



# HOUSE BILL 959: Social Media Literacy in Schools.

2025-2026 General Assembly

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<b>Committee:</b>	House Education - K-12. If favorable, re-refer to Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House	<b>Date:</b>	May 6, 2025
<b>Introduced by:</b>	Reps. Blackwell, K. Hall, Biggs	<b>Prepared by:</b>	Hillary Woodard
<b>Analysis of:</b>	PCS to First Edition H959-CSCH-15		Staff Attorney

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**OVERVIEW:** *House Bill 959 would require local boards of education to adopt an internet safety policy and to provide instruction regarding social media and its effects on health. The PCS for House Bill 959 would make technical and clarifying changes.*

**CURRENT LAW:** The general powers and duties for each local board of education are outlined in G.S. 115C-47. These include, among others, adopting certain rules, regulations, and policies. In addition, the State Board of Education is required to adopt a plan of education and a standard course of study which must include instruction in personal health and safety. G.S. 115C-81.5. Students from kindergarten through ninth grade must receive age-appropriate comprehensive health education instruction regarding mental and emotional health. G.S. 115C-81.25.

**BILL ANALYSIS:** The PCS for House Bill 959 would require local boards of education to adopt an internet safety policy. The policies would be required to prohibit students from accessing the following:

- Data or information maintained by the local school administrative unit, including by hacking.
- Social media platforms through internet access provided by the local school administrative unit unless directed by a teacher to do so for an educational purpose.
- TikTok or any successor platform on devices owned or provided by the local school administrative or through internet access provided by the local school administrative unit. The policy would also be required to prohibit using TikTok or any successor platform as a platform to communicate or promote any local school administrative unit or school sponsored club, extracurricular organization, or athletic team.

The policies would also be required to limit student access to only age-appropriate subject matter and materials; protect the safety and security of students when they are accessing email, chat rooms, and other forms of electronic communication; and prevent access to websites, web applications, or software that does not protect against the use of a student's personal information.

The PCS for House Bill 959 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:

- Negative effects of social media on mental health, including addiction.

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# House 959 PCS

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- 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:** Effective when it becomes law and applies beginning with the 2025-2026 school year.