



Key Takeaways—Education and School Board Law Webinar Vol. 8 (Technology Policies in Public Schools)

The following are key takeaways from CALN’s Education and School Board Law webinar on August 22, 2025. The session covered newly enacted NC legislation, including HB959, HB378, and SB805. These measures deal with internet safety, technology in the classroom, and opt-out policies for parents. SB227, a pending DEI bill, is also covered.

Please note: These summaries can provide you with helpful information, but they do not and are not intended to constitute legal advice or create an attorney-client relationship. Instead, they are for general informational purposes only. You are encouraged to contact your board attorney, or to hire a personal attorney, to obtain advice with respect to legal matters.

- Bills that became law on July 29, 2025:
 - SL 2025-38 (HB959): Must have a policy regarding student access to internet
 - Section 1
 - 1. Limit student access to only age-appropriate content
 - 2. Protect the safety and security of students on communication apps
 - 3. Prohibit unauthorized access by students to sensitive data
 - 4. Protect students’ personal information
 - 5. Prohibit access to social media
 - Section 2
 - Social media and mental health: standard course of study shall include instruction on social media and its effects on health starting in the 2026-2027 school year
 - State Board of Education must provide a standard course of study that touches on addiction, misinformation, manipulation, permanency of information shared online, personal security, cyberbullying, and personal/interpersonal skills
 - Section 3
 - Regulation of wireless communication devices—must have a “No Cell Phone Policy” (at least during instructional time). Should, at a minimum, prohibit students from using or having wireless communication devices turned on during instructional time.
 - Discipline is left to school board discretion
 - Due September 1, 2025, or January 1, 2026—send a copy of policy to DPI, and resend to DPI every time it changes

- SL 2025-46 (HB 378): Evaluating technology costs
 - When acquiring technology (including computer hardware and software), public school districts must evaluate: 1) the long-term costs of owning and repairing technology, 2) flexibility for innovation, and 3) anticipated resale or salvage value
 - School boards must annually report the following information to the NC State Board of Education by August 15:
 - The break/fix rate of school technology devices in the school district for the previous school year
 - The total number of school technology devices in operation in the school district
 - The number of technology devices requiring repair that underwent repair or were no longer in service during the previous school year
 - The amount of funds spent to repair or replace devices during the previous school year
- SL 2025-84 (HB 805): Rejection of gender ideology extremism
 - Defines biological sex as based on birth, and prohibits gender identity from being used as an equal term
 - School boards must pass a policy prohibiting sharing of sleeping quarters during school events unless parents provide written permission
 - Opting out of substantial burden on religious beliefs
 - Parents must be provided notice and given an opportunity to opt out of instruction that places a burden on religious beliefs, alternative activity must be provided
 - Requires the adopting of a policy after *Mahmoud v. Taylor*
 - Provide public access to library books via a searchable web-based catalog that's easily accessible and allow parents to identify books that may not be borrowed by student
- Burke County: Resolution encouraging balanced instruction through reduced screen use
 - Resolutions can be a good first step, though policies are binding
 - Per the resolution: "While digital tools have an appropriate place in modern education, their use must be balanced with proven traditional methods to best support student achievement and well-being."
 - The board affirms that pen-and-paper instruction should be the primary mode of learning, prioritizes investments in physical learning materials, and will provide professional development to educators. They encourage responsible and limited use of digital devices by reserving screen time for activities that offer evidence-based instructional advantages.
- SB 227: Eliminating DEI in public schools (not yet law)
 - Placed on the calendar for a veto override on August 26—needs one Democrat vote
 - Prohibits advocacy, compulsion, instruction, professional development, etc. with respect to discriminatory practices and divisive concepts (ex: one race is superior)

to another, one race is inherently bigoted, etc.)

Helpful Considerations

- Make internet safety, social media health, and wireless device usage a priority going forward. This is a matter of leadership.
 - Can be done through policy and in budgets
- Consider costs, health, and educational impacts of technology usage
- Protect women and girls from gender ideology extremism
- Respect parental rights to direct religious upbringing of their children
- Eliminate DEI by prohibiting discriminatory acts and divisive concepts. You don't need to wait for the state legislature to pass a law requiring a policy. Show leadership at the local level.