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MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Chair Michael J. Rodrigues

DATE: July 24, 2025

SUBJECT: Poll

Attached is a summary of the bill presently before the Senate Committee on Ways and Means. Committee members will be polled today from 10:30 am to 11:30 am on the question of reporting the bill favorably.

Please be advised that under Senate Rule 12, all recorded votes of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means will be posted on the website of the General Court immediately following the conclusion of the poll.

Do not hesitate to contact Aaron Carty in my office if you have any questions. Thank you for your participation.

SENATE 2549: **AN ACT TO PROMOTE STUDENT LEARNING AND MENTAL HEALTH**

(summary reflects text as redrafted)

SPONSORS: Joint Committee on Education

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY:

07/10/25	Reported from the Committee on Education New draft of S323, S333, S335, S381, S424, S461 and S463 Bill reported favorably by the Committee and referred to the Committee on Senate Ways and Means

EXISTING LAWS AFFECTED: None

SUMMARY:

- Defines personal electronic device as any portable electronic device capable of providing voice communication, text messaging or other data communication between two or more parties or devices, or capable of connecting to a smartphone or other personal electronic device, the internet, or a cellular or Wi-Fi network.

- Provides that a personal electronic device does not include school issued or sanctioned devices that are used for legitimate educational purposes.

- Requires the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to provide guidance, recommendations and a model policy to assist schools and districts with developing and implementing effective policies regarding the use of personal electronic devices on school grounds and during school-sponsored activities during the school day.

- Requires the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education guidance, recommendations and model policy to consider case-specific or targeted exemptions to the personal electronic device use prohibition.

- Requires the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to annually review and update guidance, recommendations and the model policy.

- Requires the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to solicit public input when creating the guidance, recommendations and the model policy.

- Requires the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to make the guidance, recommendations and the model policy publicly available on the Department's website.

- Requires a public school and school district to annually file its electronic device use policy with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

- Requires public schools and school districts to have a policy regarding the prohibition of student use of personal electronic devices on school grounds during school days and during school-sponsored activities during the school day.

- Requires a personal electronic device use policy to include: (i) a prohibition on the use and actual possession, strictly on their person, of a personal electronic device by a student on school grounds during the school day; (ii) at least one method for parents and guardians of students to contact students during the school day or for a student to contact their parent or caregiver during the school day; and (iii) effective enforcement provisions to ensure compliance with the policy by students.

- Permits students to use and possess a personal electronic device if: (i) used in accordance with an individualized education program or an education plan; (ii) necessary in accordance with an accommodation under state or federal law; (iii) for time spent off school grounds travelling to or from other learning opportunities; (iv) a healthcare provider provides in writing that the possession or use of a personal electronic device is necessary to treat a health condition of a student; (v) permitted under the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's model policy.

- Permits a school or district policy to include variations that align with the developmental level of students and the structure of the school day in each grade level and school.

- Requires annually, not later than September 1, public schools to notify students and the parents or guardians of students attending the school of the personal electronic device policy and make the policy publicly available on its website.

- Requires each public school or district to have a policy regarding personal electronic devices implemented before the start of the 2026-2027 school year.

- Requires the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to report to the legislature on the implementation of the personal electronic device use policies in schools.

ESTIMATED FISCAL IMPACT: Any cost associated with this legislation shall be borne through existing appropriation.

(KHV)