

NOTICE OF MEETING

EDUCATION PLAN COMMITTEE

Secretary Treasurer's Office
Wednesday, May 15, 2024
Public viewing via live broadcast

Lois Chan-Pedley (Chair)
Christopher Richardson (Vice Chair)
Janet Fraser
Jennifer Reddy

Helen McGregor, Superintendent of Schools
Flavia Coughlan, Secretary Treasurer

Notice of Meeting

A Meeting of the **Education Plan Committee** will be held in room 180 of the VSB Education Centre (1580 West Broadway, Vancouver BC) **for participating trustees, staff, rights holder representatives and stakeholder representatives** on **Wednesday, May 15, 2024, at 5:00 pm**. The meeting will be live broadcast for the public.

Trustees:	Alfred Chien	Suzie Mah (Alternate)
	Preeti Faridkot (Alternate)	Joshua Zhang
	Victoria Jung	
Student Trustee:	Mia Liu	
Other Senior Team Staff:	Daniel Blue	Maureen McRae-Stanger
	Pedro da Silva	Pete Nuij
	Michael Gray	Alison Ogden
Rights holder Representatives:	Faye Mitchell, x ^w məθk ^w əyəm (Musqueam)	
	Paul Wick, Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation)	
	Kirsten Touring, səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh Nation)	
Representatives:	Lorena Spencer, CUPE 15	Alternates: Priscilla Santos, CUPE 15 (Alternate 1) Suzette Magri, CUPE 15 (Alternate 2)
	Brent Boyd, CUPE 407	
	Jaclyn Ferreira, DPAC	Sandra Bell, DPAC (Alternate 1) Michael Lang, DPAC (Alternate 2)
	Tim Chester, IUOE	Tim De Vivo, IUOE
	Erica-Jade Mulherin, PASA	Scott Deyell, PASA
	Justin Chapman, Trades	
	Hilary Watt, VASSA	David Nicks, VASSA
	Salena Sharma, VDSC	
	Deborah Tin Tun, VEAES	Karine Ng, VEAES
	Riley McMitchell, VEPVPA	Stephen Leung, VEPVPA
	Carmen Schaedeli, VSTA	Carl Janze, VSTA

EDUCATION PLAN COMMITTEE

MEETING AGENDA

Wednesday, May 15, 2024, at 5:00 pm
Room 180, VSB Education Centre

With deep gratitude and respect, we are honoured to be learning and unlearning on the ancestral and unceded lands of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) and səliłwətał (Tseilil-Waututh Nation).

The meeting is currently being broadcasted live, and both the audio and video recordings will be accessible to the public for viewing even after the meeting ends. Footage from this meeting may be viewed from Canada or anywhere else in the world.

Meeting Decorum:

The Board has a strong commitment to ethical conduct. This includes the responsibility of committee members to conduct themselves with appropriate decorum and professionalism. As Chair of the Committee, it is my responsibility to see that decorum is maintained. To do that I ask that:

- i. All committee participants request to speak through the chair.
- ii. Civility towards others is maintained as committee participants share perspectives and participate in discussion.
- iii. Staff are able to submit objective reports without influence or pressure as their work is acknowledged and appreciated.
- iv. Committee participants refrain from personal inflammatory or accusatory language or action.
- v. Committee participants present themselves in a professional and courteous manner.

Please see reverse for the Purpose/Function and Power and Duties of this Committee.

1. Items for Approval

1.1 None

2. Information Items

2.1 None

3. Discussion Items

3.1 Personal Digital Device Restrictions

Presenters

Pedro da Silva, Associate Superintendent

3.2 Motion referred from April 29, 2024 Board meeting:
Promoting Focused Learning Environments and Online Safety

Trustee Victoria Jung

Education Plan Committee

C. Responsibilities:

- C.1 Review and make recommendations to the Board regarding matters related to the development and implementation of the Education Plan.
- C.2 Review and make recommendations to the Board regarding the annual Framework for Enhancing Student Learning Report.
- C.3 Review and make recommendations to the Board regarding proposed Board Authority Authorized Courses.
- C.4 Review and make recommendations regarding the implementation and cessation of District programs.
- C.5 Review and make recommendations to the Board regarding annual school learning plans.
- C.6 Review and make recommendations to the Board regarding school calendars.
- C.7 Review matters referred to the Committee by the Board and make recommendations as requested.

