



SENATE BILL 55: Student Use of Wireless Communication Devices.

2025-2026 General Assembly

Committee:	Senate Rules and Operations of the Senate	Date:	February 27, 2025
Introduced by:	Sens. Lee, Burgin, Barnes	Prepared by:	Drupti Chauhan
Analysis of:	First Edition		Committee Counsel

OVERVIEW: *Senate Bill 55 would require governing bodies of public school units to adopt a wireless communication policy that prohibits students from using wireless communication devices during instructional time except in certain circumstances.*

CURRENT LAW: There is no Statewide statute regarding the use of cell phones by students in public school units.

BILL ANALYSIS: Senate Bill 55 would require the governing body of a public school unit to establish a wireless communication policy. The policy must prohibit students from using, displaying, or having a wireless communication device turned on during instructional time.

Exceptions: However, the policy must allow student use of a wireless communication device during instructional time as follows:

- If authorized by a teacher for educational purposes or for use in the event of an emergency or for use in the even of an emergency. The governing body may establish parameters to be followed by a teacher in granting authorizations.
- As required by the student's individualized education program (IEP) or section 504 plan.
- As required to manage a student's health care, in accordance with a documented medical condition.

Violations of Policy: The governing body of the public school unit must establish the consequences for violations of the wireless communication policy. These consequences may include confiscation of the wireless communication device and disciplinary measures under the public school unit's Code of Student Conduct.

Report: By September 1 of the year in which this law would become effective, every public school unit must send to the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), a copy of the public school unit's wireless communication policy. The public school unit must provide DPI with a copy of the wireless communication policy anytime it is changed. By October 1 of each year, DPI must report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee, the number of public school units that are in compliance with this statute and the names of any public school unit which is not in compliance.

EFFECTIVE DATE: This bill would become effective when it becomes law and applies beginning with the 2025-2026 school year.

BACKGROUND: According to data from the North Carolina School Boards Association, approximately 77 local boards of education have adopted a policy on cell phone use by students in schools.

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