

HAYS CONSOLIDATED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Date: June 29, 2026

Agenda Item: N.8a

Board Goal: Safety & Security

Subject: Consideration and possible approval of the Grant-funded purchase of Cell Phone Storage Pouches and Unlocking Keys – MOS Equipment

Administrator Responsible/Position: Jeri Skrocki, Chief Safety & Security Officer
Cynthia Zapata, Director of Student Services

A. Purpose of Agenda Item:

Action needed Information only Receive input

B. Authority for This Action:

Local Policy: Law or Rule: N/A
CH – Purchasing & Acquisition TEC and HB 1481

C. Goal or Need Addressed: This grant supports the enforcement of HB 1481 and our related local policy that went into effect this school year.

D. Summary:

Previous board action relating to this item: N/A

Future action anticipated: N/A

Background information: The purpose of this grant program and related purchase is to assist school districts in complying with HB 1481 which took effect June 20, 2025 and requires all Texas public school districts to adopt and enforce a policy banning student use of personal communication devices during the school day. Hays CISD has adopted policy FNCE.

The Hays CISD Student Handbook and Student Code of Conduct contain the District's Personal Electronic Device Policy, which has been updated to comply with legislative requirements prohibiting student use of personal electronic devices during the instructional day. The Student Code of Conduct already outlines progressive disciplinary consequences for violations of the District's Personal Electronic Device Policy from 2025-2026 pursuant to HB 1481.

The cell phone storage pouches and secure storage safes do not constitute a new disciplinary consequence. Rather, they are tools designed to support the consistent implementation of the existing policy and the secure management of student devices when confiscation is required.

Beginning with the 2026–2027 school year, campuses will incorporate the use of the pouches and safes into their established procedures for confiscating personal communication devices. When a device is confiscated due to a policy violation, it will be placed in a secure locking pouch and stored in a designated safe until it is returned in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and campus procedures. This process provides a standardized approach across all campuses, protects student property, maintains a clear chain of custody, and supports consistent enforcement of HB 1481 and Board Policy FNCE (LOCAL).

To further support implementation, Hays CISD applied for and was awarded grant funding to supplement the district's existing policy and procedures. The grant-funded equipment provides a secure method to manage, store, and track confiscated devices while generating a receipt for the student upon confiscation and retrieval. This system significantly reduces potential liability to the district by establishing clear checks and balances for the custody of expensive personal devices and improving accountability throughout the confiscation and return process.

Upon the return of campus principals in July 2026, a comprehensive administrative procedure will be developed to provide consistent guidelines and expectations for all campuses. The district's goal is to have these security measures, procedures, and communication materials fully developed and distributed prior to the start of the 2026–2027 school year.

E. Comments Received:

Cabinet DLT FBOC Teacher Org. Reps. Other: Campus Administrators

F. Administrative Recommendation: Administration recommends approval of the request to purchase the pouches and unlocking keys.

Advantages and benefits of this proposal: These pouches and keys are being purchased with Texas Phone Free Schools Grant funds. The pouches are designed to safely and securely store confiscated student cell phones while blocking all wireless signals, preventing the device from connecting to other personal communication devices, wireless networks, or Bluetooth-enabled technology the student may possess. The magnetic locking mechanism ensures that pouches can only be opened by authorized campus personnel using the corresponding unlocking key, reducing disputes and maintaining a clear chain of custody for confiscated devices. With additional grant funds, the district will purchase locking storage containers to hold the confiscated devices until they are returned to the student or parent. Together, these tools support campus administrators in enforcing the district's phone-free policy consistently and efficiently while minimizing classroom disruptions and protecting the integrity of the confiscation process.

Expected results in terms of student benefit/achievement: Implementing cell phone storage pouches as part of our related disciplinary action plan is expected to reduce classroom distractions and help create a more focused learning environment for our students. Consistent enforcement of our phone-free policy including secure storage means students will have more uninterrupted instructional time throughout the school day. Research supports what many of our teachers and administrators already know firsthand - when phones are out of reach, students are more engaged and better able to focus on learning. These tools will also support a safer campus climate by reducing opportunities for cyberbullying, cheating, and unauthorized recording.

Effect of this action on other parts of the system: This purchase will support consistent, standardized enforcement of our phone-free policy across all campuses, reducing the burden on individual administrators. Teachers can expect fewer interruptions and more productive instructional time. Because this is fully grant-funded, there is no impact to the General Fund. Overall, this strengthens our ability to implement state law consistently and equitably across Hays CISD.

Consequences of not approving this recommendation: Without board approval, campuses will lack a consistent and secure method for enforcing our phone-free policy as required by state law. This could result in inconsistent application of disciplinary procedures across campuses and increased risk of disputes related to phone confiscation. Additionally, failure to utilize available grant funds for this purpose may result in those funds being forfeited or redirected.

G. Fiscal Impact and Cost: \$152,657.42

Budget Bond Grant/Special Funds: Texas Phone Free Grant Program

Budget Amendment Needed

Prior Year Spending for this item/service:

Bid / Contract Information:

Reasons for rejecting alternatives: This option provides a high-quality pouch that is easy to use and also offers an App to track pouch use.

Future/Ongoing: N/A - This is a one-time purchase

H. Monitoring and Reporting Time Line:

Person responsible for evaluating this decision or action: Jeri Skrocki

Evaluation method and timeline: Semester reviews of phone-related disciplinary infractions

Next report to the Board: December 2026

I. Suggested Motion:

I move that the Hays CISD Board of Trustees the Texas Phone Free grant-funded purchase of cell phone storage pouches and unlocking keys from MOS Equipment for an amount not to exceed \$152,657.42, as presented.