May 15, 2024

ITEM 3.1

TO: Education Plan Committee

FROM: Pedro da Silva, Associate Superintendent, Learning and Information Technology

RE: Personal Digital Devices Restrictions

*Reference to
Education Plan*

GOAL: The Vancouver School Board will improve student achievement, physical and mental well-being, and belonging by...

OBJECTIVE(S): Improving school environments to ensure they are safe, caring, welcoming, and inclusive places for students and families.

INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Education and Child Care has revised the Provincial Standards for Codes of Conduct Order to establish provincial uniformity and to assist boards of education in implementing suitable policies to regulate student personal digital device use. Updates to School Codes of Conduct will take effect on July 1, 2024.

The purpose of the amended Order is to promote online safety and support focused learning environments by reducing non-educational use of personal digital devices. Schools must include specific statements in their codes of conduct that limit the use of personal devices, such as cell phones and tablets, during school hours or instructional time.

Personal devices may be used during school hours for educational purposes, as directed by the educator; for health and medical purposes, as specified in an Individual Education Plan or Student Safety Plan; or to support special or diverse educational needs, such as assistive technology related to Individual Education Plans or Student Support Plans.

This report is provided for information and discussion.

EDUCATION PLANNING – Information and Discussion

This report will be accompanied by a presentation that will provide further context, update the committee on the ongoing work to adhere to the Order, and gather feedback from the committee members.

Guiding questions for feedback:

- What strategies or methods can we implement to guide students towards the appropriate use of personal electronic devices?
- Are there any concerns or issues that the recent Order from the Ministry has raised?
- What are your suggestions for effective collaboration on this topic in the upcoming year?

Attachments:

- A. Letter from Ministry of Education and Child Care
- B. Personal Digital Device Restrictions Support Guide



April 12, 2024

Dear Superintendent:

I am writing to let you know that the Provincial Standards for Codes of Conduct Order has been [amended](#), effective July 1, 2024. This order sets out the standards that boards of education must meet in establishing student codes of conduct for their respective districts. The amendments require all boards of education to include one or more statements in their codes of conduct about restricting the use of personal digital devices at school, to promote focused learning environments and online safety.

On January 26, 2024, Premier David Eby and Minister Rachna Singh announced cell phone restrictions in schools as one of three important actions to keep kids and young people safe. The Ministry of Education and Child Care engaged with education and Indigenous partners to determine the mechanism for the restrictions and to seek input on implementation supports.

I am sharing with you today:

- The ministerial order that amended the Provincial Standards for Codes of Conduct Order, effective July 1, 2024; and
- A [Support Guide](#), which provides supporting information relating to the changes to the order.

I understand that many districts already address personal digital devices use in schools, either at the district level and/or at the school level. The goal of establishing provincial consistency in restricting personal digital devices use in schools is to ensure that all students in BC are safe from online harms and are focused on their learning with fewer distractions. Districts are offered some flexibility to develop an approach to restrict personal digital devices use in classrooms that best fits the school community's needs.

Personal digital devices can be an important learning tool as well as a support for students with diverse needs, and as such we have embedded language to address accessibility, equity, and accommodations within the Order and the Support Guide.

Please update your Codes of Conduct to align with the amended Provincial Standards for Codes of Conduct Order by July 1, 2024, and submit them through email to ecc.strategicpriorities@gov.bc.ca by August 15, 2024. In the meantime, should you have questions, please contact Meghan Day, Executive Director, Equity and Strategic Priorities, by email at Meghan.Day@gov.bc.ca.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C.A. Zacharuk". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Christina Zacharuk
Deputy Minister

Personal Digital Device Restrictions Support Guide

The Ministry of Education and Child Care has [amended](#) the *Provincial Standards for Codes of Conduct Order* (the “Order”) to promote provincial consistency and to support boards of education in ensuring their schools have appropriate policies in place to restrict student personal digital device use. The amended Order will come into effect on July 1, 2024.

This guide is intended to support boards of education in amending their codes of conduct to align with the amended Order by including language that addresses student use of personal digital devices (including cell phones) at school. This Order sets out the standards that boards of education must meet in establishing student codes of conduct for their respective districts. The information in this support guide is provided for your convenience and guidance and is not a replacement for the Order.

The Ministry of Education and Child Care recommends boards of education engage with their Indigenous Education Councils as part of the process of updating their codes of conduct.

