

Schools consider adopting a phone ban

Connecticut joins a growing number of states enacting a cellphone ban. Even the nation's largest school system, New York City schools, is considering adopting a similar policy.

Students in Stamford will have limited access to their cellphones and other electronic devices during school hours when they head back to the classroom.

Officials with the Stamford School District spent the summer coming up with a plan that aims to promote a positive environment. Next week, the district becomes the latest in the state to ban phone use for students during class time.

The new policy in Stamford bans elementary and middle school students from using the items without permission from the principal. They must be silent and stored in backpacks during classes.

High school students can use their cellphones and devices at lunch, in between classes and when they are not receiving instruction. When not in use, they can be put in over-the-door storage pockets in silent mode.

It comes as the Connecticut State Board of Education adopted new policies regarding the use of personal technology.

Gov. Ned Lamont and Connecticut Education Commissioner Charlene M. Russell-Tucker are urging other local school districts to implement the policies.

The exact rules can differ by district. Many elementary and middle schools use locking pouches to secure the devices for the entire day. "All too often, our young people find themselves too distracted by their smartphones and disconnected from the reality of what is happening around them, including while in their classrooms, and it's having negative impacts on their learning and mental well-being," Lamont said. "It is crucial that we adopt stronger policies to address this issue head-on. The state's guidance provides a clear framework, but it is up to each school district to shape their own policies that meet the needs of their students and communities."