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Governor Signs LB140 Into Law

Lincoln, NE — On May 20, 2025, Governor Jim Pillen signed Legislative Bill 140 (LB140) into law, which requires all Nebraska public school districts to adopt a policy restricting student use of cell phones and other personal electronic devices during classroom instruction.

Key Points of LB140

Under LB140, school policies must limit or prohibit personal electronic device use during class time, with specific exceptions for:

- Devices required by an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan
- Educational use approved by the school board or staff
- Emergencies or perceived threats
- Use necessary to manage a student's healthcare
- Other uses deemed appropriate by the school board

Full bill language: <https://nebraskalegislature.gov/FloorDocs/109/PDF/Slip/LB140.pdf>

What This Means for Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Students

Many Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing students use cell phones and tablets as essential tools for communication and access. These may include:

- Captioning or transcription apps
- Video Relay Services (VRS)
- Visual or tactile alerts
- Speech-to-text software
- Messaging apps used with interpreters or staff

LB140 does not prohibit the use of these tools—but their use must be clearly documented in a student's IEP or 504 Plan to ensure they are allowed during class under the law's exceptions.

Families with Deaf Parents of Hearing Children

In some families, Deaf parents may use texting or video calling during the school day to communicate with their hearing children—for example, to coordinate transportation or emergency information. LB140 does not specifically address this scenario. If this type of communication is necessary during school hours, we encourage families to contact their local school district to discuss how this may be handled under the law's existing exemptions, such as emergency use or educational necessity.

Guidance for Families and Students

To ensure continued access to communication tools in the classroom:

- Review your child's IEP or 504 Plan: Make sure it clearly states the need for any communication-related device or app.
- Talk with school administrators: Ask how your district plans to implement LB140 and how accommodations will be handled.
- Contact NCDHH with questions: We can help families understand the law and support communication access planning.