Order Language

The following sections are excerpts from the amended Order:

- 1 In this order “**personal digital device**” means any personal electronic device that can be used to communicate or to access the internet, such as a cell phone or a tablet.
- 6 Boards must ensure that the following elements are included in their codes of conduct:
 - ...(d.1) one or more statements about restricting the use of personal digital devices at school for the purpose of promoting online safety and focused learning environments;
- 8 Further to section 6(d.1), the statements about restricting the use of personal digital devices at school must address the following matters:
 - (a) restrictions on the use of personal digital devices at school, including during hours of instruction;
 - (b) use of personal digital devices for instructional purposes and digital literacy;
 - (c) use of personal digital devices that is appropriate to a student’s age and developmental stage;
 - (d) accessibility and accommodation needs;
 - (e) medical and health needs;
 - (f) equity to support learning outcomes.

Intention

Codes of conduct to restrict student personal digital device use at school to promote online safety and support focused learning environments.

Supporting Information

Section 1 Personal Digital Devices

The Order defines this term as “any personal digital device that can be used to communicate or to access the internet, such as a cell phone or a tablet.” Additional examples of devices that may fall into this definition are smart watches, gaming devices, and electronic toys.

Subsection 8(a) At school, including during hours of instruction

Codes of conduct must include statements about restricting the use of personal digital devices during hours of instruction. Boards of education are expected to use these statements to limit the use of personal digital devices at times when students should be focused on participating in educational programs.

With respect to the meaning of “hours of instruction”, please see the relevant definitions in the *School Regulation*.

Codes of conduct may also address student use of personal digital devices during school hours or on school property.

Subsection 8(b) Instructional purposes and digital literacy

Codes of conduct must address the use of personal digital devices for instructional purposes and digital literacy. Instructional purposes might include the use of devices as directed by teachers during class time. Digital literacy purposes might include designated computer or cell phone time that serves to promote digital literacy by providing opportunities for students to use devices while under the supervision of a teacher, which may include critical dialogue regarding responsible and appropriate use of devices.

Subsection 8(c) Age and Developmental Stage

Codes of conduct must address the use of personal digital devices that is appropriate to a student’s age and developmental stage. For example, elementary school codes of conduct may take a more restrictive approach, while middle and secondary schools may allow for progressively greater flexibility and student agency in using personal digital devices.

Subsection 8(d) Accessibility and accommodation needs

Codes of conduct must address accessibility and accommodation needs. This might involve the use of personal digital devices to support students with disabilities or diverse abilities as outlined in students’ support plans and Individual Education Plans. Codes of conduct may consider the use of assistive technology on personal digital devices at school to support student accessibility, communication, and autonomy. Examples of assistive technology could include devices or programs that support students with hearing loss or voice, speech or language disorders. Codes of conduct might allow for the use of tools such as augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices, text to speech and speech to text programs or devices, translators, timers, calendars, and reminder software to promote accessibility and to facilitate participation.

Subsection 8(e) Medical and health needs

Codes of conduct must address medical and health needs. This might include approved use of personal digital devices to support medical necessities, such as monitoring blood glucose levels for a student with diabetes.

Subsection 8(f) Equity to support learning outcomes

Codes of conduct must address equity to support learning outcomes. Codes of conduct might include considerations to ensure personal digital device restrictions do not disproportionately impact some students

more than others. For example, codes of conduct may reflect computer or cell phone access facilitated by boards of education to support students who do not have access to internet outside of school and who therefore might use technology at school to complete schoolwork and foster connections with peers.

Research/Evidence

Restricting the use of personal digital devices at school is consistent with published research and evidence. The Ministry of Education and Child Care recommends that boards of education consider available research, including the following information, when amending their codes of conduct.

Reducing Screen Time at School

A recent academic paper (Smale et al., 2021) looking at the potential benefits and harms of cell phone use in classrooms to provide policy recommendations concluded that “removing cell phones from classrooms is likely to reduce students’ temptation to check their devices, play games, text, and surf the Internet, consequently enhancing their ability to focus and thus improving their performance due to greater intake and memory of academic material.” (p.51)

According to the 2023 BC Adolescent Health Survey results (Smith et al., 2024), during their last school day prior to responding to the survey, top reasons for which students reported using their phones included: to scroll social media (74%), connect with family and friends (65%), game (not esports) (26%), game (esports) (18%), and only 11% of students reported using their phones for none of these activities.

There is a growing field of research into the impacts of cell phones and social media on mental health and academic performance, however there is still limited in-depth or longitudinal studies and more research is needed to confirm causality versus correlation (Smale et al., 2021; Abi-Jaoude, et al., 2020; Vuorre et al., 2021; Shannon, et al., 2022). Social media use in particular has been linked to emotional and coping challenges, including eroded self-worth, fear of missing out, distraction, stress and anxiety, and exposure to cyber-bullying (Vuorre et al., 2021; Abi-Jaoude et al., 2020; Shannon et al., 2022).

