



NORTH CAROLINA
State Board of Education
Department of Public Instruction

Report to the North Carolina General Assembly

Wireless Communication Policies Report
S.L. 2025-38

Date Due: October 1, 2026
DPI Chronological Schedule, 2026-2027

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION VISION

Every public school student in North Carolina will be empowered to accept academic challenges, prepared to pursue their chosen path after graduating high school, and encouraged to become lifelong learners with the capacity to engage in a globally-collaborative society.

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MISSION

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WIRELESS COMMUNICATION POLICY: S.L. 2025-38

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cell Phone Policy Compliance (S.L. 2025-38)

Session law 2025-38 requires the local governing body of a public school unit to establish a wireless communication policy prohibiting student use of wireless devices during instructional time, and to submit the policy to the Department of Public Instruction each year by September 1, and again whenever it is updated. The Department of Public Instruction must report compliance statewide to the legislature's Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by October 1.

Most Public School Units adopted the North Carolina School Board Association Policy 4318, establishing uniformity statewide. The policy prohibits unauthorized cell phones, smartwatches, tablets, and two-way radios during class time, and incorporates the exceptions required by statute, i.e., teacher-approved use for instructional or emergency purposes, accommodations under an Individualized Education Program or Section 504 plan, and documented medical needs.

BACKGROUND

This report fulfills the annual legislative reporting requirement set forth in Session Law 2025-38 (codified as N.C.G.S. § 115C-76.100). Subsection (e) mandates that no later than October 1 of each year, the Department of Public Instruction shall report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee the number of Public School Units (PSUs) in compliance with the statute and identify any public school unit that is not in compliance.

STATUTORY DEFINITIONS

Under the statute, the following definitions apply:

Wireless Communication Device: Any portable wireless device capable of providing voice, messaging, or other data communication between two or more parties. This includes cellular telephones, tablet computers, laptop computers, paging devices, two-way radios, and gaming devices.

Wireless Communication Policy: A local policy established by a public school unit's governing body governing the use of wireless communication devices by students.

Core Policy Requirements

Instructional Time Prohibition: At a minimum, each PSU policy must prohibit students from using, displaying, or keeping a wireless communication device turned on during instructional time.

Permitted Statutory Exceptions: A wireless communication policy must permit student device use during instructional time under the following specified circumstances:

- When authorized by a teacher for educational purposes or in the event of an emergency.
- As required by a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 plan.

- As required to manage a student's healthcare condition, in accordance with documented medical needs.

Enforcement & Discipline: The governing body must establish clear consequences for policy violations, which may include physical device confiscation and formal disciplinary measures under the PSU's Code of Student Conduct.

Reporting & Submission Mandate

Per SL, 2025-38, No later than September 1, of the year in which this section becomes effective, every public school unit shall send to the Department of Public Instruction a copy of the public school unit's wireless communication policy. The public school unit shall provide the Department of Public Instruction with a copy of the wireless communication policy anytime it is changed. No later than October 1 of each year, the Department of Public Instruction shall report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee the number of public school units that are in compliance with this section and the name of any public school unit which is not in compliance with this section.

Report Findings

As of September 1, 2026, 5 PSUs have not submitted the required wireless communication policies. The PSU's who have not submitted the required policy have been contacted and supported by the Digital Learning Regional Consultants.

The following PSUs have not submitted the Wireless Communications Policy:

LEA	298	Governor Morehead School for the Blind
Charter	41U	Ryze Academy
Charter	61K	United Community School
Charter	62N	Aspire Trade High School
Charter	92J	The Institute for the Development of Young Leaders (IDYL)

PSUs policies reflected a high level of compliance with the statutory mandate to prohibit unauthorized student device use or display, during class time.

1. **Standardized Class-Time Storage Expectations:** The policies require personal devices (e.g., cell phones, smartwatches, ear buds) to remain powered off or placed in silent mode and stored out of sight in backpacks, lockers, or designated classroom holding pouches throughout instructional periods.
2. **Consistent Integration of Statutory Exemptions:** Policies systematically incorporate statutory exceptions, establishing clear pathways for permitted device usage when authorized by teachers for instructional or emergency needs, specified in a student's IEP or Section 504 plan, or required for medical condition management.
3. **Tiered Administrative Consequences:** PSUs implemented a graduated approach to violations, with additional consequences under the PSU's Code of Student Conduct reserved for continued or repeated violations.

COPY OF EACH GOVERNING BOARD'S WIRELESS COMMUNICATION POLICY

In accordance with N.C.G.S. § 115C-76.100(e), Public School Units across North Carolina have submitted copies of the local governing board's wireless communication policy to the Department of Public Instruction. A comprehensive list of all policies submitted by PSUs (Charters, LEAs), including links to each local board document, is available at <https://go.ncdpi.gov/NCWCP2026>.