

Information Technology

See full summary documents for additional detail

Facilitate Permanent Installation of Broadband Infrastructure – Disaster Recovery Act of 2025 - Part I.

SL 2025-2 (H47), Sec. 5.2

Section 5.2 of S.L. 2025-2 (House Bill 47) requires roadway constructors repairing or rebuilding roads within a county affected by Hurricane Helene to do all of the following: (i) on roads that are a quarter of a mile long or longer, collaborate with any broadband provider that is repairing or rebuilding broadband infrastructure that was located along the original right-of-way; (ii) coordinate with broadband providers to avoid extended traffic disruptions or the necessity of further improvements upon the completion of the roadway construction process; and (iii) cooperate with broadband providers converting temporary backbone broadband service into permanent broadband installations.

This section further requires the Department of Transportation and local governments to allow the underground installation of broadband infrastructure within rights-of-way as needed for the repair of broadband infrastructure damaged by Hurricane Helene.

This section became effective March 19, 2025.

Internet Safety Policy – Various Education Changes.

SL 2025-38 (H959), Sec. 1

Section 1 of S.L. 2025-38 (House Bill 959) requires local boards of education to adopt policies on student access to the internet on devices or internet services provided by local school administrative units (LEAs). The policies must do all of the following:

- Limit access by students to only age-appropriate subject matter and materials.
- Protect the safety and security of students when accessing email, chat rooms, and other forms of electronic communication.
- Prohibit unauthorized access by students to data or information maintained by the LEA, including by "hacking" and other unlawful online activities.
- Prevent access to websites, web applications, or software that do not protect against the disclosure, use, or dissemination of a student's personal information.
- Prohibit and prevent students from accessing social media platforms, except when expressly directed by a teacher solely for educational purposes.

This section became effective July 1, 2025. Local boards of education must adopt required policies by January 1, 2026.

Social Media and Mental Health – Various Education Changes.

SL 2025-38 (H959), Sec. 2

Section 2 of S.L. 2025-38 (House Bill 959) requires the standard course of study to include instruction on social media and its effects on health, including social, emotional, and physical effects. Instruction must be provided once during elementary school, once during middle school, and twice during high school. In addition, this instruction must include information on at least the following:

- Negative effects of social media on mental health, including addiction.
- Distribution of misinformation on social media.
- Methods of manipulating behavior using social media.
- The permanency of information shared online.
- How to maintain personal security.
- How to identify cyberbullying, predatory behavior, and human trafficking on the internet.
- How to report suspicious behavior encountered on the internet.
- Personal and interpersonal skills or character education that enhances individual level protective factors and mitigates or reduces risk-taking or harmful behavior.

This section became effective July 1, 2025, and applies beginning with the 2026-2027 school year.

Regulation of Wireless Communication Devices – Various Education Changes.

SL 2025-38 (H959), Sec. 3

Section 3 of S.L. 2025-38 (House Bill 959) requires governing bodies of public school units to establish a wireless communication policy that prohibits students from using, displaying, or having a wireless communication device turned on during instructional time, except in the following circumstances:

- If authorized by a teacher for educational purposes or for use in the event of an emergency.
- As required by the student's individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan.
- As required to manage a student's health care, in accordance with a documented medical condition.

The governing body is required to establish the consequences of violations of the policy, which can include confiscation of the wireless communication device and disciplinary measures under the public school unit's Code of Student Conduct.

Each governing body is required to submit its policy to the Department of Public Instruction (DPI). DPI must annually report by October 1 to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on the number of public school units that are in compliance with this requirement and provide a list of any units that are not.

This section became effective July 1, 2025. Governing bodies must adopt the policy by no later than January 1, 2026.

North Carolina Community College System Learning Management System/North Carolina Longitudinal Data System.

SL 2025-62 (S133)

S.L. 2025-62 (Senate Bill 133) does the following:

- Directs the State Board of Community Colleges (SBCC) to solicit a learning management system (LMS) for all community colleges.
- Provides the Community College System Office (System Office) with an exemption from the Department of Information Technology (DIT).
- Makes changes to the statutes related to the North Carolina Longitudinal Data System (NCLDS).

Community College Learning Management System. – Section 1 of the act requires the SBCC to conduct a competitive solicitation to provide an LMS to all community colleges by December 31, 2025. The transition to the new LMS must be completed by December 31, 2027. Answers to the competitive solicitation must include information about how the LMS would align with the systems (i) offered by the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), and (ii) used by the constituent institutions of The University of North Carolina. The SBCC must report to the Senate Appropriations Committee on Education/Higher Education, the House Appropriations Committee on Education, and the Fiscal Research Division on the information received by December 31, 2025.

DIT Exemption. – Section 2 of the act exempts the System Office from the DIT requirements in Article 15 of Chapter 143B of the General Statutes but allows it to elect to participate in the information technology programs, services, or contracts offered by DIT, including information technology procurement, by having the SBCC elect to do so in writing.

