

Update on DUSD Mobile Communication Policy

Aligning with AB 3216 – The Phone-Free
Schools Act

Presented by: Dr. Rani Bertsch, Assistant
Superintendent Secondary Education

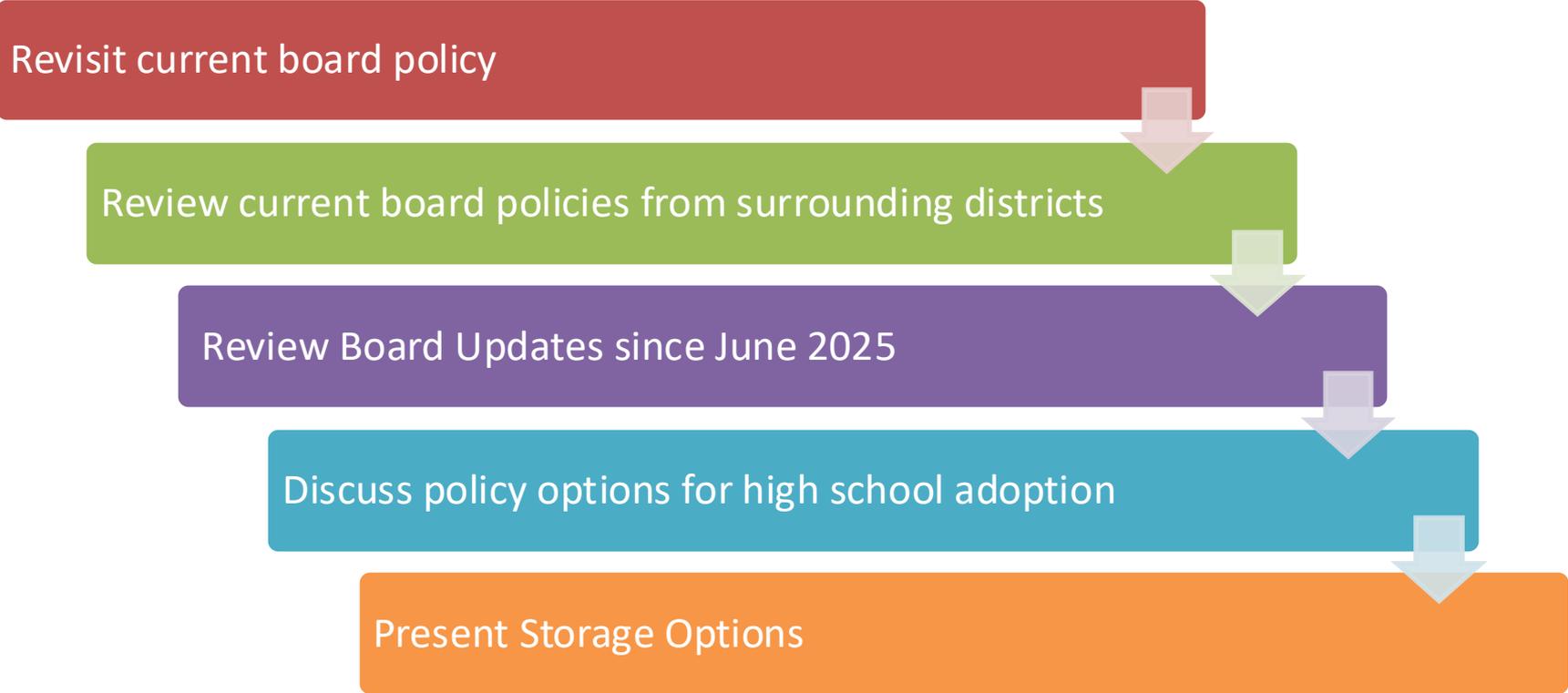
March 11, 2026



Dr. Brossmer presented to the board on
June 10, 2025

Presentation

Revisit current board policy



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graph TD; A[Revisit current board policy] --> B[Review current board policies from surrounding districts]; B --> C[Review Board Updates since June 2025]; C --> D[Discuss policy options for high school adoption]; D --> E[Present Storage Options];
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Review current board policies from surrounding districts

