



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

# DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: September 10, 2025  
To: Local Educational Agency Leads  
From: Kathy Ehling, Assistant Commissioner  
Division of Educational Services

## Guidelines for Schools on Student Use of Internet-Enabled Devices

In today's increasingly connected world, cell phones and other internet-enabled devices are integral to how students communicate, access information, and engage with the broader world. However, the unregulated use of these devices during the school day can result in lower academic performance, harm to emotional well-being, and deterioration of a positive school climate. In response to these concerns, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) has developed [guidelines](#) to support districts in crafting thoughtful, inclusive, and age-appropriate policies based on research and best practices that allow for flexibility in local implementation.

The purpose of the guidance is to provide New Jersey public school districts, including charter schools and renaissance school projects, with guidelines for developing and implementing local policies governing the use of internet-enabled devices by students during the school day, on school buses, and at school-sponsored events. The guidelines aim to promote student well-being, academic engagement, and digital safety by offering policy considerations, implementation strategies, and a range of recommendations across grade levels to equip districts to tailor student use of personal internet-enabled device policies to their unique community needs.

Student use of internet-enabled device policies that are thoughtfully designed, developmentally appropriate, and equitably enforced can play a crucial role in supporting student focus, fostering healthy peer relationships, and minimizing digital distractions. These guidelines provide New Jersey school districts with considerations and suggestions to establish local policies that reflect community values, meet legal obligations, and prioritize student success. By aligning policy design with evidence-based research, districts can create safer, more connected, and academically supportive school environments that benefit all learners.

To support implementation, the NJDOE will provide a funding opportunity to school districts that adopt bell-to-bell policies. Additional information will be available in the coming weeks.

c: Members, State Board of Education  
NJDOE Staff  
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network  
Garden State Coalition of Schools  
NJ LEE Group