CHAPTER 36

EDUCATION — LIMITATIONS ON STUDENT USE OF PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES — SCHOOL HIGH-QUALITY EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLANS

H.F. 782

AN ACT relating to electronic devices in schools, including student access during instructional hours and school safety plans, and including effective date provisions.

Be It Enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Iowa:

Section 1. Section 256.9, Code 2025, is amended by adding the following new subsection:

NEW SUBSECTION. 69. On or before May 1, 2025, develop and distribute to school districts, accredited nonpublic schools, charter schools, and innovation zone schools model policies that, if adopted, would satisfy the school district's, charter school's, or innovation zone school's responsibilities under section 279.87 relating to policies governing student use of personal electronic devices. [1]

Sec. 2. NEW SECTION. **279.87 Limitation on the use of personal electronic devices.**

1. Commencing with the school year beginning July 1, 2025, the board of directors of each school district shall adopt policies regarding student use of personal electronic devices during school hours that restrict student use of such devices during classroom instructional time. The policies must meet all of the following requirements:

a. Identify policies and information related to various educational devices and technologies that will be made available to students for instructional purposes.

b. Identify the methods that a parent or guardian of a student may use to communicate with the student during school hours or while the student is participating in a school-sponsored activity.

c. Identify the methods that a parent or guardian of a student may use to communicate with the student during an emergency situation.

d. Include protocols that the school district will use to securely store a student's personal electronic device when such device is in the possession of the school district.

e. Specify the discipline associated with a student's violation of the policies, including the discipline associated with a student's use of a personal electronic device during classroom instruction or during the administration of an assessment.

f. Establish a process through which a student's parent or guardian may petition the school district to allow the student to maintain access to the student's personal electronic device during the portion of the school day in which classroom instructional time is delivered if the student's parent or guardian can establish that there is a legitimate reason related to the student's physical or mental health for the student to maintain access to the device during such time.

g. Allow a student who has an individualized education program, or a plan under section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act, 29 U.S.C. §794, to maintain access to the student's personal electronic device during the portion of the school day in which classroom instructional time is delivered if the student's individualized education program, or plan under section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act, 29 U.S.C. §794, requires the student to maintain such access.

2. The board of directors of a school district may adopt policies that limit student use of personal electronic devices during school hours, including the use of such devices during classroom instructional time, that are more stringent than the model policies developed and distributed by the director of the department of education pursuant to section 256.9, subsection 69.

3. For purposes of this section, *"personal electronic device"* includes but is not limited to electronic communication equipment, mobile phones, smart phones, video game devices, and portable media players.

[1] See chapter 159, §11 herein

4. The state board of education may adopt rules pursuant to chapter 17A to administer this section.

Sec. 3. REVISION OF HIGH-QUALITY EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLANS.

1. The department of education and the department of public safety shall do all of the following:

a. Consult regarding revisions that school districts need to make to high-quality emergency operations plans developed pursuant to section 280.30 to take into account the provisions of section 279.87, as enacted by this Act, and revisions that accredited nonpublic schools may make to such plans to take into account policies regarding student use of personal electronic devices during school hours.

b. Provide support and guidance to school districts regarding how to revise high-quality emergency operations plans developed pursuant to section 280.30 so that such plans are consistent with the provisions of section 279.87, as enacted by this Act, and provide similar support and guidance to accredited nonpublic schools that elect to adopt policies regarding student use of personal electronic devices during school hours.

2. On or before July 1, 2025, each school district shall revise the school district's high-quality emergency operations plans developed pursuant to section 280.30 so that such plans are consistent with the provisions of section 279.87, as enacted by this Act.

Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE. This Act, being deemed of immediate importance, takes effect upon enactment.

Approved April 30, 2025