Review Board Updates since June 2025

Discuss policy options for high school adoption

Present Storage Options

AB 3216 Requirement

- Requires, no later than July 1, 2026, the governing body of a school district, a COE, or a charter school to adopt a policy to limit or prohibit the use by its pupils of smartphones while the pupils are at a school site or while the pupils are under the supervision and control of an employee or employees of that school district, COE, or charter school

Key Points of AB 3216

Signed into law:
September 2024

Compliance
deadline: July 1,
2026

Requires community
engagement

Allows different
policies by grade
level

Mandates
exemptions
(emergencies, IEP,
medical)

Our Current policy is
in compliance with
AB 3216
BP 5131.8

AB 3216 Exemptions

Requires a pupil to not be prohibited from possessing or using a smartphone under any of the following circumstances:

- a) In the case of an emergency, or in response to a perceived threat of danger;
- b) When a teacher or administrator of the school district, COE, or charter school grants permission to a pupil to possess or use a smartphone, subject to any reasonable limitation imposed by that teacher or administrator;
- c) When a licensed physician and surgeon determines that the possession or use of a smartphone is necessary for the health or well-being of the pupil; and
- d) When the possession or use of a smartphone is required in a pupil's individualized education program. (Education Code (EC) 48901.7)

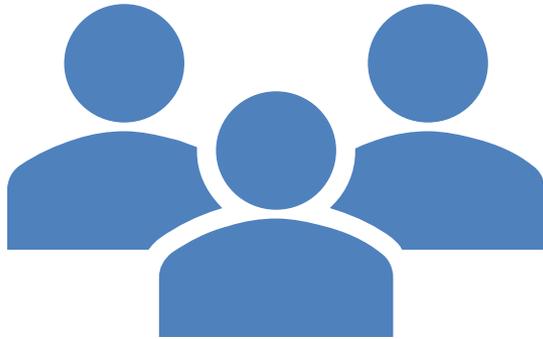
Community Engagement - Student

Superintendent Student Advisory Committee (SSAC)

- The consensus among students was that mobile devices should not be accessible to TK–8 students, supporting an “Away for the Day” policy at both the elementary and middle school levels. For high school students, the group agreed devices should be allowed during non-instructional times.



Community Engagement - Parent



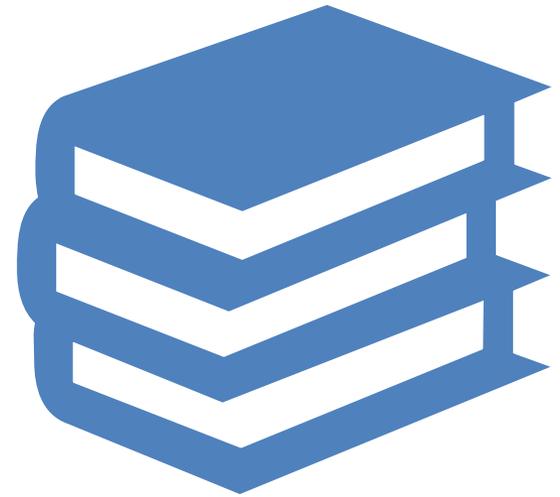
Parent Teacher Association (PTA) Council and Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) for parent input

- Many parents felt mobile phone restrictions should be targeted—applying only to students with academic, attendance, or behavioral challenges.
- There was significant disagreement about what qualifies as an "emergency" that would justify phone access, highlighting the need for clear policy definitions.

Community Engagement - Teacher

Downey Education Association (DEA) Rep Council for teacher input

- Questions regarding the legal and financial liability teachers might face if asked to confiscate student devices.
- Worries about how enforcing the policy could affect instructional time and potentially strain student-teacher relationships



Neighboring District Mobile Communication Policies – Highlighted Indicate Alignment with AB 3216