To promote physical and mental health and support healthy relationships, HealthLinkBC (2023) recommends a maximum of 2 hours of screen time per day for children aged 5-17. According to a recent report (Saunders & Colley, 2024) based on the Canadian Community Health Survey, average screen time increased between 2018 and 2021. In 2018, 42.5% of youth between age 12-17 reported meeting the recommended 2 hours or less of screen time on school days and 21% on non-school days, compared to 29.8% and 12.2% in 2021. Increased screen time takes away from time spent in direct connection with others, physical activity, and learning activities, and delays sleep.

Digital Literacy

As set out in the *School Act*, “the purpose of the British Columbia school system is to enable all learners to become literate, to develop their individual potential and to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to contribute to a healthy, democratic and pluralistic society and a prosperous and sustainable economy.” Digital literacy is instrumental to meeting this purpose. Digital literacy can include both the basic skills needed to operate devices and programs, as well as the thinking skills needed to access, evaluate, and utilize digital information. Jobs across all industries increasingly need foundational to advanced computer skills (Bergson-Shilcock, 2020). Digital literacy further promotes critical thinking related to internet safety, media, and online participation which benefit personal agency, holistic health, and political engagement and democracy (Cortesi et al., 2020).

Equity, Accessibility and Accommodations

Many B.C. students face barriers due to factors such as race, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, care status, disabilities, diverse abilities, immigration status or primary language.

Students who face barriers are likely to experience greater benefits from access to technology and internet to support their unique needs. Cell phones can support equity through access to supports and services, connections and relationships, applications for learning, and more (UNESCO, 2023; McCreary Centre Society, 2018; Ministry of Children and Family Development, 2021). Cell phones can also support a sense of safety and promote social connection (Ministry of Children and Family Development, 2021).

The UNESCO Technology in Education report (2023) identifies that, “People with disabilities face some of the most significant barriers in accessing quality education. Technology provides multiple means of representing information, expressing knowledge and engaging in learning, which can support people with disabilities, providing fair and optimized access to the curriculum, while developing their independence, agency and social inclusion” (p. 37). They further identify that “Some applications and technology-assisted learning initiatives support language learning” (p. 40).

Access to the Internet

According to the 2023 BC Adolescent Health Survey, 97% of youth in B.C. had access to the internet in some capacity, and among these youth, 31% identified as accessing internet at school (Smith et al., 2023, p. 41). While highspeed internet or cellular services are available to most B.C. residents, many face barriers for access due to affordability (Ministry of Citizens' Services, 2022, pp. 26, 42). Students without internet access at home or cellular data may have access internet while at school or in other wifi-enabled locations outside of their houses.

BC Youth's Access to Technology fact sheet (McCreary Centre Society, 2018), based on 2018 Adolescent Health Survey data, identifies that a lack of internet access can create barriers to access health and mental health information, reduce feelings of connection and negatively impact school and employment skills (p. 1). They further note that those without internet were less likely to plan to graduate secondary school or pursue post-secondary education and reported poorer mental health and wellbeing, with higher levels of school absences, self-harm, and suicidality (p. 3). School connectedness was seen to be “protective for youth who lacked Internet access. For example, those who felt like a part of their school were more likely to rate their mental health as good or excellent ..., to feel happy ..., and to plan to continue their education beyond high school.” (p. 6)

Resources:

Curriculum

- [BC's curriculum](#) provides many opportunities for students to consider the appropriate use of technology. The provincial Applied Design, Skills, and Technologies (ADST) course is required learning for all students. Other areas of the curriculum reinforce this learning about technology use, such as the health components of the Physical and Health Education (PHE) curriculum which teach students about making choices to promote physical and mental health and developing healthy relationships.

Next Generation Network

- Through the Next Generation Network, the Ministry supports school districts with resources to protect internet access on school networks with firewall services to block: access to social media sites, inappropriate images, websites defined as inappropriate by the districts.

Digital Literacy

- BC's [Digital Literacy Framework](#) gives teachers suggestions on what ages to introduce important concepts related to topics like digital footprints, online safety, and information literacy.
- [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization \(UNESCO\) International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training](#) provides a database of digital competence frameworks, links to articles and think-pieces, and webinars.
- [Youth and Digital Citizenship+ \(Plus\): Understanding Skills for a Digital World](#) overview of digital citizenship, its importance in the digital age, includes frameworks and resources.

