pilot
- Develop transparent exception protocols and family resources
- Monitor, and adjust as necessary, policies, practices, and procedures



*Thank
you*

