

Dear Governor Stein,

As co-chairs of the Advisory Council for Student Safety and Well-Being, we submitted the Advisory Council's *Best Practices Guide for North Carolina Public Schools Units (PSUs) Establishing Personal Communication Device Policies (Best Practices Guide)* to you on June 2, 2025, in response to Executive Order 13. We are pleased that since submitting the *Best Practices Guide*, you signed bipartisan House Bill 959 into law on July 1, 2025, to require all North Carolina public school units to implement policies by January 2026 to restrict the use of wireless communication devices, including cell phones, during instructional time.



Although the law does not require NC public school units to implement these new policies until January 2026, we have found that many school systems have enthusiastically welcomed this new legislation and have already moved to implement local policies. From our research, as of December 2025, all traditional public school units have a local policy that addresses student cell phone use, and the majority of school systems have recently updated their policies to reflect changes made under the new law.

North Carolina joins 31 other U.S. states in enacting legislation on wireless communication devices.¹ Initial implementation efforts across the nation indicate that these policies are having a positive impact in classrooms and schools. A recent survey of more than 20,000 public school educators across the U.S. found that stricter, school-wide cell phone policies correlate with less device use during class and higher teacher satisfaction.²

While these policies are just in their initial phase of implementation, the Advisory Council has learned of similar positive early indicators from our NC public school units. During our November 17, 2025, meeting, the Advisory Council heard presentations from leaders in the Chatham and Onslow county school systems about how they implemented their policies and the early outcomes they are seeing. It was heartening to hear of the many positive results they are witnessing in their school environments, including increased social interactions, improved academic outcomes, increased engagement, and decreased discipline concerns.

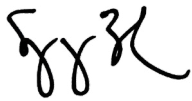
The stories we have heard about initial policy implementation are encouraging, and we are excited to share some of these reflections with you and the public. Because we feel these policy implementation efforts are best told by those who are leading the work, we have created a video featuring North Carolinians sharing their stories about these policies in action. We hope you enjoy this [video report](#) as much as we have loved hearing their stories.

¹ Prothero, A., Langreo, L., & Klein, A. (2024, June 28). Which States Ban or Restrict Cellphones in Schools? Education Week. <https://www.edweek.org/technology/which-states-ban-or-restrict-cellphones-in-schools/2024/06>

² Over 20,000 educators share insights on school cell phone policies. (2025, October 9). Penn Today. <https://penntoday.upenn.edu/news/angela-duckworth-over-20000-educators-share-insights-school-cell-phone-policies>

Our Advisory Council has been hard at work since we published the Best Practices Guide: we are spending time this year learning more about the challenges our students, educators, and families face regarding student safety, well-being, and physical health. As we engage in this work, we are refining the policy recommendations that will best support North Carolina students, and we will submit recommendations to you next year.

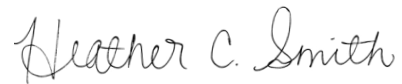
We appreciate the initial charge you gave us to make recommendations around eliminating the use of personal communication devices, including cell phones, in schools. It is clear that North Carolina has prioritized student academic achievement and well-being by giving our students eight hours a day Monday through Friday when they can focus on being students free of online pressures and distractions. We feel confident this policy implementation will only continue to show great results for students, educators, and families.



Sydney Batch
Senate Democratic Leader
Senate District 17, Wake County
North Carolina Senate



William "Billy" Lassiter
Deputy Secretary for the Division of
Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
Department of Public Safety



Heather Smith
North Carolina 2024
Teacher of the Year
Haywood County Schools

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