

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2025 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 1179 (Montgomery County Delegation)
Ways and Means

Montgomery County - Board of Education - Student Cellular Phone Policy
MC 13-25

This bill requires the Montgomery County Board of Education to develop and implement a policy that (1) prohibits the use of cellular phones by students during instructional time; (2) requires students to store their cellular phone in a secure place during instructional time, including a locker, a closed backpack, or a storage device; and (3) includes appropriate disciplinary measures for violations of the policy. Under the bill, instructional time includes any time during the school day, except a student’s lunch period. The policy developed in accordance with the bill may not prohibit a student from using a cellular phone (1) for any purpose documented in the student’s individualized education program; (2) to monitor or address a health issue; or (3) when directed by an educator or administrator for educational purposes. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2025.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The bill pertains to the Montgomery County Board of Education.

Local Effect: The Montgomery County Board of Education can develop and implement cellular phone use policies as specified with existing resources. Revenues are not affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Many local school systems have policies governing the use of cellular phones in schools or on school grounds, which are aligned with local codes of discipline. According to the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), at least

19 of Maryland's 24 local school systems have recently updated or adopted new student cellular phone use policies as of September 2024. Additional local school systems are in the process of reviewing and updating policies. Policies vary across systems and schools and typically cover definitions, guidelines, compliance procedures, and consequences for violations. They also generally cover procedures for notifying parents and staff, and the responsibilities of school administrators and may provide differing levels of flexibility for elementary, middle, and high school students.

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 cellular phones in schools. MSDE anticipates the task force will generate a set of policy recommendations to support school districts in addressing student cellular phone use by April 2025.

Local Fiscal Effect: The Montgomery County Board of Education can modify its existing policies on student cell phone use in accordance with the bill's requirements using existing resources.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See SB 112 of 2024.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education; Montgomery County Public Schools;

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 27, 2025
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