

NOVAK.....contined from page 7

student engagement and social interaction increased without the students being distracted by their smartphones.

In the past two years, 14 states have banned or significantly limited cell phone use in schools – Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, New York, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia and West Virginia. And more states are working on similar legislation.

We were not alone by passing SB2354. Personal electronic devices are defined as a portable electronic device capable of communication by voice, text or other data with one or more parties or devices, or capable of connection to a smartphone, the internet or a cellular or wireless fidelity network, including a smartphone, cellular phone, Bluetooth-enabled device, tablet, smartwatch or other wearable device and gaming device. It does not include a school owned device, such as a laptop or tablet, or an approved medical device.

We recognized that there are appropriate times to use electronic devices like school-owned laptops or tablets in school. After all, there are classes such as word processing or desktop design where these devices are required. We also know that there are times where a student needs some sort of technology for medical reasons so there are opt-outs for those situations.

Senate Bill 2354 was not intended to be a draconian measure. It sets up the policy that says students essentially need to put their electronic devices away during the school day, but still allows the local school boards to come up with exactly what that looks like in their individual schools.

- In a nutshell, Senate Bill 2354 does five things:
1. It requires all schools across the state to comply with this law.
 2. This bill mandates that students are physically separated from their electronics.
 3. It bans personal electronic devices from being used for the entire school day. It takes approximately 20 minutes for a person's mind to reset from being distracted by an electronic device. Allowing a smartphone to be used in between classes or at lunch would be counterproductive. In addition, a student that is constantly on their phone at lunch or between classes misses valuable opportunities to connect socially with others.
 4. It prevents schools from requiring any type of schoolwork to be done on their personal electronic device during the school day.
 5. Senate bill 2354 also includes exceptions for medical needs and special education needs.

The Education Committee spent a significant amount of time discussing two aspects of this bill:

No. 1: How schools will be responsible for taking the phones at the start of the school day and giving them back at the end of the school day. Having someone in the office collecting phones for kids in a small town like Underwood likely isn't a gigantic task. However, in a school with 1,000 students or more, such as West Fargo, this could pose a logistical nightmare.

And No. 2, we focused on how time was spent on a bus, to a game or a similar activity, which impacted this bill.

At the end of the committee discussions, we felt that it isn't our place to be overly prescriptive in this bill as to what specifically is allowed and what isn't allowed. Each school district knows what's best for their respective schools and should be allowed to tailor their own policy based on their school's needs.

We had many teachers, administrators and even students testify in favor of the bill because they see first-hand how cell phones have negatively impacted kids. Many of them wanted a statewide policy to be set because they saw the need but didn't want the school boards or administrators to be the "bad guys." It's easier for them to say that their hands are tied and they are just following the law.

One of the most compelling pieces of testimony I heard was that it takes 20 minutes for a person's brain to refocus after being on an electronic device. So, the idea of checking messages or playing a quick game on your cell phone in between classes or even during lunch is a hinderance because a student would essentially waste half of the next class period by not being focused.

And that doesn't touch the social interaction piece of spending the few free minutes of the school day being glued to a cell phone versus having an actual conversation with someone.

I truly believe Senate Bill 2354 has the potential to reduce our children's behavioral health issues, positively impact their ability to focus, improve academic scores and increase opportunities to connect with their teachers and classmates.

Providing consistency throughout the state will make this policy easier to implement at each of our schools, although I realize there will be some growing pains along the way in addition to possibly tweaking the law next session after we see what flaws may be in the current law.

Because the good outweighs the few negatives (not having constant communication with your child, although we are allowed to leave messages at the school office for our children), I voted in favor of the bill.

I believe by passing the bill, we *are* giving kids some of their childhood back.

North Dakota District No. 33 Rep. Anna Novak, of Hazen, has been serving in the ND House of Representatives since 2023. She is a member the state's Education Committee and is vice chairwoman of the state's Energy and Natural Resources. Outside of politics, Novak is the co-founder of Faces of North Dakota Coal and is married with four children. To contact Rep. Novak, email her at anovak@ndlegis.gov.

CENTER REPUBLICAN PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF LEASING STATE SCHOOL LANDS

The Board of University and School Lands will offer the following lands for lease in Oliver County.

Unorganized (141-085)			
	AC	Term	Rent
16 NE4	160	5	\$3022
16 NW4	160	5	\$3094
16 SE4	160	5	\$3443
16 SW4	160	5	\$2469
Unorganized (142-083)			
	AC	Term	Rent
36 NE4	160	5	\$2417
36 NW4	160	5	\$2878
36 SE4	160	5	\$3043
36 SW4	160	5	\$3107
Unorganized (143-083)			
	AC	Term	Rent
30 W2SE4, S2SW4	159	5	\$4222
Hay: 0 Crop: 44			
32W2NW4, NW4SW4	120	5	\$2361
Unorganized (143-084)			
	AC	Term	Rent
14 N2NE4, SE4NE4, NE4NW4	160	5	\$2590
14 SE4	158	5	\$2849

Auctioneer will read specific requirements at the auction. The public lease auction will be held in City of Center, Betty Hagel Memorial Civic Center at 9/30/2025 8:45 AM CT. Other than the descriptions of the lands to be auctioned, the information contained in this advertisement may be revised prior to the auction upon further review by the North Dakota Department of Trust Lands. Any such revisions will be announced at the auction and will be binding upon the bidders. Bidding will begin at minimum rent. 1st year's rent must be paid in full immediately after the sale. The Board reserves the right to reject any and all bids. For more information, visit <https://land.nd.gov> or call (701) 328-2800. For auxiliary aids and services, please call by 9/17.

Joseph A. Heringer COMMISSIONER
1707 N 9th St | Bismarck ND 58506-5523
PHONE: 701-328-2800 | FAX: 701-328-3650 | WEB: <https://land.nd.gov>

(08-28-2025)(09-04-2025)(09-11-2025)
(09-28-2025)(09-25-2025)

FOR SALE BY BID

Oliver County will accept bids for the Case TV450B Compact Skid Steer Minimum starting bid is \$20,000 Bids must be received by the September 11th Commission Meeting. Skid Steer is sold as is. Machine does have damage and a waiver must be signed prior to completion of sale to winning bidder. Contact Kenny Rude, Road Superintendent for more information

(08-28-2025) (09-04-2025)

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- ☐ 2 Year out of State \$135
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A rewarding position in agronomy combined with first-rate outdoor recreation and a friendly community is waiting for you in central North Dakota. Hefty Seed is hiring a sales agronomist in Wilton, ND. In an area that boasts some of the region's best hunting and fishing, the right candidate will be able to enjoy acreage for hunting and many beautiful lakes nearby. We are looking to invest in individuals who will be a great fit with our established, yet growing team of agronomists. These positions will include top pay and benefits. If you are looking to work in an enjoyable environment while providing top notch service to our valued customers, we invite you to send your resume and cover letter to matt.elder@heftyseed.com or call Matt at 701-425-8384.

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