

Dear Members of the Senate Education and Workforce Development Committee:

I would appreciate your consideration in modifying HB 2426, which is currently in Senate committee. I'm afraid I don't believe that most of what is in this bill has any business being dictated by the state. The only part that seems like it might be appropriate for a state law is the portion in Section 1, paragraph 4a, which, in my mind, relates to ensuring equal access to education for all students, and preventing local districts from effectively raising fees on education by requiring some or all students to provide their own electronic devices to access academic materials. The rest of the bill is a solution searching for a problem.

Individual policies about whether a teacher should allow a student to use an "electronic device" are best left to the teacher and the teacher's supervisor. With all due respect, some bureaucrat or legislator in Salem hasn't the experience or the intellect to decide what will work best for every teacher in every classroom. Similarly, whether a school board needs a specific board policy on the use of "personal electronic devices" is best left up to local school boards.

Moreover, HB 2426 doesn't define what constitutes a "personal electronic device," apparently leaving the definition open to common interpretation: radio, camera, calculator, tape player, CD player, "boom box," laptop computer, cell phone, mp3 player, wristwatch, iPod, iPad, Blackberry, etc., etc. Since when does the state legislature need to mandate that local school boards create policy for something (say a boom box or a calculator) that is not a problem for the local school district?

Another problem is in Section 1, paragraph 8. While I think I understand some of the possible concerns behind allowing access to students' personal e-mail, this provision in paragraph 8 is far too sweeping, and would even prevent school district administrators from necessary monitoring of student e-mail accounts that were hosted and provided by the school or school district itself. That doesn't make any sense.

Student behavior on campus is a concern of schools--whether that behavior involves face-to-face interaction or "cyber" interaction. To deny school officials the ability to examine or monitor the cyber activity of students that takes place on school grounds--and especially if that activity was using school-provided cyber infrastructure--is absolutely absurd.

If state officials and professional educators believe that providing more cyber ability to students will have a positive impact on learning, then those officials need to be sure not to prevent schools from monitoring students' cyber activity. I believe school boards will be far less likely to provide electronic resources to any of their students if the school boards know that their teachers and principals cannot monitor the use of those resources to ensure that they are being properly used.

In closing, it's important to note that, while I am a member of the board of directors of the Molalla River School District, any views represented in this e-mail are solely my own, and in no way represent the views or opinions of the school district, its board or employees.

Very Sincerely,

Craig Loughridge
Craig For Schools
P.O. Box 942
Beavercreek, OR 97004
Office: 503-632-8258
Cell: 503-349-6892
Web: www.craigforschools.com

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