

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Education Pre-K -12

BILL: SB 1296
INTRODUCER: Senator Burgess
SUBJECT: Use of Wireless Communications Devices in Schools
DATE: March 28, 2025 REVISED:

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Jahnke	Bouck	ED	Pre-meeting
2.			CF	
3.			RC	

I. Summary:

SB 1296 requires the Commissioner of Education to work with six selected school districts that currently implement a policy or will implement a policy during the 2025–2026 school year that prohibits student use of cell phones and personal electronic devices throughout the school day, both on and off school grounds during school-related activities.

The bill requires the Department of Education to submit a report evaluating the policy’s impact on student achievement and behavior and providing a model policy for statewide use. The bill also outlines exceptions for device use and requires student conduct guidelines for policy violations.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2025.

II. Present Situation:

Wireless Communications Device Use in Florida Public Schools

In 2023,¹ the Legislature required each district school board to adopt rules prohibiting student use of wireless communications devices during instructional time. The prohibition does not apply when device use is expressly directed by a teacher solely for educational purposes. Additionally, the rules must prohibit student access to social media platforms through internet access provided by the school district, with exceptions for instructional use. These rules must be included in each district’s code of student conduct and published on the district’s website.²

¹ Ch. 2023-36, Laws of Fla.

² See ss. 1006.07(2)(f) and 1003.02(1)(g), F.S.

District School Boards

District school boards are responsible for the general supervision and control of students enrolled in public schools.³ Each board must adopt rules for the control, attendance, discipline, in-school suspension, suspension, and expulsion of students, as well as maintain a code of student conduct.⁴ Students may possess wireless communications devices while on school property or attending school functions. However, school boards have the authority to adopt rules governing the use of such devices through their codes of student conduct.⁵

The implementation of policies concerning wireless communications devices is left to the discretion of each district. As a result, local policies vary. Some districts prohibit student device use for the entire school day, while others allow limited use during non-instructional periods, such as lunch or between class periods.

Principals and Teachers

School principals are responsible for enforcing the student code of conduct and maintaining school safety and discipline. Principals may take disciplinary action consistent with board policies, including those governing the inappropriate use of wireless communications devices.⁶

Teachers have the authority to manage student behavior and establish rules of conduct within their classrooms.⁷ Within the framework of the district's code of conduct, teachers may designate specific locations or procedures for storing devices during instructional time to minimize distractions and maintain an orderly learning environment.⁸

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

SB 1296 requires the Commissioner of Education to coordinate with six selected school districts representing two small, two medium, and two large counties that currently implement a policy, or will implement a policy during the 2025–2026 school year that prohibits students from using cell phones and other personal electronic devices during the entire school day. This prohibition applies both on school grounds and while students are engaged in school-sponsored activities off campus during the school day.

The Department of Education must submit a report to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by December 1, 2026. The report must:

- Summarize the effect of each district policy on student achievement and behavior.
- Include a model policy that school districts and charter schools may adopt.

The bill further requires that the report and model policy account for circumstances under which the use of cell phones or other electronic devices during the school day by students may be authorized, including:

³ Section 1003.02(1), F.S.

⁴ Section 1006.07(2), F.S.

⁵ Section 1006.07(2)(f), F.S.

⁶ Section 1006.09(1), F.S.

⁷ Section 1003.32(1)(a), F.S.

⁸ Section 1006.07(2)(f), F.S.

- For students with disabilities or English Language Learners (ELLs) who rely on such devices to access curriculum or other required activities.
- For health-related reasons, emergency medical issues, or disaster situations.
- On school buses before or after school hours.
- During extracurricular activities occurring outside of the school day.

The bill requires the report to also include student code of conduct provisions for violations of the policy, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Illegal behaviors involving device use that may warrant law enforcement involvement.
- Use of devices to bully, harass, or threaten other students.
- Use of devices to cheat or violate school academic integrity policies.
- Use of devices to capture or display any picture or video of any student during medical issues or misconduct.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2025.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

None.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill creates an undesignated section of Florida law.

IX. Additional Information:

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.