



**STATE OF HAWAII  
BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
P.O. BOX 2360  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

**House Committee on Education**

Tuesday, February 11, 2025

2:01 p.m.

Hawaii State Capitol, Room 309

**Measure: House Bill 1343, Relating to Education**

**Purpose of Measure:**

Requires the Board of Education to adopt a policy that bans the use of phones and related devices by students during school hours.

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, and Members of the Committee:

The Board of Education (Board) supports the intent of House Bill 1343, and appreciates the Legislature's concern.

The Board recognizes the importance of fostering an environment conducive to our students' learning, and the significant impact of cell phones on our lives.

Currently, policies regarding cell phone use are implemented at the discretion of the individual schools. The Board oversees curriculum as part of its constitutional and statutory authority to set statewide education policy, and believes a Board policy would allow for consistent implementation for schools across the state.

A Board-level policy would also allow for the nimbleness needed to respond to the speed of technological advances.

The Board previously debated banning cell phones in public schools statewide, but opted not to after members voiced concern about students being able to access phones during an emergency.

Policies that have been implemented across the nation range from a complete ban on cell phones, and blocking access to social media platforms during the school day, to providing pouches in which students can safely store their phones during class time, and allowing teachers to make exceptions for use of phones for educational purposes.

The Board is again looking at a policy and recognizes the many considerations that must be balanced in the formulation of such a policy. We note that the Board's process for policy development requires public engagement to ensure the consideration of stakeholder input.

We would support a resolution that encourages the Board's work to develop a policy, and requires the Board to report to the Legislature on progress made.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify on behalf of the Board.

**HB-1343**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:30:19 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/11/2025 2:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Janice English	Waimea Middle Public Conversion Charter School	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Education Committee,

I appreciate you taking the time to consider this legislation that impacts schools. When considering this legislation, I would like committee members to consider site-level implementation.



**LATE**

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**LATE**

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## TESTIMONY TO THE HAWAI'I HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Item: **HB 1343 - Relating to Cell Phones in Schools**  
Position: **SUPPORT**  
Hearing: **2/11/2025, Conference Room 229, 2:01pm**  
Submitter: **Osa Tui, Jr. – President, Hawai'i State Teachers Association**

Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, and members of the committee,

The Hawai'i State Teachers Association supports HB 1343 which requires the Board of Education to adopt a policy that bans the use of phones and related devices by students during school hours.

Our educator members have shared that cell phones in schools have impacted student learning, created social and behavioral concerns, and caused socioeconomic disparities to be highlighted. We believe that this bill could help create a focused-learning environment for our keiki.

The following observations about cell phones in schools have been shared by our members:

### **Distraction and Focus**

Classroom Disruptions: Cell phones can be a constant source of distraction during lessons. Notifications, social media updates, games, and texting pull students' attention away from the teacher and the learning material. Even if a phone isn't actively in use, its mere presence can be distracting.

Reduced Attention Span: The constant availability of cell phones can contribute to shorter attention spans and difficulty focusing on tasks, impacting students' ability to engage deeply with complex concepts.

Multitasking Myth: Many students believe they can effectively multitask while using their phones in class. However, research suggests that multitasking actually reduces cognitive performance and hinders learning.

## **Impact on Learning**

Lower Academic Performance: Studies have shown a correlation between cell phone use in class and lower grades. The distractions and reduced focus can lead to missed information, incomplete assignments, and poorer test scores.

Decreased Engagement: When students are preoccupied with their phones, they are less likely to participate in class discussions, ask questions, and collaborate with their peers. This can hinder their overall learning experience.

Lost Learning Time: Dealing with cell phone use in the classroom, whether it's confiscating phones or redirecting students' attention, takes up valuable instructional time that could be spent on teaching and learning.

## **Social and Behavioral Concerns**

Cyberbullying: Cell phones can be a tool for cyberbullying, creating a hostile environment for some students and impacting their well-being and academic performance.

Social Isolation: While cell phones can facilitate some social connections, excessive use can also lead to social isolation within the classroom. Students may be more focused on their virtual interactions than on building relationships with their peers.

Cheating: Cell phones can make it easier for students to cheat on tests and assignments, undermining the integrity of the educational process.

