

The House Committee on Education offers the following substitute to HB 340:

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:

H. B. 340 (SUB)

16 "20-2-324.8.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

54 (4) Establish clear communication protocols that:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

90 (f) The Department of Education shall provide local school systems and public schools  
91 with guidance and technical support for the effective implementation and enforcement of  
92 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.