



GOVERNOR JOSH SHAPIRO

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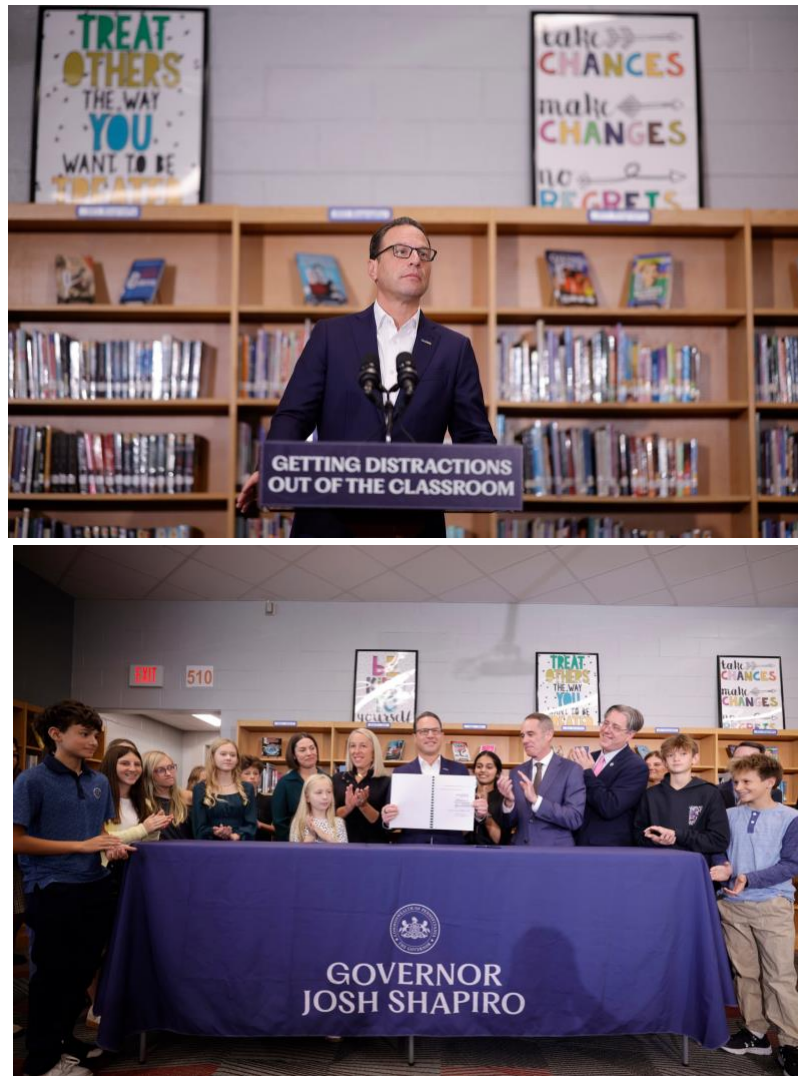
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**Governor Shapiro Signs Bell-to-Bell Cell Phone Ban into Law,
Delivering on Key Budget Address Promise and Ensuring Students
Can Learn Without Distractions**

Governor Shapiro signed SB 1014 into law at Lenape Middle School in Doylestown, requiring Pennsylvania schools to adopt and implement a policy to prohibit the use of cell phones during the school day beginning next school year.

This bill reinforces the Shapiro Administration's commitment to improving student wellbeing by ensuring students spend less time focused on their phones and more time focused on learning and building connections with their fellow students.

SB 1014 received broad, bipartisan support in the legislature and delivers on one of the priorities laid out in the Governor's budget address earlier this year.



Doylestown, PA – Today, **Governor Josh Shapiro** visited Lenape Middle School in Bucks County with legislators, educators, parents, and students to sign [Senate Bill 1014](#) into law, requiring all Pennsylvania public, charter, cyber charter, and private schools to adopt policies prohibiting students from using personal cell phones throughout the school day, including during lunch, recess, and between classes.

