

Student Voice on Personal Electronic Device Policy Implementation: Recommendations for Year 2

For the full overview of key findings, recommendations, and implementation considerations, see the overall Policy Brief.



During the 2025-26 school year, ODE collected over 6,000 student survey responses from 76 districts and engaged the Oregon Youth Advisory Council (YAC) in listening sessions.

ODE also reviewed relevant findings from the 2026 ODE EVE Workforce Survey.

Students and educators report benefits of personal electronic device (PED) policies, including fewer classroom distractions, more face-to-face interaction, and reduced digital harassment.

YAC members expressed genuine long-term optimism about PED policies.

At the same time, student feedback highlights opportunities to strengthen consistency and equity as districts move into their second implementation year.



I Communicate the purpose of PED policies alongside the expectations. Students generally reported knowing the rules and consequences of their school's PED policy, but many wanted more information about the purpose and intended benefits. Communication quality was the strongest predictor of positive student experiences in the survey, which was reinforced within the responses of the EVE Workforce Survey. Ongoing messaging about the policy's purpose, framed as something done for students rather than to them, will help build understanding, acceptance, and long-term buy-in. Students also identified peer-to-peer communication as a particularly effective strategy.

II Support consistent implementation across classrooms. Students frequently described differences in how policies are implemented from one classroom to another. More than half reported that phones are still used at least occasionally during the school day. Districts can strengthen consistency by providing ongoing staff support, clarifying expectations for all staff, and regularly reviewing implementation practices proactively throughout the year.

III Monitor equitable implementation across student groups. Students experience policy implementation differently across student groups. Black and African American students reported lower perceptions of fairness than the overall average, and students with disabilities were more likely to report stress related to the policy. District review of implementation and discipline data by student groups can help districts identify patterns and support equitable experiences for all students.

IV Strengthen and clarify the exemption process for high school. Often, students in high school reported more challenges with the policy than middle school students. Students identified employment, dual-credit participation, and family communication as common reasons they may need access to a personal device during the school day. While EO 25-09 has exemption language to address these needs, a majority of staff reported not knowing whether the exemption process is fair. Clear, transparent, consistent, and equitable exemption procedures can improve understanding, fairness, and confidence in policy implementation at the high school level.

V Model the learning environment schools want to create. While EO 25-09 does not regulate staff device use, students consistently viewed adult behavior as part of the policy environment. When staff use personal devices during instructional time, students may be less likely to see the policy as a shared commitment to learning. Staff modeling the expectations of their district's PED policy themselves can reinforce policy goals and strengthen credibility.

VI Commit to tracking progress over time. Year one data reflects an early stage of implementation. Students with more experience under established PED policies reported fewer concerns and were more likely to describe the policy as a normal part of the school day. Continuing to gather student feedback in future years will help ODE and districts monitor progress, identify successful practices, and make informed improvements over time.