

[Third Reprint]

SENATE, No. 3695

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

221st LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED SEPTEMBER 30, 2024

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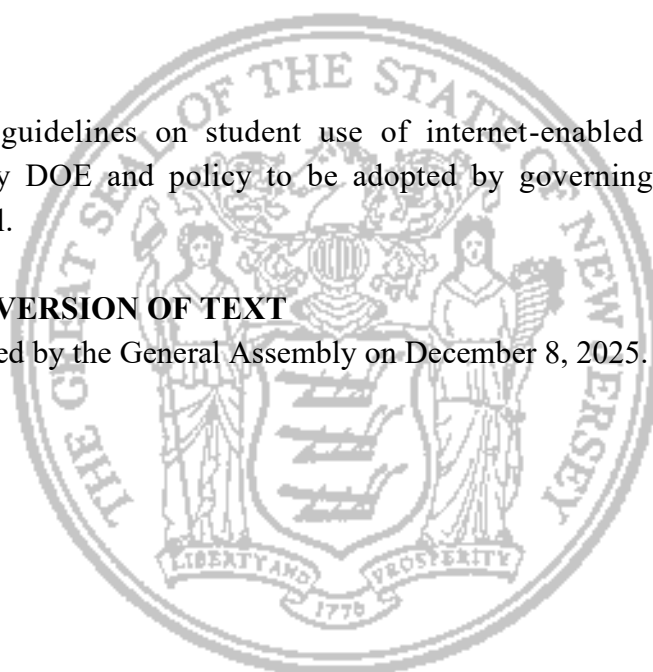
**Senators Turner, O'Scanlon, Gopal, Assemblywomen Dunn, Peterpaul,
Reynolds-Jackson, Assemblymen Karabinchak, Bailey and Hutchison**

SYNOPSIS

Requires guidelines on student use of internet-enabled devices to be developed by DOE and policy to be adopted by governing body of each public school.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As amended by the General Assembly on December 8, 2025.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 12/22/2025)

1 AN ACT concerning student use of ³**[cell phones and social media**
 2 **platforms]** internet-enabled devices³ and supplementing chapter 36
 3 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

4
 5 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
 6 *of New Jersey:*

7
 8 ³1. As used in this act:

9 “Board of education” means a board of education as defined in
 10 N.J.S.18A:18A-2, a board of trustees of a charter school, and a
 11 board of trustees of a renaissance school project.

12 “Internet-enabled device” means a smartphone, tablet,
 13 smartwatch, or other device capable of connecting to the internet
 14 and enabling the user to access content on the internet, including
 15 social media applications. An internet-enabled device shall not
 16 include a non-internet-enabled device or an internet-enabled device
 17 provided by a public school when used for educational purposes.

18 “Non-internet-enabled device” means a cell phone or other
 19 communication device that is not capable of connecting to the
 20 internet or enabling the user to access content on the internet.

21 “Public school” means and includes a school, under college
 22 grade, which is operated by the governing body of a school district,
 23 charter school, or renaissance school project.³

24
 25 ³**[1.] 2.**³ a. To assist ³**[school districts]** boards of education³
 26 in developing policies concerning student use of ³**[cell phones and**
 27 **social media platforms]** internet-enabled devices³ during regular
 28 school hours, on a school bus, or during school-sanctioned events
 29 when the student is under the direct supervision of a teaching staff
 30 member or employee of the board of education, the Commissioner
 31 of Education shall develop ²**[a policy]** guidelines² applicable to
 32 students enrolled in grades kindergarten through 12. The ²**[policy]**
 33 guidelines² shall be issued no later than 90 days after the effective
 34 date of this act.

35 b. The ²**[policy]** guidelines² shall, at a minimum:

36 (1) provide age appropriate and grade-level differentiated
 37 ²**[policies]** guidelines² concerning limiting and prohibiting student
 38 use of ³**[cell phones and social media platforms]** internet-enabled
 39 devices³;

40 (2) prohibit non-academic use of ³**[a cell phone or social media**
 41 **during classroom instruction]** an internet-enabled device on school
 42 grounds during the school day³;

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is
 not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

¹Senate SED committee amendments adopted December 5, 2024.

²Assembly AED committee amendments adopted March 10, 2025.

³Assembly floor amendments adopted December 8, 2025.