## **Equity and Access**

Socioeconomic Disparities: Not all students have equal access to the latest cell phone technology. This can create a sense of inequality and exacerbate existing social divisions within the school.

## **Why We Support this Bill**

By limiting cell phone use, schools can create a more focused and productive learning environment where students are encouraged to engage with the material and with each other. Reducing distractions helps students develop important skills such as concentration, critical thinking, and communication, which are essential for success in school and beyond.

The Hawai'i State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support** this bill.

**HB-1343**

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 5:04:59 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/11/2025 2:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jacob Wiencek	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

Extensive evidence has been documented over the last 20 years showing a direct, negative relationship between youth cell phone use in school and student educational achievement. Restricting and in cases banning smart phone use during schooltime will help reverse these deeply negative trends.

I urge this Committee to SUPPORT this bill!

**HB-1343**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 12:54:35 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/11/2025 2:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Alice Luck	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I believe the language of the bill should be more directive to the DOE in the timeline that the Legislature is requesting. The language mentions a date to begin implementation but no end date. I also recommend adding emerging technologies, such as META enabled sunglasses.

Thank you.

**HB-1343**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 1:30:57 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/11/2025 2:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Rodrigo Romo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Members of the Committee:

I am writing to offer strong support to HB1343 which requires DOE to implement policy to ban or limit the use of cell phones by students in class. My wife is a former DOE science teacher and she saw the proliferation of cell phones in her students during her teaching years.

Cell phone use is not only a distraction for the student using it, but for the teacher and the rest of the class as well. Many times students are using their phones not as a tool to help them with the subject they are studying but instead to engage in social media or other non class related activities.

The policy could be as simple as having locking boxes in the classrooms where the students would lock in their devices upon entering the class and retrieve them when exiting. If the teacher thinks they could use their phones as a tool for the class, the teacher could allow them to retrieve them for that purpose.

This is a case in which technology has far outpaced policy and the DOE's policies with regards to cell phone use need to be updated to meet the times.

Mahalo



**HB-1343**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 1:33:39 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/11/2025 2:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Edward Johnston	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Cellphone use in a school environment should be prohibited . Education of the individual students must be the priority.

**HB-1343**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 1:49:07 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/11/2025 2:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sunita Przewlocki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Testimony in Support of H.B. No. 1313 (2025)**

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing today as a concerned parent and a staunch supporter of teachers who are already facing incredibly difficult challenges in the classroom. I am in full support of H.B. No. 1313, which seeks to establish a policy that bans cell phones and related devices, such as smartwatches, earbuds, and Bluetooth-connected headphones, during school hours.

As a parent, I have witnessed firsthand how distractions from cell phones can hinder my child’s focus and academic progress. It is disheartening to see how frequently students are pulled away from important lessons to check notifications or text messages, which ultimately impacts their ability to retain and engage with the material. Research has long shown that allowing cell phones in the classroom diminishes student concentration, decreases overall academic performance, and negatively affects social interactions between students. These disruptions do not only harm individual students but also disrupt the flow of teaching and learning for all students in the classroom.

Teachers, already under immense pressure to meet academic goals and manage diverse learning needs, should not have to fight for their students' attention due to the constant pull of personal devices. Our educators work tirelessly to create engaging and supportive learning environments, and it is only fair that we help eliminate distractions that impede their efforts. Allowing teachers to focus on their lessons, rather than managing the distractions of cell phones, will create a more productive, focused, and harmonious learning environment for all students.

Furthermore, this bill is in line with the growing movement across the country to reduce cell phone usage in schools. Several states have already enacted similar measures with positive results, such as improved test scores, better socialization, and healthier student-teacher relationships. Hawaii should follow suit to prioritize student learning and well-being. As reported by local teachers, removing cell phones in schools has already shown positive outcomes, including fewer distractions and more opportunities for in-person communication among students.

We owe it to our students to help foster an environment where they can succeed academically and socially. I wholeheartedly believe that this bill will contribute to creating the focused, enriching school experience that our students deserve.