North Carolina Longitudinal Data System. – Section 3 makes various changes to the statutes governing the NCLDS, including the following:

- Removing the five year limit on the linkage of student data and workforce data.
- Removing the requirement that the Governmental Data Analytics Center (GDAC) designate a compliance timeline for electronic transcripts.
- Requiring GDAC to publish an inventory of the data proposed to be accessible in the NCLDS.
- Moving the NCLDS from being administratively housed within DPI to DIT.
- Requiring that the NCLDS act as a data broker for all public school units and the entire Department of Commerce.
- Requiring the NCLDS and recipients of data in fulfillment of approved data requests to use only aggregated data in public reports.

- Clarifying that all data collected and maintained by the NCLDS remains owned by the contributors and that all data sharing supported by the NCLDS must comply with applicable federal and State laws and regulations.

Section 3 of the act became effective July 1, 2025. The remainder of the act became effective July 3, 2025.

Department of Information Technology Changes – Continuing Budget Operations.

SL 2025-89 (H125), Sec. 4.1

Section 4.1 of S.L. 2025-89 (House Bill 125) exempts the State Board of Elections and the State Highway Patrol from oversight by the Department of Information Technology (DIT). An exempt entity may still elect to be subject to oversight by DIT.

These provisions also extend the exemption period for the State Bureau of Investigation and the Division of Emergency Management within the Department of Public Safety. Previously, these entities were exempt from DIT oversight until June 30, 2025. The exemption period is extended until June 30, 2027.

This section became effective July 1, 2025.

Broadband Fund Flexibility – Continuing Budget Operations.

SL 2025-89 (H125), Sec. 4.3

Section 4.3 of S.L. 2025-89 (House Bill 125) does all of the following:

- Repeals the statutory authority for the Satellite-Based Broadband Grant Program and the Growing Rural Economies with Access to Technology (GREAT) Program for Fixed Wireless and Satellite Broadband Grants.
- Directs the Department of Information Technology (DIT) to use funds appropriated to the GREAT Program for Fixed Wireless and Satellite Broadband Grants to award grants to eligible entities to purchase installation materials for satellite internet service. In awarding these grants, DIT must prioritize applicants operating in a county designated within the Hurricane Helene disaster area, and may also give priority to applicants that offer emergency services, disaster relief, educational services, or economic development. Eligible grant recipients include State agencies, local governments, volunteer fire departments, schools, libraries, community colleges, community centers, and other similar places.
- Authorizes DIT to provide emergency funding to communications service providers to rebuild, repair, or replace broadband infrastructure damaged by Hurricane Helene. DIT may use up to \$50 million of available funds that were originally appropriated in the 2021 Appropriations Act (S.L. 2021-180) for the purpose of the Broadband Make Ready Accelerator programs.

This section became effective retroactively to July 1, 2025.

BEAD Deployment Changes – Continuing Budget Operations.

SL 2025-89 (H125), Sec. 4.4

Section 4.4 of S.L. 2025-89 (House Bill 125) does all of the following:

- Revises the statute authorizing the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program to incorporate by reference to federal law the definitions for the following terms: "low-cost broadband service," "reliable broadband service," "underserved," and "unserved."
- Repeals a provision that directed the Broadband Infrastructure Office in the Department of Information Technology (DIT) to prioritize applicants proposing to serve the highest number of new unserved and underserved locations when deciding between competing applicants for a BEAD grant who have received the same score on the objective, 100-point scale used to evaluate grant applicants.
- Appropriates to DIT any federal funds received from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act for the BEAD Program to be used for administering the Program.

This section became effective retroactively to July 1, 2025.

Sale of Mainframe and Related Technology Components – Continuing Budget Operations Part II.

SL 2025-92 (H358), Sec. 5.1

Section 5.1 of S.L. 2025-92 (House Bill 358) allows the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) to sell its mainframe computing system and related components on terms that AOC deems to be in its best interests and without involvement of the State Surplus Property Agency.

This section became effective retroactively to July 1, 2025.

Remote Public Access Fees – Continuing Budget Operations Part II.

SL 2025-92 (H358), Sec. 5.2

Section 5.2 of S.L. 2025-92 (House Bill 358) clarifies the authority of the Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts to enter into contracts under reasonable terms with third parties to provide remote electronic access to certain court records and clarifies that funds recovered pursuant to any such agreements must be remitted to the State Treasurer to be held in the Court Information Technology Fund.

This section became effective retroactively to July 1, 2025.

Modify Department of Information Technology Procurement Exemptions – Continuing Budget Operations Part IV.

SL 2025-97 (S449), Sec. 7.2

Section 7.2 of S.L. 2025-97 (Senate Bill 449) provides that Article 143B of the North Carolina General Statutes does not apply to the Department of State Treasurer. Certain entities are authorized to elect to participate in information technology programs, services, or contracts offered by the Department of Information Technology, but the election must be made in writing. This section also provides that for the Department of State Treasurer, other than the Investment Authority, the election must be made in writing by the State Treasurer. For the Investment Authority, the written election must be made by the Board of Directors of the Investment Authority.

This section became effective October 22, 2025.