



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew Gounardes

Sen. Gounardes Calls on NYC Schools to Follow Through with Smartphone Ban

ANDREW GOUNARDES November 4, 2024

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Read the full letter [here](#).

Brooklyn, NY – New York State Senator Andrew Gounardes sent a letter to the New York City Schools Chancellor today calling for smartphone restrictions in schools in light of the mental health crisis gripping children.

In the letter, Senator Gounardes encouraged Chancellor Melissa Aviles-Ramos to commit to a policy restricting student access to smartphones in schools, a proposal the Department **considered** and then **delayed** earlier this year. In the letter, Senator Gounardes argues that the urgency of the youth mental health crisis, **fueled** by social media companies, demands immediate action.

“I believe school smartphone restrictions are a crucial step to address the toxic impact of these devices on youth mental health,” the Senator wrote in the letter. **Research** by Common Sense Media and the University of Michigan shows that students receive a median of 237 notifications per day, and **a national survey** of school administrators found 87% believe cell phones in school make students more distracted and tired, and 85% said the phones amplify conflict and bullying.

“Parents, teachers, doctors and students themselves are all on the same page about this: smartphones in school are an addictive distraction that makes kids more anxious, isolated and depressed,” said **State Senator Andrew Gounardes**. “If Big Tech companies refuse to put our children’s mental health above their profits, then we need to act. A ban on smartphones during the school day helps ensure young people have the school experience they deserve, where their health, safety and well-being come first.”

Senator Gounardes recently passed the **SAFE for Kids Act**, a first-in-the-nation law that protects children from addictive algorithmic feeds and overnight notifications on social media. Multiple independent studies reveal a **distressing link** between prolonged social media use and heightened rates of depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation and self-harm among youth. Smartphones offer unfettered social media companies unfettered access to young people’s attention, a reality that tech companies have built into their business model: in 2022 alone, social media firms made over **\$11 billion** in ad revenue from minors in the U.S.

In that context, Senator Gounardes wrote in the letter, “school smartphone restrictions would further support our shared goal of alleviating the youth mental health crisis while creating a brighter future for young people.”

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