

Reducing Screen Time: Student Smartphone Policy

Mark J. Dawson and Peter Lambert
Area Directors Education Services

Date: April 1, 2025



Educating Students for Success.

Background Information

- Assembly Bill 3216: Pupils Use of Smartphones was signed in the Fall of 2024.
- By July 1, 2026 school districts, county offices of education and charter school must develop and adopt, and update every 5 years, a policy to limit or prohibit the use by pupils of smartphones while pupils are at a school site or while pupils are under the supervision or control of a school district employee.
- September of 2024 the board gave direction to implement the Lodi Unified policy in July of 2025.

Lodi USD Board Policy 5131

Lodi USD Board Policy 5131 states the following:

- No Devices During Instruction
 - Cellular phones, pagers, and similar devices are not for use during class time
- Turned Off Requirement
 - Devices must be off unless used for approved instructional or school-related activities
- Authorized Activation
 - Devices may be used when specifically directed by a district employee
- Privacy Protection
 - Camera, video, or recording functions must not infringe on anyone's privacy
- Medical Exception
 - Essential health devices, per a licensed physician's recommendation, are allowed for health-related use

Smartphone-Free: Reducing Screen Time

- **Key Participants**
 - Superintendent, Communications Dept, Ed. Services Staff, High School Principals, and Student Activities Directors
- **Collaborative Effort**
 - Both student activities directors and student leaders participated from every comprehensive high school
- **Campaign Development**
 - Created a district-wide initiative with tailored, site-based strategies during Fall 2024 and Winter 2025
- **Policy Benefit Focus**
 - Emphasized the benefits of prohibiting smartphone use during the school day
- **Screen Time Initiative**
 - Aimed to reduce screen time and encourage students to take a pledge for mindful device use

Video

- [Smartphone Challenge Video](#)



Next Steps

Social Media

- Publish campaign video on district and school platforms

- **Community Engagement**

- Consistently communicate AB 3216 and Board Policy 5131 to staff and community

- **Teacher Protection**

- Collaborate with LEA on an MOU to release teachers from liability for lost/damaged devices

- **Student Interventions**

- Work with site administration on consistent strategies for policy enforcement