School District	Avg. HS size	NO USE DURING NON-INSTRUCTIONAL TIME	ALLOWS USE DURING NON-INSTRUCTIONAL TIME	Last Revised
ABC	1,553		X	2024/2025
Bellflower	2,260		X	3/27/2025
Brea-Olinda	1,710		X	8/10/2023
Claremont	2,182		X	8/11/2024
Compton	1,376		X	1/24/2025
Fullerton Joint	2,040		X	6/11/2024
Irvine	2,242		X	5/02/2023
LAUSD	2,085	X		2024/2025
Los Alamitos	3,005		X	2024/2025
Lynwood	1,732		X	3/1/2025
Montebello	2,095		X	2024/2025
Norwalk-La Mirada	1,558		X	2/12/2009
Orange Lutheran	1,394		X	2024/2025
Santa Monica-Malibu	2,573		X	2025
Paramount	3,737		X	09/14/2020

Additional Neighboring District Mobile Communication Policies – Highlighted Indicate Alignment with AB 3216

School District	Avg. HS size	NO USE DURING NON-INSTRUCTIONAL TIME	ALLOWS USE DURING NON-INSTRUCTIONAL TIME	Last Revised
Downey USD	4000		X	2024/2025
Fresno	2000		X	Feb 2026
Kern High School District	2200		X	Dec 2025
Long Beach USD	3500		X	Jan 2026
Paso Robles	2000		X	July 2025
Petaluma	1200		X	July 2025
San Diego	1800		X	July 2025
San Jose	1000	X		July 2025

Board Updates

July 17, 2025
San Diego Unified School
District

August 14, 2025
Paso Robles Joint Unified
School District

August 14, 2025
Petaluma City School District

September 18, 2025
Long Beach Unified
School District

October 30, 2025
UC/CSU Study

Key Findings of the UCLA Study Strengthening K-12 Cellphone Policies

•Study Results

- Complex Impact on Well-being:** Phones can simultaneously enhance learning (via quick research, apps) and harm it (due to notification distractions and reduced focus).

- Issues with Total Bans:** Many students in schools with total bans still use phones, making rigid enforcement difficult and potentially unproductive.

- The "Double-Edged Sword":** Phones are particularly valuable for neurodivergent students or in under-resourced schools, but they also fuel issues with attention and social interaction.

•Specific Recommendations:

- Schools should focus on building "**healthy phone habits**" rather than just enforcing punishments.

- Restricting phone use during instructional, while allowing access during breaks time is recommended rather than implementing a full-day ban from the time students arrive on campus.

- Ensuring students with disabilities or specific health needs can use their devices.



Digital Citizenship



Held each October



Current Topics covered

Appropriate online behavior

Social Networking

Cyberbullying

Copyright

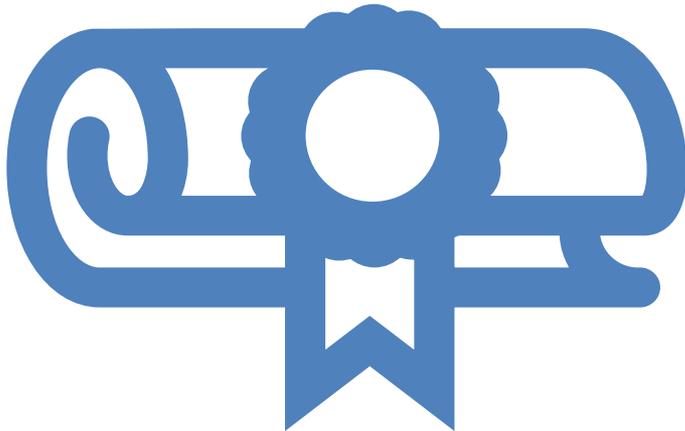


Proposed additions for
next year

Artificial Intelligence

Healthy Cellphone Use

What are our Student Outcomes



Discipline Referrals on Electronics 2025-2026	
Downey High School	26
Warren High School	14

Recap Board Decision: Elementary and Middle School

Currently policies for elementary and middle schools prohibit use of mobile communication devices during the school day; “Away for the day”.

Decision Points for Policy Development for High School

Access During Free Time:

Should phones be allowed during snack, lunch & passing periods?

Phone Storage:

Should phones be kept in lockers, pouches, or collected during class?

