

House Bill 340 (AS PASSED HOUSE AND SENATE)

By: Representatives Hilton of the 48<sup>th</sup>, Jones of the 47<sup>th</sup>, Gaines of the 120<sup>th</sup>, Rice of the 139<sup>th</sup>,  
Barrett of the 24<sup>th</sup>, and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

1 To amend Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to  
2 elementary and secondary education, so as to enact the "Distraction-Free Education Act"; to  
3 require local school systems and public schools to enact policies and procedures for use of  
4 personal electronic devices at school and school sponsored events by students in kindergarten  
5 through eighth grade; to provide for permissible student use of personal electronic devices;  
6 to authorize the Department of Education to provide guidance and technical assistance; to  
7 prohibit certain waivers; to provide for definitions; to provide for related matters; to repeal  
8 conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

9 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

10 **SECTION 1.**

11 This Act shall be known and may be cited as the "Distraction-Free Education Act."

12 **SECTION 2.**

13 Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to elementary and  
14 secondary education, is amended in Part 15 of Article 6, relating to miscellaneous provisions  
15 under the "Quality Basic Education Act," by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

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"20-2-324.8.

(a) As used in this Code section, the term:

(1) 'Access' means viewing, holding, wearing, or otherwise using a device for the purpose of communication, internet access, gaming, recording, listening to music, or any other function commonly associated with personal electronic devices.

(2) 'Bell-to-bell' means the period beginning with the first bell signaling the start of instructional time and ending with the final bell signaling the conclusion of the school day and shall include all scheduled instructional time, breaks, transitions, assemblies, and other school related activities occurring between the start and end of the school day.

(3) 'Distraction-free education' means a learning environment where access to personal electronic devices is restricted to minimize distractions, improve academic outcomes, and increase meaningful interactions and focused learning experiences.

(4) 'Personal electronic device' means any portable electronic device capable of transmitting, receiving, or accessing communications, data, or media. Such term includes, but is not limited to, smartphones, smartwatches, tablets, e-readers, headphones, and other devices with functionalities such as wireless communication, internet access, messaging, video recording, gaming, social media access, or data transmission.

(5) 'School day' means the bell-to-bell period for students receiving instruction on a school campus. Such term shall not apply to students receiving virtual or remote instruction away from a school campus.

(6) 'School equipment' means any computer or computer networking equipment, technology or technology related device or service, or communication system or service that is operated, owned, leased, and made available to students by a local board of education, local school system, or public school and that is used for transmitting, receiving, or accessing communications, data, or media.

(b) Beginning no later than July 1, 2026, no public school student in kindergarten through grade eight shall be permitted to access personal electronic devices during the school day, except as otherwise provided in this Code section or required by law.

(c) By January 1, 2026, each local school system and public school shall adopt policies and procedures that, at a minimum:

(1) Prohibit bell-to-bell access to personal electronic devices by students in kindergarten through grade eight, subject to exceptions provided for by law;

(2) Establish appropriate methods for storing students' personal electronic devices, including, but not limited to, a student's locker, a locked pouch, or a designated place in the classroom;

(3) Establish clear procedures for off-site events or activities, including all school sponsored events and field trips, daily transportation, athletic and extracurricular events, and other instructional opportunities that do not occur on school grounds;

(4) Establish clear communication protocols that:

(A) Facilitate all emergency communication through school emergency communication management systems and coordinated by school personnel;

(B) Require parents or guardians who need to communicate with their student during the school day to contact the school directly; and

(C) Communicate rules for school personnel and sponsors of all school sponsored events and field trips, daily transportation, athletic and extracurricular events, and other instructional opportunities that do not occur on school grounds; and

(5) Provide that any student found in violation of such policies and procedures during the school day shall be subject to progressive consequences in accordance with the local school system's or public school's student code of conduct, including, but not limited to, verbal warnings, confiscation of personal electronic devices, parental notification, and other actions as deemed appropriate.

(d) A student whose Individualized Education Program (IEP), Section 504 Plan, or medical plan explicitly mandates the use of a personal electronic device for medical or educational purposes shall be permitted to access the device as necessary to fulfill the requirements of the respective program or plan.

(e)(1) Each local school system and public school shall:

(A) Implement appropriate monitoring and enforcement mechanisms to ensure compliance with policies and procedures established pursuant to this Code section, which may include, but need not be limited to, assigning designated school personnel to oversee implementation and adherence to such policies and procedures, conducting periodic audits of personal electronic device storage, and regularly reviewing enforcement practices;

(B) Ensure that parents, guardians, and students are informed of such policies and procedures through student and family handbooks, student codes of conduct, school public websites, and other common communication channels; and

(C) Regularly review the effectiveness of such policies and procedures and adjust as necessary to ensure its continued alignment with educational goals and student well-being.

(2) Each local school system and public school is encouraged to host student and parent engagement activities designed to promote distraction-free education through personal electronic device-free, independent play and learning, including, but not limited to, family workshops, question and answer sessions, town halls, mindfulness or enrichment sessions, screen-free challenges, and participation in initiatives that encourage students to engage in meaningful, personal electronic device-free play and activities.

(f) The Department of Education shall provide local school systems and public schools with guidance and technical support for the effective implementation and enforcement of the provisions of this Code section.

93 (g) Nothing in this Code section shall be construed or applied to prohibit or limit a local  
94 school system or public school from providing school equipment, including, but not limited  
95 to, laptops and tablets, for student use for educational purposes.  
96 (h) This Code section shall not be subject to waiver pursuant to Code Section 20-2-82 for  
97 a strategic waivers school system, Code Section 20-2-2063.2 or 20-2-2065 for a charter  
98 system, Code Section 20-2-2065 for a charter school, Code Section 20-2-2096.3 for a  
99 completion special school, or Code Section 20-2-244."

100 **SECTION 3.**

101 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.