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**THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA**

SENATE BILL

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| No. | 2 | Session of  2024 |

INTRODUCED BY

REFERRED TO EDUCATION

AN ACT

Establishing the Cell Phone Lockable Bag Pilot Program.

The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania hereby enacts as follows:

Section 1. The act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, is amended by adding a section to read:

Section 1322-B. Cell Phone Lockable Bag Pilot Program.

(a) Establishment.--The Cell Phone Lockable Bag Pilot Program is established. The purpose of the program shall be to provide funding to cover the costs of purchasing secure cell phone lockable bags. Within 90 days of the effective date of this section and subject to availability of funds, the Department will award grants to successful applicants and ensure that grant funding under the program is geographically dispersed throughout this Commonwealth. The number of applicants chosen shall be contingent upon the amount of funding allocated.

(b) Duties.--A school entity that participates in the program must:

(1) Create a school entity policy that prohibits the use of cell phones during school time and requires students to use cell phone lockable bags, provided that nothing in the policy shall prohibit a school employee from using a cell phone during school time to perform the employee's work. The policy shall provide for exemptions for students who have a documented medical condition that necessitates the use of the phone, such as diabetes. The school entity's adopted policy shall be posted on the school entity's publicly accessible Internet website.

(2) Track changes over the course of two school years in student mental health, incidents of bullying, incidents of violence and academic performance and submit that information to the Department. The Department shall develop a uniform report method for the school entity to use to track each of the metrics.

(c) Report.--The Department shall submit to the Governor and the General Assembly a report on the program utilizing the data submitted. The report may not contain any identifiable information regarding a student. Any information submitted by school entities as part of the program, the disclosure of which would be reasonably likely to result in a substantial and demonstrable risk of physical harm or the personal security of students or staff shall remain confidential and shall not be subject to the Right-to-Know Law. The Department may release aggregate data at its discretion.

(d) Expiration.--This section shall expire December 1, 2026.

(e) Definitions.--As used in this section, the following words and phrases shall have the meanings given to them in this subsection unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

"Cell phone lockable bag." A reusable, secure case, pouch, or bag that has a locking mechanism and can be used to store cell phones and other smart devices.

“Department.” The Pennsylvania Department of Education.

"Program." The Cell Phone Lockable Bag Pilot Program.

"School entity." A school district, intermediate unit, area career and technical school, charter school, regional charter school, approved private school, nonpublic school, chartered school for the education of the deaf or the blind or private residential rehabilitative institution.

Section 2. This act shall take effect in 60 days.