



# House of Representatives

**File No. 726**

General Assembly

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*February Session, 2026*      **(Reprint of File No. 402)**

Substitute House Bill No. 5035  
As Amended by House Amendment  
Schedule "A"

Approved by the Legislative Commissioner  
April 28, 2026

***AN ACT REQUIRING SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO BAN CELLULAR  
PHONES IN THE CLASSROOM.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General  
Assembly convened:

1        Section 1. Section 10-233j of the general statutes is repealed and the  
2        following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2027*):

3        [(a) No student in a public school in the state shall possess or use a  
4        remotely activated paging device unless such student obtains the  
5        written permission of the school principal for such possession and use.  
6        The principal shall grant such permission only if the student or his  
7        parent or guardian establishes to the satisfaction of the principal that a  
8        reasonable basis exists for the possession and use of the device.

9        (b) A local or regional board of education may restrict the student  
10       possession or use of cellular mobile telephones in the schools under its  
11       jurisdiction. In determining whether to restrict such possession or use,  
12       the local or regional board of education shall consider the special needs

13 of parents and students.]

14 (a) As used in this section:

15 (1) "Wireless communication device" means any portable wireless  
16 device that has the capability to provide voice, messaging or other data  
17 communication between two or more parties, including, but not limited  
18 to, a (A) cellular mobile telephone, (B) tablet computer, (C) computer or  
19 laptop computer, (D) gaming device, or (E) smart watch;

20 (2) "Personal wireless communication device" means a wireless  
21 communication device that is owned by or otherwise under the control  
22 of a student or parent or guardian of a student and has not been issued  
23 to such student or another student by the local or regional board of  
24 education;

25 (3) "Access" means holding, viewing, wearing or otherwise using a  
26 wireless communication device for the purpose of communication,  
27 accessing the Internet, gaming or any other function commonly  
28 associated with a wireless communication device;

29 (4) "Student" means a child enrolled in (A) a preschool program  
30 operated by a local or regional board of education, or (B) grade  
31 kindergarten to twelve, inclusive, in a public school in this state; and

32 (5) "Social media" has the same meaning as provided in section 10-  
33 231c.

34 (b) (1) Except as otherwise provided in subdivision (2) of this  
35 subsection, no student shall be permitted to access or use such student's  
36 personal wireless communication device on school grounds during the  
37 regular school day. All such personal wireless communication devices  
38 shall be powered off and stored in a manner prescribed by the policy  
39 adopted by the local or regional board of education pursuant to  
40 subsection (d) of this section.

41 (2) A student may access and use a personal wireless communication  
42 device on school grounds during the regular school day if (A) such use

43 or access is required under such student's individualized education  
44 program, in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education  
45 Improvement Act of 2004 and sections 10-76a to 10-76000, inclusive, or  
46 is necessary to implement the provisions of an accommodations plan for  
47 such student pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973,  
48 as amended from time to time, for such student, (B) a licensed physician,  
49 physician assistant or advanced practice registered nurse determines  
50 that such use or access is necessary for the health and well-being of such  
51 student, or (C) such use or access is limited to a computer, laptop  
52 computer or tablet computer for instructional purposes only and  
53 authorized under the policy adopted by the local or regional board of  
54 education pursuant to subsection (d) of this section.

55 (c) No student may access any social media platforms through the use  
56 of the Internet provided by the school during the school day, except  
57 such access to a social media platform may be permitted when such  
58 access is for instructional purposes.

59 (d) Each local and regional board of education shall adopt, and  
60 update as necessary, a policy restricting the student access or use of  
61 personal wireless communication devices during the regular school  
62 day. A board shall consider the unique needs of teachers,  
63 administrators, parents and guardians and students in the school  
64 district. Such policy shall include, but need not be limited to, (1) a  
65 prohibition on the access or use of personal wireless communication  
66 devices by students on school grounds during the regular school day,  
67 (2) provisions permitting the student access or use of personal wireless  
68 communication devices during the regular school day in accordance  
69 with the provisions of subdivision (2) of subsection (b) of this section,  
70 (3) provisions regarding the storage of personal wireless  
71 communication devices during the regular school day, including, but  
72 not limited to, in a student's locker or in a specified location, (4) a system  
73 of enforcement and discipline for violating the provisions of this section  
74 or such policy, and (5) procedures for communicating between boards  
75 of education and parents and guardians of students in the event of an  
76 emergency that occurs during the regular school day.

