

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2025 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 897 (Senator Love)
 Education, Energy, and the Environment

**Primary and Secondary Education - Student Technology and Social Media
 Resource Guide**

This bill requires the National Center for School Mental Health (NCSMH) at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, in consultation with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), to develop and publish a student technology and social media resource guide as specified. Before developing the guide, NCSMH must develop a needs assessment as specified by September 1, 2026. The guide must be posted and distributed as specified on or before the first day of the 2027-2028, 2028-2029, and 2029-2030 school years. The Governor must include an appropriation of \$100,000 for fiscal 2027 and \$125,000 in fiscal 2028 and 2029 to fund the research and development of the student technology and social media resource guide. Annually, beginning July 1, 2027, NCSMH must report to the General Assembly on the expenditure of funds. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2025.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: University System of Maryland (USM) general fund expenditures increase by \$100,000 in FY 2027 and by \$125,000 in FY 2028 and 2029 in accordance with the bill’s mandated appropriation and to fund the development of a social media resource guide and needs assessment. Revenues are not affected. **This bill establishes a mandated appropriation for FY 2027 through FY 2029.**

(in dollars)	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	0	100,000	125,000	125,000	0
Net Effect	\$0	(\$100,000)	(\$125,000)	(\$125,000)	\$0

Note: () = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate increase; (-) = indeterminate decrease

Local Effect: Local school systems post and distribute the guide as specified with existing resources. Revenues are not affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary:

Needs Assessment

The NCSMH needs assessment must identify existing State and federal resources to assist in developing the guide, existing efforts to educate families on the impact of technology and social media on the mental health of youth in the State, and gaps in the existing resources and education efforts.

Student Technology and Social Media Resource Guide

For the 2027-2028 school year, the guide must cover commonly used technology products for personal use by children. For the 2028-2029 school year, the guide must additionally cover commonly used technology products used in education delivery to children. For the 2029-2030 school year, the guide must be published into a multimedia product covering the information required in previous school year guides.

Generally, the guide must include age-appropriate information and best practices that encourage students and caregivers to understand how technology and social media can be used and misused by developers and users, as well as promote informed decision making when using technology, social media and the Internet. The guide must also include information and guidance on safe Internet, technology and social media usage by students in prekindergarten through grade 12 including certain specified items and any other product, service, or device an individual can use to communicate with other individuals through the Internet. In the case where there is a gap in available information relating to specific category of technology or social media, the guidelines must include a reference to the lack of available information. The guide may include other State, federal, nonprofit, or public resources.

The guide must include a service and product landscape review that contains (1) the name of a specific product or service; (2) the supported function of the product or service; (3) any privacy, safety, or security concerns with regard to whether and how data is captured, stored, or shared by the product or service; (4) whether the product or service affects additive qualities in a user and if so, how; (5) ways in which a student in prekindergarten

through grade 12 could access a specific product or service, including whether a specific product or service is available through a device provided by a public school; (6) any information on the potential harmful impact on a user, including emotional, psychological, and physical impacts; and (7) positive and negative impact potential on academic growth and learning.

The guide must be written in plain English and clearly display contact information for NCSMH. On request, NCSMH must provide translated copies of the guides.

Current Law: There are no requirements in current law to develop or provide a student technology and social media resource guide for public schools.

All students in Maryland's public schools, without exception, have the right to educational environments that are safe, appropriate for academic achievement, and free from any form of harassment.

MSDE advises that the agency is in the process of convening the Task Force on Student Cell Phone Use in Schools. Comprising teachers, administrators, parents, students, superintendents, and other educational experts across all grade bands, the task force will review current policies across the State on allowable student use of cell phones in schools. MSDE anticipates the task force will generate a set of policy recommendations to support school districts in addressing student cell phone use by April 2025.

State Expenditures: The bill requires production of a needs assessment by September 1, 2026, just two months after funding becomes available at the start of fiscal 2027. However, given the long lead time between the bill's effective date and the needs assessment reporting date, this analysis assumes that NCSMH can use existing resources in fiscal 2026 to lay the groundwork for completion of the needs assessment in the two-month window once funding becomes available. The University of Maryland School of Medicine further advises that the bill's mandated funding amounts are likely sufficient to fund the creation of a resource guide with specified elements before the 2027-2028, 2028-2029, and 2029-2030 school years. These funds are also assumed to be sufficient to cover the cost of any requested translations of the guide once published. Therefore, general fund expenditures for USM increase by \$100,000 in fiscal 2027 and by \$125,000 in fiscal 2028 and 2029 in accordance with the bill's mandated appropriation.

MSDE advises that the department can collaborate with NCSMH as needed in the development of the guide and post the guide to its website with existing resources.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: HB 1316 (Delegate Wolek, *et al.*) - Ways and Means.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education; University System of Maryland; Department of Budget and Management; Anne Arundel County Public Schools; Baltimore City Public Schools; Baltimore County Public Schools; Frederick County Public Schools; St. Mary's County Public Schools; Wicomico County Public Schools; Montgomery County Public Schools; Department of Legislative Services

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