While the use of technology in moderation can support learning, creativity, and communication, [studies](#) have shown excessive screen time can contribute to increased stress, disrupted sleep, and worsened academic performance. With the signing of this legislation, Pennsylvania joins more than two dozen other states in keeping devices out of students' hands from the start of the school day until dismissal to help them focus, engage with peers, and build social and emotional skills — delivering on a priority the Governor called for during his [2026-27 Budget Address](#).

“Technology is a powerful tool, but it’s also a powerful distraction, and I’ve heard from parents and teachers who tell me about how our kids are too easily caught up by addictive algorithms that are preventing them from focusing on school, building

relationships with other kids, and developing the social skills that help us all relate to each other in person,” said **Governor Shapiro**. “I listened to those concerns from parents and teachers all across our Commonwealth and called on the General Assembly to put a bill on my desk to get cell phones out of our classrooms. Today, I’m delivering on that promise alongside my colleagues in the legislature, and the very educators, parents, and students who will see the impact of this bill firsthand — because when we support our kids and invest in their futures, good things happen.”

In 2025, six new questions were added to the [Pennsylvania Youth Survey \(PAYS\)](#) — a biannual survey sent to 6th, 8th, 10th and 12th graders across the Commonwealth — assessing students’ access to devices and social media, their frequency of use, and parent or caregiver rules regarding screen time. PAYS [found](#) **24 percent of students reported spending four or more hours per school day on social media** and **36.3 percent reported four or more hours of total non-school screen time**.

The Governor has heard from parents and teachers across Pennsylvania who are concerned about their kids’ dramatic increase in screentime — especially during the school day. To address this growing issue head on, SB 1014 requires any Pennsylvania school district, intermediate unit, area career and technical school, charter school, regional charter school, private school, approved private school, nonpublic school or cyber charter school to adopt a policy prohibiting the student possession and use of mobile devices throughout the entirety of the school day. Schools are required to adopt and implement that policy by the beginning of the 2027-28 school year.

Adopted policies must establish how a student’s phone use will be restricted during the school day while on school property — though the bill does not require the school to take physical possession of a device.

Governor Shapiro signed this legislation at Lenape Middle School in the Central Bucks School District, where students are currently required to keep phones off and away throughout the school day.

“As educators, teachers, and caregivers, we understand the challenges of raising and educating young people in a digital world. For years, schools have been striving to address the distraction that comes with student cell phones,” said **Dr. Joanna Wexler, Superintendent, Central Bucks School District**. “Now, we will continue to work with students, staff, and parents to engage in conversations and dialogue around this issue, knowing our students and staff will rise to the occasion and meet these new expectations, continue to excel, achieve, and make us proud in countless ways.”

“Here at Central Bucks, we’ve already seen first-hand what happens when students put their phones away — they’re more present, they talk to each other more, they’re more engaged, and teachers can focus on teaching instead of competing for our students’ attention,” said **Christie Besack, Social Studies Teacher, Central Bucks High School West**. “When we get distractions out of the classroom, we’re improving students’ educational outcomes and ensuring they are in the best position to succeed. I want to thank Governor Shapiro and the general assembly for working together to invest

in our children and implement policies that put the focus back on learning and collaboration.”

The bill also outlines exceptions to the ban for documented medical needs, special education or disability accommodations, English language learning devices, and other pre-approved, limited instructional purposes. Schools will also be required to notify parents of emergency communication procedures, provide opportunities for public input, and publish their policies online.

“Like many other parents, I began noticing the very different childhood our kids are experiencing with the early and constant pull of technology and social media,” said **Kirstin McGowan, a parent advocate and co-leader of PA Unplugged**. “Parents, teachers and health professionals have been asking for help and the passing of SB 1014 is a major first step in supporting our kids and teachers... Thank you, Governor Shapiro for calling for this state-wide standard, for signing SB 1014, and for helping make Pennsylvania a place where childhood happens in the real world first.”

“As students, we should not be viewing this as a disconnection from the digital world, but rather an opportunity to connect with one another face-to-face,” said **Sanjana Chamarty, a senior at Central Bucks High School South**. “Eliminating cell phones in schools is a huge push forward for removing distractions. Thank you Governor Shapiro for being here today, and ensuring that students are receiving a quality education.”

