



# HOUSE BILL 959: Social Media Literacy in Schools.

2025-2026 General Assembly

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<b>Committee:</b>	Senate Education/Higher Education.	<b>If Date:</b>	May 21, 2025
	favorable, re-refer to Rules and Operations of the Senate		
<b>Introduced by:</b>	Reps. Blackwell, K. Hall, Biggs	<b>Prepared by:</b>	Brian Gwyn*
<b>Analysis of:</b>	Second Edition		Committee Co-Counsel

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**OVERVIEW:** *The 2nd edition of House Bill 959 would require local boards of education to (i) adopt an internet safety policy and (ii) provide instruction regarding social media and its effects on health.*

**CURRENT LAW:** G.S. 115C-47 outlines the general powers and duties for local boards of education.

G.S. 115C-81.5 requires the State Board of Education to adopt a plan of education and a standard course of study which must include instruction in the areas of arts, communication skills, physical education and personal health and safety, mathematics, media and computer skills, science, second languages, social studies, and career and technical education. G.S. 115C-81.25 requires students from kindergarten through ninth grade to receive age-appropriate comprehensive health education instruction regarding mental and emotional health. G.S. 115C-81.45(b) requires local boards of education to ensure that the standard course of study is taught in schools.

**BILL ANALYSIS:** The bill would require local boards of education to adopt policies on student access to the internet provided by local school administrative units. The policies would be required to do all of the following:

- Limit access by students to only age-appropriate subject matter and materials.
- Protect the safety and security of students when accessing email, chat rooms, and other forms of electronic communication.
- Prohibit access by students to data or information maintained by the local school administrative unit, including by "hacking" and other unlawful online activities.
- Prevent access to websites, web applications, or software that do not protect against the disclosure, use, or dissemination of a student's personal information.
- Prohibit and prevent students from accessing social media platforms, except when expressly directed by a teacher solely for educational purposes.
- Prohibit the use of the TikTok platform or any successor platform in the following instances:
  - On devices owned or provided by the local school administrative unit.
  - Through internet access provided by the local school administrative unit.
  - As a platform to communicate or promote any unit or school sponsored club, extracurricular organization, or athletic team.

The bill would also require local boards of education to provide instruction on social media and its effects on health. Instruction would be required to be provided once during elementary school, once during middle school, and twice during high school. This instruction could be offered as a part of the required mental and emotional health instruction and would have to include information regarding at least the following:

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- Negative effects of social media on mental health, including addiction.
- Distribution of misinformation on social media.
- Methods of manipulating behavior using social media.
- The permanency of information shared online.
- How to maintain personal security.
- How to identify cyberbullying, predatory behavior, and human trafficking on the internet.
- How to report suspicious behavior encountered on the internet.
- Personal and interpersonal skills or character education that enhances individual level protective factors and mitigates or reduces risk-taking or harmful behavior.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** The bill would be effective when it becomes law and would apply beginning with the 2025-2026 school year.

*\*Hillary Woodard, Staff Attorney with the Legislative Analysis Division, substantially contributed to this summary.*