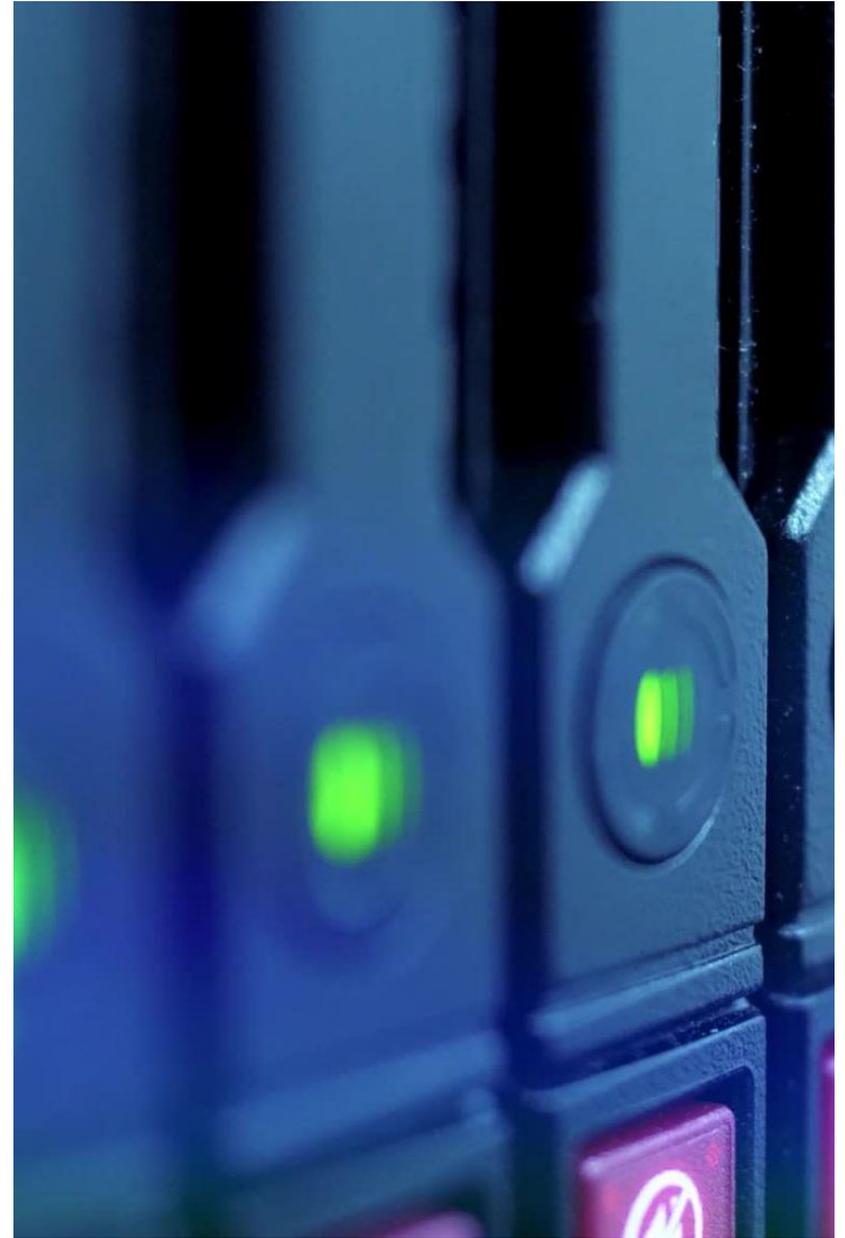
Emergencies:

How will students access their phones during emergency situations?

Teacher Policing:

Should we minimize teacher enforcement or require active policing of the policy?

