

CPS POLICY CLARIFIES STUDENT USE OF CELL PHONES & PAGERS

The Illinois General Assembly has revised the law relating to student use of cellular telephones and pagers in school facilities. The Illinois School Code previously contained an absolute prohibition on student use or possession of cellular telecommunications devices (CTD). Now, school boards are authorized to establish policies specifying appropriate student CTD use.

In response to this legislative change and in recognition that CTDs have become an important means of communication between students and their parents and guardians, the Board has adopted a policy on CTD use, which is listed as an exception to Act of Misconduct 2-12 of the Student Code Conduct (prohibiting the possession of pagers or cellular telephones without prior permission of the Principal).

According to the policy, students may possess CTDs on school premises only with prior written approval of the principal. To obtain this approval, parents must submit a written application specifying the student's need for a CTD.

Applications are appropriate in circumstances such as the following:

- 1) when the student's IEP requires a CTD for medical or educational reasons;
- 2) for a student whose parent, guardian or other close family member is hospitalized or is dependent on the student;
- 3) when a student travels a long distance to school;
- 4) when the parent believes a CTD is needed to keep the student safe; or
- 5) when the parent can make a reasonable showing of good cause.

In deciding whether to grant the application, principals should weigh the benefit to the student against the likelihood of inappropriate CTD use. If the principal grants the request, the student must carry the principal's letter of approval with him or her at all times.

If the principal denies the application, the parent may appeal to the Chief Executive Officer's designee (the Area Management Support Director), who will have authority to issue a final decision.