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Student Digital Wellness

Student Use of Internet-Enabled Devices

In today's increasingly connected world, cell phones and other internet-enabled devices are integral to how students communicate, access information, and engage with the broader world. However, the unregulated use of these devices during the school day can result in lower academic performance, harm to emotional well-being, and deterioration of a positive school climate. In response to these concerns, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) has developed a new guidance document to support districts in crafting thoughtful, inclusive, and age-appropriate policies based on research and best practices that allow for flexibility in local implementation.

The purpose of the guidance is to provide New Jersey public school districts, including charter schools and renaissance school projects, with guidelines for developing and implementing local policies governing the use of internet-enabled devices by students during the school day, on school buses, and at school-sponsored events. The guidelines aim to promote student well-being, academic engagement, and digital safety by offering policy considerations, implementation strategies, and a range of recommendations across grade levels to equip districts to tailor student use of personal internet-enabled device policies to their unique community needs.

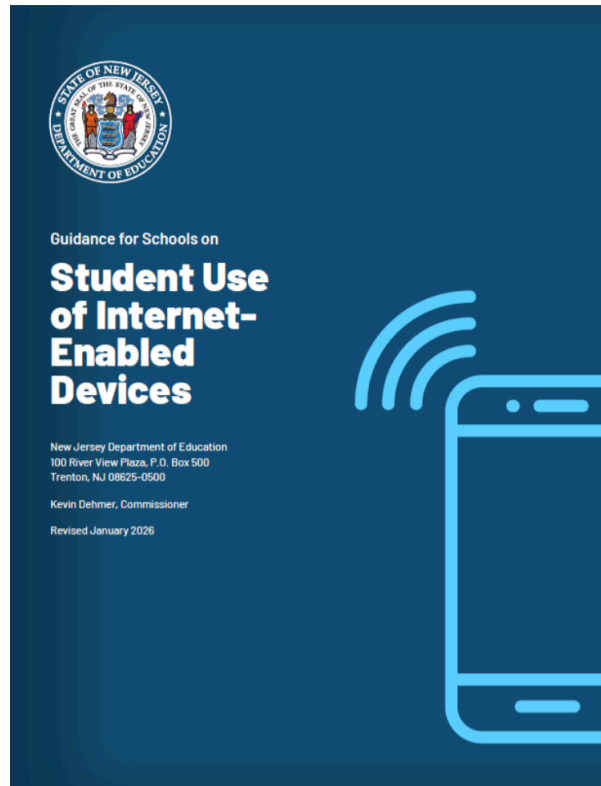
Student use of internet-enabled device policies that are thoughtfully designed, developmentally appropriate, and equitably enforced can play a crucial role in supporting student focus, fostering healthy peer relationships, and minimizing digital distractions. These guidelines provide New Jersey school districts with considerations and suggestions to establish local policies that reflect community values, meet legal obligations, and prioritize student success. By aligning policy design with evidence-based research, districts can create safer, more connected, and academically supportive school environments that benefit all learners.



Recommendations for LEA Leaders

Additional Resources





[2026 Guidance for Schools on Student Use of Internet-Enabled Devices](#)



 [Phone Free Schools Grantees](#)

Impact of Social Media Use on Adolescents

The **Commission on the Effects of Social Media Usage on Adolescents** (the Commission) was established by P.L. 2023, c. 126 in response to mounting public concern over the role of digital platforms in the lives of young people. With the charge to investigate how social media affects adolescent health and academic performance, the Commission reviewed the latest research, consulted with experts, and collaborated with Rutgers University School of Communication to prepare a report with their findings and recommendations for the Governor and Legislature. The below report provides a comprehensive review of the research and 20 recommendations for changes to policy and practices that promote student well-being.

Commission Findings & Recommendations



[2025 Social Media Commission Report](#)



[2025 Report Executive Summary](#)

Resources for Educators

Resources for Families 

Resources for Healthcare Providers 

- [New Jersey Department of Education Standards Transparency and Mastery Platform](#)

- [Digital Citizenship Curriculum](#) (Common Sense Media): Lesson plans and classroom resources on digital literacy, privacy, and online respect.
- [Digital Citizenship Resource List](#) (Making Caring Common Project at Harvard University: Research-based strategies for integrating digital health into teaching practices.
- [Parent & Educator's Guide to Media Literacy and False Information](#) (Connect Safely: Easy-to-use resource designed to empower adults to build students' critical thinking skills around media consumption.
- [Digital Safety Resources for the Classroom](#) (Be Internet Awesome with Google): Interactive curriculum for grades 2-6 to promote safe and positive online behavior.

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