Assistive Technology

- [SET-BC \(setbc.org\)](#) provides assistive technology services for students living with physical disabilities.

Parent & Educator Resources

Digital literacy training

- [MediaSmarts](#) Non-profit organization that develops digital media literacy programs and resources with BC specific resources and curriculum charts for Grades K-12. Additional resources for parents include blogs, games, tips sheets, guides, workshops & tutorials, and videos.
- [Expect respect and a safe education \(erase\)](#) Online safety information, actions and resources to support K-12 students, parents, families, and educators in learning how to use technology responsibly, and stay safe from online harms.
 - erase Training sessions were designed to support families and caregivers navigate the digital world.
- [TelusWise](#) free digital literacy education program that offers informative workshops and resources to help people of all ages have a positive experience as digital citizens.
- [Canadian Paediatric Society - Digital media: Promoting healthy screen use in school-aged children and adolescents](#)
- [Canadian Paediatric Society - Screen time and digital media: Advice for parents of school-aged children and teens](#)
- [Canadian Paediatric Society - Social media: What parents should know](#)

Assistive Technology

- [Understood.org - What is assistive technology?](#)

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May 15, 2024

ITEM 3.2

TO: Education Plan Committee

FROM: Trustee Victoria Jung

RE: Motion referred from April 29, 2024 Board meeting:
Promoting Focused Learning Environments and Online Safety

*Reference to
Education Plan*

GOAL: The Vancouver School Board will increase equity by ...

OBJECTIVE(S): Improving stewardship of the district's resources by focusing on effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability.

INTRODUCTION

At the April 29, 2024, Public Board meeting, the Board referred the attached motion to the Education Plan Committee.

Attachment:

Notice of Motion – Promoting Focused Learning Environments and Online Safety (April 29, 2024)

April 29, 2024

TO: Board of Education

FROM: Victoria Jung, Trustee

RE: Notice of Motion – Promoting Focused Learning Environments and Online Safety

Reference to Education Plan

GOAL: Improve student achievement, physical and mental well-being and belonging

OBJECTIVE(S): by improving school environments to ensure they are safe, caring, welcoming and inclusive places for students and families.

REFERENCE TO VSB POLICY

Please indicate if the proposed motion relates to an existing policies from the [Board Policy Handbook](#). You must check one or more boxes.

- Relates to Policy No.
- This is an action motion and does not change or contradict any existing policies from the Board Policy Handbook

PROPOSED MOTION

That the Board direct the Superintendent to develop the Ministry of Education and Child Care required updates to school Codes of Conduct related to restricting student use of personal digital devices at schools and associated implementation guidelines for the implementation of these updates in collaboration with school leaders, by July 1, 2024.

And further,

That school Codes of Conduct include a requirement that students in kindergarten to grade six will be required to keep phones on silent and out of sight for the entire school day unless they get explicit permission from an educator.

And further,

That the Board direct the Superintendent to form a working group comprised of rights holders, district stakeholders, district leaders and school leaders with a mandate to discuss lessons learned, share best practices to restrict student personal digital device use at school, promote online safety and support focused learning environments, and propose changes to Codes of Conduct as needed during the 2024-2025 school year.

RATIONALE

Digital literacy skills are of paramount importance to students in today’s digital age. However, we must also acknowledge the challenges that come with it. The overuse of electronic devices, particularly cell phones, among our younger students has been associated with distractions, setbacks in social development, and hindrances to academic performance. Our students require guidance to navigate the addictive nature of these devices and to learn responsible usage. It is our collective responsibility to

educate them and foster habits that prioritize learning without distractions. While we are proponents of leveraging technology for educational purposes, we must also ensure that schools develop strategies to restrict access to devices that are not focused on learning outcomes.

In response to the Ministry of Education and Child Care's (the Ministry) amendment to the Provincial Standards for Codes of Conduct Order, which requires appropriate guidelines to restrict student personal digital device use, we want to encourage district and school staff to develop school-wide strategies and update their Codes of Conduct to reflect provincial guidelines prior to July 1, 2024.

Furthermore, to support the implementation and refinement of these new guidelines it is proposed that a working group be initiated in September, comprising rights holders, stakeholders, district and school leaders. The working group mandate will be to examine, discuss, and review the approaches used to support age-appropriate use of devices in the classroom. The working group will work throughout the following school year to discuss lessons learned, share best practices to restrict student personal digital device use at school, promoting online safety and supporting focused learning environments and propose changes to Codes of Conduct as needed.