77        (e) Each local and regional board of education shall annually notify  
 78        the parents and guardians of students regarding the policy adopted  
 79        pursuant to subsection (d) of this section and include such policy in the  
 80        student handbooks for the school district.

81        Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2026*) No local or regional board of  
 82        education may use social media as the exclusive means of directly  
 83        communicating with, or otherwise providing notice or information to,  
 84        students and the parents and guardians of students enrolled in a school  
 85        under the jurisdiction of the board. As used in this section, "social  
 86        media" has the same meaning as provided in section 10-231c of the  
 87        general statutes.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2027</i>	10-233j
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	New section

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

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### **OFA Fiscal Note**

**State Impact:** None

**Municipal Impact:** None

### **Explanation**

The bill has no fiscal impact. It requires local and regional boards of education (BOEs) to develop policies to ensure student use of cell phones, other mobile devices, and social media is restricted during the regular school day except in certain circumstances. It is anticipated that BOEs can meet the requirements of the bill with existing resources.

**House "A"** eliminates the original bill and its associated fiscal impact, and results in the impact described above.

### **The Out Years**

**State Impact:** None

**Municipal Impact:** None

**OLR Bill Analysis****sHB 5035 (as amended by House "A")\******AN ACT REQUIRING SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO BAN CELLULAR PHONES IN THE CLASSROOM.*****SUMMARY**

This bill bans public school students from accessing their personal wireless communication devices on school property during the regular school day, with certain exceptions. It also prohibits (1) these students from accessing social media using the school's internet during the school day (unless permitted for instructional purposes) and (2) local or regional boards of education ("school boards") from using social media as the only way they communicate with students and their parents or guardians.

Under the bill, students' devices must be turned off and stored as the school board determines. School boards must develop policies to implement the bill's prohibitions and notify parents and students about the policy.

Lastly, it makes technical and conforming changes, including by repealing provisions in existing law (1) prohibiting students from using remotely activated paging devices and (2) allowing schools to restrict cell phone use in their schools.

\*House Amendment "A" (1) adds the provision banning school boards from using social media as the only way of communicating with parents and students; (2) narrows the types of personal devices that may be used if permitted for instructional purposes; (3) expands what the policy must cover; and (4) makes various other minor, technical, and conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2027

### **SCOPE OF BAN**

The bill prohibits holding, viewing, wearing, or otherwise using “wireless communication devices” to communicate, access the Internet, or play games, or for any other function commonly associated with the devices. “Wireless communication devices” are portable, wireless devices capable of providing data communication between two or more parties, including cell phones, tablets, computers, laptops, gaming devices, and smart watches.

The bill’s ban applies specifically to:

1. wireless communication devices owned or controlled by a student or his or her parent or guardian (not to devices issued to students by the school board) and
2. public school students in grades kindergarten to 12 and preschool students in a program operated by a school board.

The bill’s social media restrictions apply to any electronic medium where users create and view user-generated content (such as videos, photos, blogs, or instant messages).

### ***Exceptions to the Ban***

Under the bill, the ban does not apply to any technology the school district provides to students for instructional purposes. It also does not apply when:

1. a student requires access to a device under an individualized education program (IEP) or 504 plan;
2. the device is necessary for a student’s health or well-being, as determined by a physician, physician’s assistant, or advanced practice registered nurse; or
3. students are permitted to use personal computers, laptops, or tablets for instructional purposes under the school board’s

policy.

## **BOARD POLICIES**

The bill requires school boards to adopt, and update when necessary, a policy implementing the bill's ban, considering the unique needs of teachers, administrators, parents, guardians, and students in the district.

The policy must cover:

1. the bill's personal device ban and exceptions;
2. how devices must be stored, such as in a student's locker or specified location, during the regular school day;
3. discipline and enforcement for violations; and
4. procedures for communicating between school boards and students' parents and guardians if an emergency happens during the school day.

Under the bill, school boards must annually notify students' parents and guardians about the policy and procedures, as well as include them in the school district's student handbook.

## **BACKGROUND**

### ***Related Bill***

sHB 5149, favorably reported by the Education Committee, similarly bans students from using mobile electronic devices during the school day.

## **COMMITTEE ACTION**

Education Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 29    Nay 16    (03/16/2026)