



OFFICE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS & MEDIA CONTENT

341 S. Bellefield Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213

For Immediate Release

CONTACT: Ebony Pugh (412) 475-1523

Pittsburgh Public Schools Board Action Prohibits Student Use of Electronic Devices Districtwide During the School Day

Board Adopts 2026 General Fund Budget with 2.0 Percent Millage Rate Increase

PITTSBURGH, PA December 17, 2025- The Pittsburgh Board of Public Education voted tonight to update the District's Electronic Devices Policy, formally prohibiting the use and possession of electronic devices by students during the school day on District property, subject to specific Board-approved exceptions and guidelines.

The updated policy establishes a consistent districtwide standard aimed at maintaining safe, secure, and focused learning environments for students and staff. The Board's action comes as state officials and education leaders across Pennsylvania continue to explore statewide approaches to student cell phone use during the school day, reflecting growing concern about classroom distractions, student well-being, and school safety.

"This updated policy reflects what we know supports student learning," said Superintendent Wayne N. Walters. "Many of our schools have already seen positive results from limiting cell phone use during the school day. Establishing a districtwide standard ensures consistency while still allowing for necessary and appropriate exceptions."

While the policy creates a uniform expectation across all Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS), similar practices are already in place at many schools. Under the District's previous policy, individual schools were permitted to implement school-based electronic device restrictions. As a result, 44 PPS schools currently require students to turn in their cell phones at the start of the school day, a practice that has helped reduce distractions and curb incidents.

Under the updated policy:

- Use and possession of electronic devices by students during the school day is prohibited on District property, including school buildings, buses, and school-related activities occurring during school hours.
- Students may bring electronic devices to school, if necessary, but devices must be turned in to school personnel while school is in session.
- Exceptions may be granted for health, safety, or emergency reasons, for students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan, for approved instructional activities, or for other circumstances approved by school administrators.



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The District will provide additional guidance to schools and families regarding implementation, including school-level procedures for the collection, storage, and return of devices at the end of the school day.

The updated Electronic Devices Policy will be shared with students, families, and staff through student handbooks, school communications, and the District's website.

In Other Business

Board Adopts 2026 General Fund Budget with 2.0 Percent Millage Rate Increase

In other business, the Board adopted the District's 2026 General Fund Budget totaling \$731.3 million, representing a 3.1 percent decrease from the adopted 2025 budget. The approved budget includes \$12.1 million in savings from Cyber Charter Reform, and a 2.0 percent millage rate increase to 10.457 mills, allowing the District to meet the Board's minimum 5 percent fund balance policy for one additional year. The 2026 General Fund Budget includes a deficit of \$5.7 million.

"While this budget reflects important steps to stabilize our finances in the short term, we know that more work remains," said Superintendent Wayne N. Walters. "The District must continue to confront its long-term structural challenges and identify sustainable solutions to address the budget shortfall in the years ahead, while keeping students at the center of every decision."

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