

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

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HOUSE BILL 959
Committee Substitute Favorable 5/6/25

Short Title: Social Media Literacy in Schools.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

April 14, 2025

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO PROMOTE INTERNET SAFETY AND TO PROVIDE SOCIAL MEDIA
LITERACY INSTRUCTION IN SCHOOLS.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. G.S. 115C-47 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

"(70) To Adopt an Internet Safety Policy. – Local boards of education shall adopt policies for student access to the internet provided by the local school administrative unit. The policies shall do at least the following:

- a. Limit access by students to only age-appropriate subject matter and materials.
- b. Protect the safety and security of students when accessing email, chat rooms, and other forms of electronic communication.
- c. Prohibit access by students to data or information maintained by the local school administrative unit, including by "hacking" and other unlawful online activities.
- d. Prevent access to websites, web applications, or software that does not protect against the disclosure, use, or dissemination of a student's personal information.
- e. Prohibit and prevent students from accessing social media platforms through the use of internet access provided by the local school administrative unit, except when expressly directed by a teacher solely for educational purposes.
- f. Prohibit the use of the TikTok platform or any successor platform in the following instances:
 1. On devices owned or provided by the local school administrative unit.
 2. Through internet access provided by the local school administrative unit.
 3. As a platform to communicate or promote any unit or school sponsored club, extracurricular organization, or athletic team."

SECTION 2. Part 1 of Article 8 of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

"§ 115C-81.26. Social media and mental health.

Each local board of education shall provide instruction on social media and its effects on health, including social, emotional, and physical effects. Instruction shall be provided once during elementary school, once during middle school, and twice during high school. Instruction



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may be included as part of the mental and emotional health instruction provided pursuant to G.S. 115C-81.25. Instruction on this topic shall include at least the following:

- (1) Negative effects of social media on mental health, including addiction.
- (2) The distribution of misinformation on social media.
- (3) Methods of manipulating behavior using social media.
- (4) The permanency of information shared online.
- (5) How to maintain personal security.
- (6) How to identify cyberbullying, predatory behavior, and human trafficking on the internet.
- (7) How to report suspicious behavior encountered on the internet.
- (8) Personal and interpersonal skills or character education that enhances individual level protective factors and mitigates or reduces risk-taking or harmful behavior."

SECTION 3. This act is effective when it becomes law and applies beginning with the 2025-2026 school year.