Options for phone storage



Backpacks



Pros – no cost to district, easily accessible during an emergency



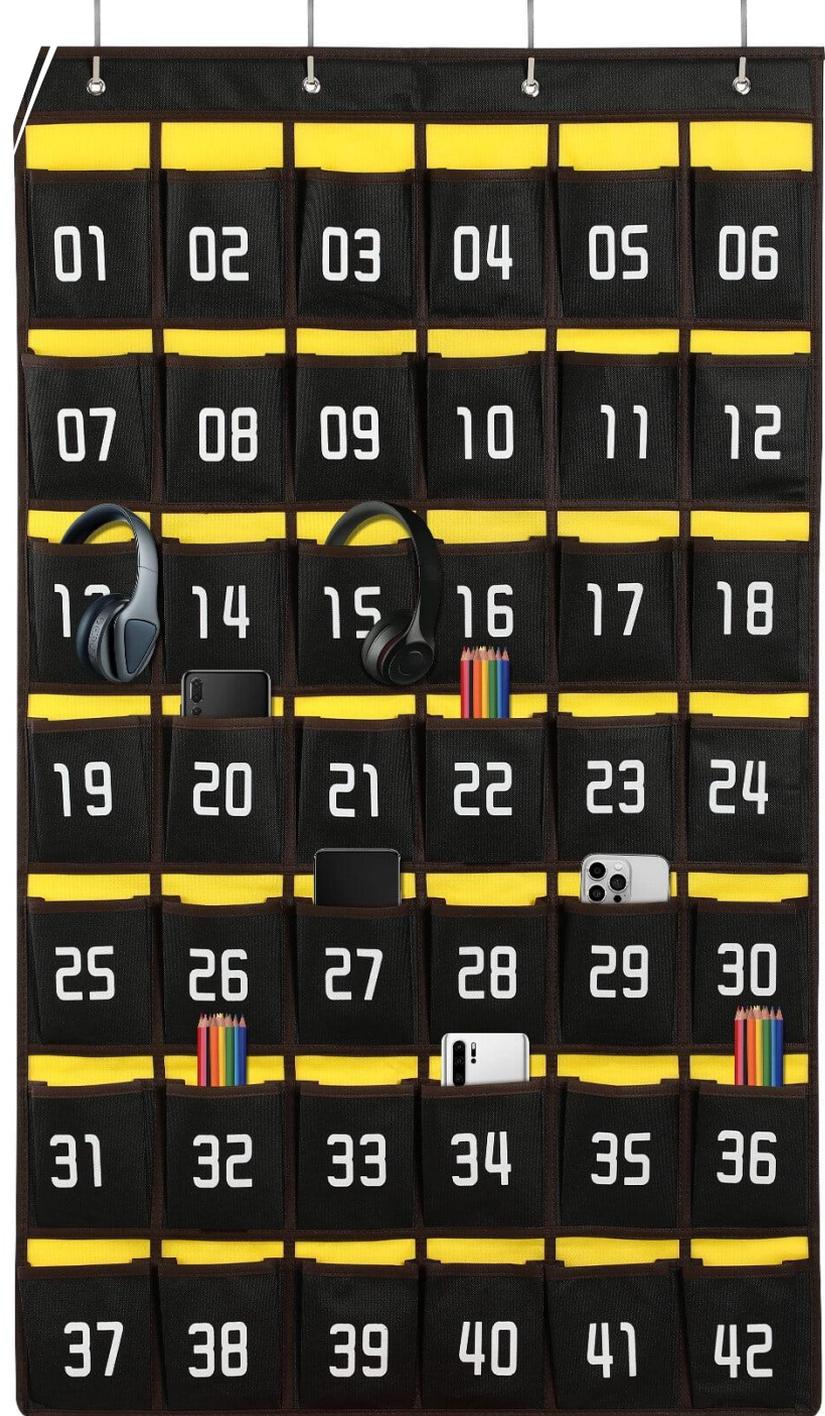
Cons – high level of temptation, teacher is the enforcer



Pocket Chart -

Approximately \$11 per room
\$3,300 Total

-
- Pros – cheap, easily accessible for an emergency
 - Cons – security, teacher has to monitor, too easy to access



Locking Phone Caddy

Approximately \$50 per room

\$15,000 Total

- Pros – increased security, easily accessible in an emergency
- Cons – increased cost, teacher needs to collect





Locked Pouches Approximately \$300,000

- Pros – collection on entry to school, minimal distraction
- Cons – expensive with **on-going** costs due to breakage , hard to access in an emergency, can be tampered with

High School

While our current board policy aligns with AB3216, the board has the option to be more restrictive.

Our current policy for high schools allow students to access their mobile communication devices during non-instructional times (Maximum **1 hour per day**; passing period, snack and lunch).

Board Consideration High School Options

Option 1: Off during
instruction, allowed
during breaks



Option 2: Prohibit use
during school day with
legal exceptions

Board Questions, Discussion, and Direction to Staff