I strongly urge you to support H.B. No. 1343 and help ensure that our schools remain places where learning is the priority, not distractions from personal devices. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sunita Przewlocki

**HB-1343**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 1:53:15 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/11/2025 2:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Thomas Fratinardo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I am in support of HB1343. This issue regarding personal devices should never have become such a distraction for our keiki. Please approve this legislation and support our Kumu and staff. They are overworked and overwhelmed. There is a time and place for such devices in the classroom setting. DOE Kumu are able to discern when such time is appropriate as it applies to lessons. Mahalo

**HB-1343**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 1:53:27 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/11/2025 2:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Rachel Ebert	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Schools should be a place to learn and socailize not for scolling. Help teach our kids how to interact with eachother, IRL (in Real life), it is better for their mental health.

**LATE**

**HB-1343**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 2:31:58 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/11/2025 2:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Patrick McGrath	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1344

**LATE**

**HB-1343**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 2:42:39 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/11/2025 2:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessica Andrews	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Hawai'i State Representatives,

I am writing to ask you to strongly support HB 1343, to address the problematic issue of cell phones in our schools. Hawai'i students urgently need our representatives to act decisively and create a state-wide law to remove the distraction of cell phones in schools and allow teachers to focus on education.

My children attend public schools in Hilo and my husband has served as both a middle school and high school teacher for many years. Their experiences speak to the negative effect that cell phones have on our schools. Since many Hawai'i schools have no established cell phone bans, teachers spend valuable classroom time monitoring phone usage and competing with youtube or social media for student attention. When teachers try to ban cell phone usage in their individual classrooms, they are often outliers at schools with no school-wide cell phone ban and experience constant opposition, even outright aggression, from students who insist on nonstop use of cell phones, especially in middle and high school classrooms.

The lack of a state-wide cell phone ban in Hawai'i schools effectively means that each teacher is on their own to invent and enforce cell phone policies, leading to inconsistency and ineffective teaching conditions, thereby lowering educational quality. As a parent, I can think of no benefit to allowing students the use of cell phones in classrooms, especially when many schools provide laptops to students for online instruction and when the negative effects are overwhelmingly destructive to the classroom setting.

Our keiki and teachers deserve action from our state legislature!

**Please act now: Pass HB 1343 and act to ban cell phones in schools.**

Mahalo,

Jessica Andrews

Parent of a 3rd grader and 7th grader

Hilo, Hawaii





**LATE**

**HB-1343**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 2:44:48 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/11/2025 2:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ron Terry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a former teacher, I believe this measure is critical to responding to the challenges that teachers face in the classroom and will help students become more engaged.

**LATE**

**HB-1343**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 3:48:06 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/11/2025 2:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patti Cook	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senators - I am not a certificated teacher but worked for nearly 2 decades in Waimea Middle Public Conversion Charter School to improve student outcomes including academic achievement and preparedness for college and career, and I strongly support this measure. It is, in fact, overdue. Not only do our students and teachers need and deserve this support to enhance classroom focus and engagement in learning but it would serve to improve student well-being by helping reduce bullying and related cellphone distractions and mean-spiritedness that unfortunately harm - and/or torment a fairly large number of students.

Eliminating cell phone access during the school day (unless a teacher specifically prepares a lesson plan that includes use of a cell and possibly an online app as part of his/her curriculum) would directly diminish cyberbullying and in-school texting which are very difficult for teachers, administrators and support staff to monitor. (We did use an online tool to monitor inappropriate language and behaviors for the school's google service for this very reason - to prevent bullying.)

WMS parents generally support limiting use of cell phones during the school day, but did push back on wanting to be able to communicate with their students during the day if there was a family emergency or late-in-the-day change in plans, pickup arrangements, etc. We resolved this by accepting family emergency calls in the school office and relaying them to the classroom to the best of our staff's ability - especially when it was clearly an emergency.

Thank you for considering this to improve both academic progress and student wellbeing at a time when many students already report experiencing a high level of social-emotional issues and stress.

MAHALO - Patti Cook 808-937-2833

Waimea, Island of Hawai'i

**LATE**

**HB-1343**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 3:50:18 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/11/2025 2:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Liam Nesson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Representatives,

Thank you for bringing HB1343 up for vote. I teach at Hilo High School and see the effects of free cell phone use on campus and in the classroom. Students remain socially isolated, their emotional health is negatively affected, and attention is regularly distracted.

