

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

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PRINCIPAL CLERK

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SENATE BILL DRS35412-NGa-161

Short Title: Screen Free Schools.

(Public)

Sponsors: Senator Burgin (Primary Sponsor).

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO FURTHER LIMIT THE USE OF WIRELESS COMMUNICATION DEVICES IN
3 SCHOOLS.

4 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

5 SECTION 1. G.S. 115C-76.100 reads as rewritten:
6 "§ 115C-76.100. Regulation of wireless communication devices.

7 (a) The following definitions apply in this section:

8 (1) Wireless communication device. – Any portable wireless device that has the
9 capability to provide voice, messaging, or other data communication between
10 two or more parties, including the following:

- 11 a. Cellular telephones.
12 b. Tablet computers.
13 c. Laptop computers.
14 d. Paging devices.
15 e. Two-way radios.
16 f. Gaming devices.
17 g. Smart watches.

18 (2) Wireless communication policy. – A policy governing the use of wireless
19 communication devices by students.

20 (b) The governing body of a public school unit shall establish a wireless communication
21 policy. At a minimum, except as permitted in subsection (c) of this section, the policy shall
22 prohibit students from using, displaying, or having a wireless communication device turned on
23 during instructional time as follows:

24 (1) For students in kindergarten through grade eight, at any time on school
25 premises.

26 (2) For students in grades nine through 12, at any point during the school day
27 except as required for assessments issued as part of the Statewide Testing
28 Program pursuant to Part 2 of Article 10A of this Chapter. Policies established
29 pursuant to this subdivision may allow wireless communication devices prior
30 to the start of the school day or after the conclusion of the school day.

31 (c) A wireless communication policy shall allow student use of a wireless communication
32 device during instructional time as follows:

33 (1) ~~If authorized by a teacher for educational purposes or for use in the event of~~
34 ~~an emergency. The governing body may establish parameters to be followed~~
35 ~~by a teacher in granting authorizations.~~



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- (2) As required by the student's individualized education program or section 504 (29 U.S.C. § 794) plan.
- (3) As required to manage a student's health care, in accordance with a documented medical condition.

...."

SECTION 2. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Public Instruction the sum of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) in nonrecurring funds for the 2026-2027 fiscal year to provide support to governing bodies of public school units in implementing policies pursuant to G.S. 115C-76.100, as amended by this act.

SECTION 3. This act becomes effective July 1, 2026.