

NEPN/NSBA CODE: JICJ

TITLE: STUDENT USE OF CELL PHONES AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES

AUGUSTA CODE/TITLE: JICJ/STUDENT CELL PHONE/PAGER USE

Augusta's existing policy focuses on cell phones and pagers. Since this policy was adopted in 2006, the capabilities of cell phones have increased and students are users of many other electronic devices including but not limited to camera phones, I-pods, handheld computers/PDA's and gaming devices. We have provided some more expansive "suggested language" for the Board's discussion.

While the Board may ban the use of cell phones and other electronic devices during the school day, there may be times when use might be allowed, e.g., while traveling to and from school-sponsored activities. As an alternative, the Board may prefer to give school administrators the discretion to determine when use of these devices is appropriate; this could vary depending on whether students are in elementary school (where all use is generally prohibited), middle school or high school.

We noted that Augusta's policy says that "Administrators may search cell phones if there is suspicion of violation of school policy." We caution boards and school administrators to be cautious in searching student cell phones. Depending upon the suspected violation, the Superintendent may want to contact the District's attorney before proceeding. There may be issues of preservation of evidence as well as concerns with student privacy.