With a non-restrictive policy on campus the burden of regulation is placed on teachers. This is an unweildy responsibility rife with conflict. Students are regularly distracted by their phones; constantly policing phones takes time and energy away from valuable teaching. Because classroom policies differ, students are confused and sometimes defiant. Many times, my colleagues and I have had to call campus security because a student refuses to stow away their phone during class time.

Current research shows that excessive phone and social media use is harmful to teens. So why are we allowing unfettered use during school?

This bill will have a positive effect on our childrens' academic focus and social-emotional learning. Please support it.

Sincerely,  
Liam Conway-Nesson  
Hilo High School

**LATE**

**HB-1343**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 4:34:07 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/11/2025 2:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sarah Anderson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill 110%. It is imperative that students have a school environment that allows them to actually learn and to develop the critical thinking skills that are essential in navigating our complicated world. Teachers too need every advantage to be able to engage and teach the students. Controlling phones and social media within the classroom is fundamental to improving education and real teaching and learning.

Thank you for your consideration on this critical issue.

-Sarah Anderson

**LATE**

**HB-1343**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 7:21:27 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/11/2025 2:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Amy Brinker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this measure and appreciate all of the bills to start working on this issue.

Mahalo,

Amy Brinker

Ala Moana/Kaka'ako

**LATE**

**HB-1343**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 8:23:44 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/11/2025 2:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ella Aki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill!

**LATE**

**HB-1343**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 8:44:39 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/11/2025 2:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kim Pierce	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Full support for the ban of cell phones on our school campuses. As a mental health provider, the benefits of the ban FAR out weigh the drawbacks. Would encourage the passing of the bill to protect the kids longer and allow greater chances of learning and peer engagement which are fundamental the the developmental tasks at hand. Mahalo for the consideration

**LATE**

**HB-1343**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 9:52:37 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/11/2025 2:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Yuka takasu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Yes for no phone at the school



**LATE**

**HB-1343**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 10:11:20 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/11/2025 2:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Joseph Cody Burkert	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I wish my support for this bill was only due to the lost academic learning caused by the children's access to games and social media. It should be noted that the access to these devices is completely attributable to their parents. However, the majority of my support for this bill is due to the harm it clearly causes to the children's attention span and ability to communicate. For those of us directly observing students at school, it is also undeniable that many children are severely affected emotionally and developmentally by their addictions to their phones. From stunted maturity to depression, the children are being harmed by their addictions. Please take this first step in steering our students back to being mentally and emotionally present, at least in school, so they can develop the skills they will need as adults.

**LATE**

**HB-1343**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 11:11:44 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/11/2025 2:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Dana Sato	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of this bill!

**LATE**

**HB-1343**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 11:28:09 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/11/2025 2:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Earl Kawaa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My work as a kumu takes me into in private schools and public school. I see the challenges teachers have with students that ar not interested in schoolof the class or the subject. Most of the students who are on their phone are doing poorly in school. Some are on their phone because the class, subject or kumu is boaring kumu.

Bottom line, remove cell phones from school. Families to call the school office if ther is an emergency.

Kawaa

**LATE**

**HB-1343**

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 12:42:52 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/11/2025 2:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Shanye Valeho-Novikoff	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As an educator for over 30 years and witnessing the evolution of technology in the schools/classroom, I oppose this bill. Although the cell phones can be a hindrance to instruction, it also can be of use for attendance, surveys, QR codes that lead to assignments, and more importantly a useful tool during emergencies. The cell phone is also a communication piece during lockdowns and the presence of a live shooter on campus. The teacher can collect all cell phones before teaching his/her class. This can be a classroom norm.

**LATE**

**HB-1343**

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 4:35:14 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/11/2025 2:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Aileen Waiiau	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill because it "would ensure our kids are off their phones, bluetooth headphones, etc. during school. Schools that have done this find students are more engaged with each other and in class within a couple of weeks."

**LATE**

**HB-1343**

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 7:58:25 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/11/2025 2:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Vance Arakaki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill for no phone distractions in DOE schools