“Under Governor Shapiro’s leadership, Pennsylvania has become the 25th state to enact a bell-to-bell phone free school policy. Pennsylvania lawmakers have given students opportunities for distraction free learning, and so much more. When students put their phones away for the day, they learn more from their teachers, develop longer attention spans, and have more fun with each other,” said **Jonathan Haidt, the author of The Anxious Generation and cofounder of The TAG Movement**. “There’s more work ahead to create distraction-free schools, and I’m confident Governor Shapiro will continue to lead.”

[SB 1014](#) was sponsored by Senator Devlin Robinson and passed the House in a 141-62 vote and the Senate by a 47-3 vote — showing broad, bipartisan support.

“Our phones can do great things to unlock information for us, but they can also be a huge distraction with negative impacts on our kids,” said **Senator Steve Santarsiero, PA’s 10th Senate District**. “This bill is an important step in our schools, and their success will show us how it’s done. I’m grateful for everyone who had a hand in making this happen, and to the Governor, most of all, for his leadership on this issue. I am proud to be part of the team.”

“I am thrilled that we were able to pass this bill to prohibit cellphone use in schools. The evidence is clear and obvious: smartphones are harmful to the mental health of kids and teens, they are attention and experience blocked that connect you with people far away while disconnecting you from the people and experiences right in front of you, and they have not, in any way, improved student learning or social growth. In fact, they’ve done

the opposite,” said **Senator Devlin Robinson, PA’s 37th Senate District**. “Today is a win for students and schools and I am proud to have been a part of this effort.”

“It’s no secret that we live in a changing world and each time I get a chance to interact with students here in Central Bucks, I like to talk to them about the big issues facing their generation,” said **Representative Tim Brennan, PA’s 29th House District**. “This bill sets boundaries on technology — it manages the risks of pervasive, often market-driven technology and preserves a space for genuine human development. I know it will take some time for young people to appreciate what this bill is doing, but I’m very thankful for the Governor’s leadership on this issue, our local senator, and all of the legislators who’ve helped make this happen.”

“Big tech is attempting to render an entire generation captive,” said **Representative Mandy Steele, PA’s 33rd House District**. “Children are suffering. It is imperative that we make our schools a place where children are able to learn and socialize without the constant distraction of their phone. This is the public health crisis of our time. I’m proud to have worked on this important piece of legislation and am grateful that Governor Shapiro signed it into law today so we can protect our kids.”

Today’s bill signing reinforces **Governor Shapiro’s** commitment to strengthening student wellbeing and supporting young Pennsylvanians — which includes historic investments in education.

The [2026-27 budget](#) signed by the Governor provides an overall increase of **more than \$678 million** in education funding, including a **\$565 million** increase through the bipartisan adequacy and tax equity formula, a **\$58 million** increase for Basic Education Funding, and a **\$55 million** increase for Special Education Funding. It also continues funding for school infrastructure improvements, universal free breakfast, and mental health in schools:

- **Maintains \$125 million for school infrastructure improvements** to create safe, healthy learning environments — including **\$25 million** for the **Solar for Schools** program to lower energy costs and promote sustainability.
- **Provides more than \$100 million in mental health and school safety funding for K–12 schools**, ensuring every student has access to the resources and support they need to thrive, continuing the Shapiro Administration’s strong commitment to expanding access to mental health care and support across the Commonwealth.
- **Continues key funding for universal free breakfast and free menstrual hygiene products for students**, providing universal free breakfast to 1.7 million students, alongside **\$3 million** to ensure students have access to menstrual hygiene products at no cost.
- **Establishes 30 minutes of daily recess for students in kindergarten through fifth grade**, ensuring students have dedicated time each school day for

movement, social interaction, and stress management so they return to the classroom refreshed and ready to learn.

As a result of these historic investments under **Governor Shapiro's** leadership, graduation rates across the Commonwealth have risen for 3 years in a row, truancy rates have gone down, more new teachers are being certified, and Consumer Affairs has ranked Pennsylvania as one of the top states for quality public education in the country.

[SB 1014](#) requires schools implement compliant policies by the beginning of the 2027–2028 school year.

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