

# SENATE BILL NO. 1703

103RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCED BY SENATOR CARTER.

7305S.011

KRISTINA MARTIN, Secretary

## AN ACT

To amend chapters 160 and 186, RSMo, by adding thereto three new sections relating to instructional methods in schools.

*Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Missouri, as follows:*

Section A. Chapters 160 and 186, RSMo, are amended by adding thereto three new sections, to be known as sections 160.068, 186.085, and 186.095, to read as follows:

**160.068. 1. This section shall be known and may be cited as the "Student Screen-Time Standards Act".**

**2. As used in this section, the following terms mean:**

**(1) "Instructional technology", a laptop, tablet, computer, Chromebook, smart device, software platform, or other similar device or platform used for student learning;**

**(2) "Manipulatives", hands-on physical learning items including, but not limited to, blocks, counters, cubes, rulers, cards, science materials, and similar educational tools;**

**(3) "Traditional materials", printed books, paper-based workbooks, notebooks, handwriting materials, and physical educational resources.**

**3. For elementary school students in kindergarten through grade five, each school district and charter school, but not any virtual school, shall adopt a written screen time and instructional technology policy consistent with**

18 this section to promote the educational interests of  
19 students, prevent the harmful effects of screen time on  
20 child development, ensure that technology supports rather  
21 than supplants foundational learning, and restore evidence-  
22 based practices. The screen time and instructional  
23 technology policy shall establish the following:

24 (1) Limits and restrictions on student screen time and  
25 student use of instructional technology during the school  
26 day;

27 (2) Limits and restrictions on school district- or  
28 charter school-issued devices or school district or charter  
29 school educational technology being used outside the school  
30 day;

31 (3) Limits and restrictions on student access to  
32 internet-connected instructional technology;

33 (4) The digital platforms used;

34 (5) Standards and requirements for student use of  
35 manipulatives and traditional materials;

36 (6) The process for a parent or guardian to obtain  
37 information regarding his or her child's screen time and  
38 instructional technology use and the process for a parent or  
39 guardian to limit or eliminate his or her child's screen  
40 time and instructional technology use; and

41 (7) The research, evidence, and information upon which  
42 the policy is based.

43 4. In creating the policy, the district or charter  
44 school shall consider and document research on best  
45 practices in literacy instruction, instructional technology,  
46 and assessment and the optimal role for the use of  
47 handwriting and cursive writing in promoting literacy for  
48 all students.

49           5. Each elementary school shall notify parents and  
50 guardians annually of the policy adopted under subsection 3  
51 of this section. Parents and guardians of students in  
52 grades kindergarten through five may, upon request, receive  
53 information about their child's login time and use of  
54 district-provided instructional technology and online  
55 learning platforms. The district or charter school shall  
56 provide such available information within a reasonable time  
57 and at no cost to the parent or guardian.

58           6. Each elementary school shall publish such policy on  
59 such school's website.

60           7. Each policy adopted under subsection 3 of this  
61 section shall be periodically updated, including  
62 incorporating the best practices recommendations from the  
63 recommended model school board policy on screen time and use  
64 of technology in instruction from the framework on classroom  
65 use of screens (FOCUS) council created under section  
66 186.095, when such recommendations become available.

67           8. This section shall be implemented before the end of  
68 the 2027-28 school year and shall apply for all subsequent  
69 school years.

          186.085. The literacy advisory council established  
2 under section 186.080 shall provide advice on the inclusion  
3 of instruction and assessment of cursive writing and  
4 reading, including the optimal role for the use of cursive  
5 writing and reading in promoting literacy for all students.  
6 Such advice shall include recommendations for a related  
7 model policy on cursive.

          186.095. 1. The commissioner of education shall  
2 establish a "Framework on Classroom Use of Screens Council"  
3 or "FOCUS Council". The council shall consist of at least  
4 twelve but no more than fifteen members. The council shall

5 consist of the commissioner, or the commissioner's designee,  
6 who shall serve as chair of the council. The other members  
7 of the council shall be appointed by the commissioner and  
8 shall include members representing the following stakeholder  
9 groups:

- 10 (1) School boards;
- 11 (2) Charter schools;
- 12 (3) Elementary building principals who have gone  
13 through leadership training through the Missouri leadership  
14 development system;
- 15 (4) At least three teachers, including teachers with  
16 expertise in reading instruction, math instruction, and  
17 special education, with at least one teacher who has  
18 participated in the Missouri leadership development system;
- 19 (5) A representative from a parental advocacy group  
20 that represents children struggling with literacy and a  
21 representative from an advocacy group that represents  
22 children with disabilities;
- 23 (6) At least one faculty member of an institution of  
24 higher education with an approved teacher preparation  
25 program;
- 26 (7) A pediatric mental health professional or board-  
27 certified behavioral analyst licensed in the state,  
28 preferably with experience in technology and behavioral  
29 responses; and
- 30 (8) A medical professional with expertise in child  
31 health and development.

32 2. The department of elementary and secondary  
33 education shall provide necessary staff and resources for  
34 the work of the advisory council.

35 3. (1) The council shall meet at least four times per  
36 year in its initial year and at least twice per year

37 thereafter to conduct a comprehensive survey and analysis of  
38 screen time and instructional technology use in public  
39 schools and to review best practices regarding screen use  
40 and the use of technology in instruction and related policy  
41 provisions. Items and information related to such best  
42 practices and policies shall include, but not be limited to:

- 43 (a) Impacts on educational outcomes;
- 44 (b) Impacts on behavioral and discipline outcomes;
- 45 (c) Impacts on special education;
- 46 (d) Impacts on early childhood brain development,  
47 including reading and writing skills;
- 48 (e) The deterioration of student competency in  
49 reading, writing, arithmetic, and science;
- 50 (f) The need to strengthen human connection in  
51 classrooms and support healthy, respectful relationships;
- 52 (g) The isolation of students in a digital and virtual  
53 world; and
- 54 (h) Other such items and information to be determined  
55 by the council.

56 (2) The council shall meet for the first time for  
57 purposes of this subsection before December 1, 2026, and the  
58 whole council or a subcommittee thereof shall hold at least  
59 three additional meetings for purposes of this subsection  
60 before July 1, 2027.

61 (3) On or before July 1, 2027, the council shall  
62 submit a report containing the council's actions, findings,  
63 recommendations, and policy proposals to the state board of  
64 education, the governor, and the joint committee on  
65 education.

66 (4) The recommendations shall include a recommended  
67 model school board policy on screen time and instructional

68 technology use. The model policy shall recommend best  
69 practices regarding:

70 (a) Student screen time;

71 (b) Student use of instructional technology;

72 (c) Restrictions on student screen time;

73 (d) Restrictions on student use of instructional  
74 technology;

75 (e) Restrictions on student access to internet-  
76 connected instructional technology;

77 (f) Student use of manipulatives and traditional  
78 materials;

79 (g) The process for a parent or guardian to obtain  
80 information regarding his or her child's screen time and  
81 instructional technology use;

82 (h) Minimizing or eliminating school district- or  
83 charter school-issued devices or school district or charter  
84 school educational technology being used outside the school  
85 day; and

86 (i) The process for a parent or guardian to limit or  
87 eliminate his or her child's screen time and instructional  
88 technology use.

89 (5) The recommendations may include suggested changes  
90 to state law.

91 (6) The report shall be presented to the state board  
92 of education and to the joint committee on education in  
93 public hearings. The report shall be updated at least every  
94 two years to provide additional information regarding the  
95 council's actions, recommendations, and policy proposals.

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