1 (3) be consistent with State and federal law, including
 2 accommodations provided in a student's Individualized Education
 3 Program ²[or educational plan] (IEP)² established pursuant to the
 4 "Individuals with Disabilities Education Act," 20 U.S.C. s.1400 et
 5 seq., ²[or] educational plan established pursuant to² section 504 of
 6 the "Rehabilitation Act of 1973," 29 U.S.C. s.794 ², or student
 7 health plan established to monitor or address a student's health
 8 condition²;

9 (4) ²[permit] address permitting² student use of cell phones in
 10 the case of an emergency or in response to a perceived threat of
 11 danger;

12 (5) ²[permit student use of cell phones upon submission by a
 13 parent or guardian of documentation from a health care professional
 14 indicating that the use of a cell phone is necessary for the health or
 15 well-being of the student;

16 (6)² ³authorize student use of an internet-enabled device on
 17 school grounds during the school day, or during school-sanctioned
 18 events;

19 (a) if authorized by a principal, chief school administrator, or their
 20 designee, for a necessary specified purpose, which shall be authorized
 21 only when no reasonable alternative exists to achieve the same
 22 objective while maintaining compliance with the guidelines issued by
 23 the Commissioner of Education;

24 (b) if necessary for the provision and administration of a student's
 25 prescribed care consistent with the submission by a parent or guardian
 26 of documentation from a health care professional; (c) for translation
 27 services;

28 (d) on a case-by-case basis for a student caregiver who is routinely
 29 responsible for the care or well-being of a family member, upon
 30 approval from a principal, chief school administrator, or their
 31 designees, which may include a school psychologist, school social
 32 worker, or school counselor; and

33 (e) when required by law;

34 (6)³ address ³[smartphones,] internet-enabled devices and³ cell
 35 phones with only text or voice³[], and other relevant devices,
 36 including smart watches]³;

37 ²[(7)] ³[(6)²] (7)³ list options that may be utilized by a ³[school
 38 district] board of education³ for ³[cell phone]³ storage ³of an
 39 internet-enabled device³, including locked pouches and ³[cell
 40 phone]³ lockers;

41 ²[(8)] ³[(7)²] (8)³ provide guidance for a ³[school district]
 42 board of education³ to establish network-based restrictions to
 43 prevent the use of, or access to, social media platforms; and

44 ²[(9)] ³[(8)²] (9)³ detail protocols for communicating the
 45 ³[district's] board of education's³ policy concerning student use of

1 ³**cell phones and social media platforms** internet-enabled devices³
2 to students, their families, and teaching staff members.

3 c. The ²**policy** guidelines² shall promote student learning
4 and well-being. In developing the ²**policy** guidelines², the
5 commissioner shall ¹**involve** consult with interested¹ stakeholders
6 in the education community including, but not limited to, the New
7 Jersey Education Association, ²the American Federation of
8 Teachers,² the New Jersey School Boards Association, ²**and**² the
9 New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association,¹ ²and the New
10 Jersey Association of School Administrators,² to ensure that the
11 ²**policies** guidelines² are responsive to the needs of students,
12 parents, and teaching staff members.

13 d. A board of education shall ²**,** except as otherwise exempt
14 pursuant to subsection e. of this section,² adopt a policy
15 concerning student use of ³**cell phones and social media**
16 **platforms** internet-enabled devices³ during regular school hours, on
17 a school bus, or during school-sanctioned events when the student is
18 under the direct supervision of a teaching staff member or employee
19 of the board of education. ³The policy shall address the use of
20 internet-enabled devices in the event of an emergency situation or in
21 response to a perceived threat of danger.³ The policy shall be
22 consistent with the ²**policy** guidelines² developed pursuant to
23 subsection a. of this section.

24 e. ²**The** commissioner may, upon submission of an application
25 to the commissioner in a manner and form to be determined by the
26 commissioner, exempt a board of education from the requirements
27 of subsection d. of this section.

28 f.² Nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent a
29 ³**school district** board of education³ from adopting a policy on the
30 use of ³**cell phones and social media platforms** internet-enabled
31 devices³ by students enrolled in the ³**district** public school³ that is
32 more stringent than the ²**policy** guidelines² developed by the
33 commissioner pursuant to subsection a. of this section.

34 ²f. The guidelines developed by the commissioner pursuant to
35 subsection a. of this section shall not prohibit a principal ³, chief
36 school administrator,³ or ³**a**³ designee from making a reasonable
37 accommodation for the use of ³**cell phones or social media**
38 **platforms** internet-enabled devices³ for educational purposes.²

39
40 ³**[2.] 3.**³ This act shall take effect immediately and shall first
41 apply to the first full school year next following the date of
42 enactment.