



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 407

February Session, 2026

Substitute House Bill No. 5149

House of Representatives, April 7, 2026

The Committee on Education reported through REP. LEEPER of the 132nd Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING PHONE-FREE SCHOOLS.

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 Section 10-233j of the general statutes is repealed and the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, 2026*):

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] the
7 student's parent or guardian establishes to the satisfaction of the
8 principal that a reasonable basis exists for the possession and use of the
9 paging device.

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

15 (b) (1) As used in this subsection:

16 (A) "Mobile electronic device" means any hand-held or other portable
17 electronic equipment capable of providing data communication
18 between two or more individuals, including, but not limited to, a
19 cellular mobile telephone, a text messaging device, a paging device, a
20 personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, equipment that is capable
21 of playing a video game or a digital video disk or equipment on which
22 digital images are taken or transmitted; and

23 (B) "Personal mobile electronic device" means a mobile electronic
24 device that is owned by or otherwise under the control of a student or
25 parent or guardian of a student and has not been issued to such student
26 or another student by the local or regional board of education.

27 (2) In accordance with the local policy adopted pursuant to
28 subdivision (3) of this subsection, no student enrolled in grades
29 kindergarten to twelve, inclusive, in a public school in the state shall
30 possess or use a personal mobile electronic device during the regular
31 school day, except a student shall be permitted to possess or use a
32 personal mobile electronic device if such possession or use is necessary
33 (A) to implement the provisions of an individualized education
34 program for such student or a plan pursuant to Section 504 of the
35 Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended from time to time, for such
36 student, or (B) for the health and well-being of such student as
37 determined by a licensed physician, physician assistant or advanced
38 practice registered nurse.

39 (3) Each local and regional board of education shall develop and
40 adopt a local policy restricting the student possession or use of personal
41 mobile electronic devices during the regular school day. A board shall
42 consider the unique needs of teachers, administrators, parents and
43 guardians and students in the school district. Such local policy shall
44 include, but need not be limited to, (A) a prohibition on such possession
45 or use by students on school grounds during the regular school day, (B)
46 provisions regarding the storage of personal mobile electronic devices
47 during the regular school day, (C) a system of discipline for violating

48 the provisions of such local policy, and (D) provisions permitting the
 49 student possession or use of personal mobile electronic devices during
 50 the regular school day (i) to implement the provisions of an
 51 individualized education program for such student or a plan pursuant
 52 to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended from time
 53 to time, for such student, or (ii) if a licensed physician, physician
 54 assistant or advanced practice registered nurse has determined that
 55 such possession or use is necessary for the health and well-being of such
 56 student.

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

64 Sec. 3. Subdivision (8) of section 10-222aa of the general statutes is
 65 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
 66 *2026*):

67 (8) "Mobile electronic device" [means any hand-held or other portable
 68 electronic equipment capable of providing data communication
 69 between two or more individuals, including, but not limited to, a text
 70 messaging device, a paging device, a personal digital assistant, a laptop
 71 computer, equipment that is capable of playing a video game or a digital
 72 video disk or equipment on which digital images are taken or
 73 transmitted] has the same meaning as provided in section 10-233j, as
 74 amended by this act.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	10-233j
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	New section
Sec. 3	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	10-222aa(8)

Statement of Legislative Commissioners:

In Section 1(a), opening and closing brackets were inserted around "remotely activated" and "paging" was added before "device", for consistency.

ED *Joint Favorable Subst.*

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.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact: None

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill has no fiscal impact. It: (1) requires local and regional boards of education (BOEs) to develop and adopt a policy prohibiting student cell phone use during the regular school day except in certain circumstances; and (2) prohibits BOEs from using social media as the exclusive means to directly communicate with parents and guardians. It is anticipated that BOEs can meet the requirements of the bill with existing resources.

The Out Years

State Impact: None

Municipal Impact: None

OLR Bill Analysis**sHB 5149*****AN ACT CONCERNING PHONE-FREE SCHOOLS.***

This bill bans public school students in grades kindergarten through 12 from possessing or using personal mobile electronic devices (“personal devices”) during the regular school day, with certain exceptions. It defines a mobile electronic device as any handheld or portable electronic equipment that can provide data communication between two or more people, including cell phones, text messaging devices, laptops, gaming equipment, and equipment for taking digital images.

Under the bill, the ban applies only to devices owned or controlled by students (or their parents or guardians), not those school boards issue to students. The bill also permits personal device use if it is necessary (1) to implement an individualized education program (IEP) or a 504 plan for students with disabilities or (2) for the student’s health and well-being, as determined by a physician, physician assistant, or advanced practice registered nurse.

The bill requires school boards to adopt a local policy to implement the bill’s requirements. The policy must cover (1) the bill’s personal device ban and exceptions, (2) device storage, and (3) discipline for violations. When developing a plan, the board must consider the unique needs of teachers, administrators, parents, guardians, and students.

The bill also bans school boards from using social media as the only way they communicate with students and their parents or guardians. Social media refers to any electronic medium where users create and view user-generated content (such as videos, photos, blogs, or instant messages).

Lastly, it makes technical and conforming changes, including eliminating a provision in existing law allowing school boards to restrict cell phone use in their schools.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

BACKGROUND

HB 5035, favorably reported by the Education Committee, similarly bans students from using wireless communication devices during the school day.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Education Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 30 Nay 16 (03/16/2026)