



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

# DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: October 1, 2025  
To: Local Educational Agency Leads  
Route To: Principals, School Business Administrators, School Safety Specialists, Homeroom Administrators  
From: Kathy Ehling, Assistant Commissioner  
Division of Educational Services  
Deadline: October 31, 2025

## Phone-Free Schools Grant Now Available

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) is pleased to launch the State's first Phone-Free Schools Grant Program. This initiative provides funding to support districts in adopting and implementing Bell-to-Bell cell phone policies, which require students' internet-enabled devices to be securely stored upon arrival at school and returned at dismissal.

### Funding and Allowable Uses

Initial eligible award amounts are based on student enrollment in grades 6-12 in eligible districts, with a minimum allocation of \$500. **Initial award amounts are subject to increase if all eligible districts do not elect to participate in the program.** Participating districts may use funds for:

- Storage solutions to collect and secure student devices during the school day (e.g., locked pouch systems, lockers/bins, check-in cabinets, and related equipment/software); and
- Training for staff on the adopted cell phone policy and storage procedures to ensure consistent, equitable implementation across schools.

### Program Requirements

By accepting this award, participating districts commit to enacting a Bell-to-Bell policy for all students in grades 6-12. Adoption of less stringent approaches, such as "Off and Away" or "Limited Use" policies, do not qualify for this program. The program period extends from July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026. Reimbursement is available for allowable costs incurred within this timeframe, provided districts meet program requirements.

### Key steps/actions

- Coordinate with the district's New Jersey Homeroom Administrator to access and download the Phone Free Schools Letter of Agreement (LOA) and [Guidance for Schools on Student Use of Internet-Enabled Devices](#).
- Populate contact information and obtain required signatures indicated on the Letter of Agreement (LOA).
- Upload required documents, including the completed LOA, in the NJDOE [Homeroom](#) by **October 31, 2025**.
- A formal board resolution to accept the allocated funds must be adopted and uploaded in Homeroom no later than January 16, 2026.

### Contact information

For questions, please contact [PhoneFreeSchools@doe.nj.gov](mailto:PhoneFreeSchools@doe.nj.gov).

c: Members, State Board of Education  
NJDOE Staff  
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network  
Garden State Coalition of Schools  
NJ LEE Group