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H.B. No. 3489

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT
2 relating to development of guidelines for the use of digital
3 devices in public schools and a school district or open-enrollment
4 charter school policy for the effective integration of those
5 devices.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

7 SECTION 1. Subchapter A, Chapter 38, Education Code, is
8 amended by adding Section 38.0231 to read as follows:

9 Sec. 38.0231. GUIDELINES FOR USE OF DIGITAL DEVICES. (a)
10 The agency, in consultation with the Health and Human Services
11 Commission, shall develop and distribute model health and safety
12 guidelines that school districts and open-enrollment charter
13 schools may use to determine best practices for the effective
14 integration of digital devices in public schools. The guidelines
15 must:

16 (1) be based on evidence-based studies and practices;
17 (2) consider the needs of students with intellectual
18 or physical disabilities;

19 (3) consider the potential costs of implementation of
20 the guidelines and affordable ways to reduce the hazards associated
21 with the extended use of digital devices; and

22 (4) address:
23 (A) digital device use for varying age ranges and
24 developmental levels;

1 (B) the amount of time a student spends using
2 digital devices in the classroom;

3 (C) appropriate frequency for breaks from the use
4 of digital devices;

5 (D) physical positioning of digital devices in
6 the classroom;

7 (E) the use of digital devices to complete
8 homework assignments;

9 (F) recommended total daily screen time usage for
10 students;

11 (G) recommended practices or software to block
12 access to inappropriate content; and

13 (H) recommended teacher training regarding
14 digital device use in the classroom to ensure implementation of the
15 best practices.

16 (b) The school board of each school district or the
17 governing body of each open-enrollment charter school shall adopt a
18 policy for the effective integration of digital devices in the
19 district or school. In adopting the policy, the school board or the
20 governing body may decide whether to adopt the guidelines developed
21 under Subsection (a) for use in the district or school.

22 (c) Each school district or open-enrollment charter school
23 that adopts the guidelines developed under Subsection (a) may
24 implement the guidelines in a manner that best meets the district's
25 or charter school's individual needs and the individual needs of
26 students in the district or school, including students with
27 intellectual or physical disabilities.

1 (d) If a school district or open-enrollment charter school
2 adopts the guidelines developed under Subsection (a), the district
3 or charter school shall post the guidelines publicly on the
4 district's or charter school's Internet website.

5 SECTION 2. The Texas Education Agency shall develop and
6 distribute the guidelines for the use of digital devices required
7 under Section 38.0231, Education Code, as added by this Act, for use
8 beginning with the 2023-2024 school year.

9 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2021.