

**FAVORABLE**  
**Senate Bill 130**  
**County Boards of Education - Student Personal Electronic Device Use**  
**Policy - Established**

**House Ways and Means Committee**  
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**Government Relations**

The Maryland State Education Association supports Senate Bill 130, which would require the State Department of Education to develop guidelines for a policy on student use of personal electronic devices during school hours. It would also require county boards of education, in consultation with students, parents, teachers, and school personnel, to develop and adopt a policy that limits students from using personal electronic devices, with certain exceptions for emergencies, health needs, or educational purposes.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3-million-member National Education Association (NEA).

A recent poll of NEA members showed that 90 percent support school policies prohibiting the use of cell phones during instructional time.<sup>1</sup> Why such overwhelming support? Of those same educators, 83 percent report that students are having difficulty concentrating and completing assignments, trends which experts say correlate with increased access to cell phones.<sup>2 3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> National Education Association. Internal member polling (2024).

<sup>2</sup> National Education Association. Internal member polling (2024).

<sup>3</sup> How Phones Ruin Concentration. Child Mind Institute (2024). <https://childmind.org/article/kids-shouldnt-use-phones-during->

Adolescents are increasingly spending large portions of their days using phones or other devices: according to the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, U.S. children ages 8-12 are using devices or in front of screens for an average of 4-6 hours each day, and children over 13 approaching up to 9 hours of screen time each day.<sup>4</sup>

It is impractical and often ineffective to enforce restrictions on cell phone usage when policies vary on a classroom-by-classroom basis. Enforcement must not be left up to individual educators; rather, schools need widely observed norms led by system leaders and administrators. We therefore encourage uniform, countywide policies that are crafted in partnership with local bargaining units and include thoughtful exceptions for health, emergency, and educational circumstances. The creation of statewide guidance and best practices will support the development of such policies.

**We urge the committee to issue a Favorable Report on Senate Bill 130.**

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[homework/#:~:text=Multitasking%20leads%20to%20shallower%20thinking,Clinical%20Expert:%20Matthew%20Cruger%2C%20PhD](#)

<sup>4</sup> Screen Time and Children. American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (2024).

[https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families\\_and\\_Youth/Facts\\_for\\_Families/FFF-Guide/Children-And-Watching-TV-054.aspx](https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/Children-And-Watching-TV-054.aspx)