

Education Advocacy Coalition

for Students with Disabilities

SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL 897

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

March 7, 2025

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Education Advocacy Coalition for Students with Disabilities (EAC) is a coalition of nearly 50 organizations and individuals concerned with education policy for students with disabilities in Maryland. The EAC supports Senate Bill 897, which will require the National Center for School Mental Health at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, in consultation with the State Department of Education, to develop and publish a student technology and social media resource guide by the 2027-2028 school year.

Technology is a ubiquitous part of life for many modern students who have been exposed to devices since they were born. However, technology, particularly social media, presents a “profound risk of harm” to youth mental health, especially for youth already experiencing poor mental health.¹ There is undoubtedly a need for support for our students about technology usage and social media. This General Assembly session, there were at least half a dozen bills attempting to ban or limit student cell phone use at school; however, “[s]imply taking away devices doesn’t lead to improved wellbeing outcomes.”² Bans alone are not effective without education on healthy technology habits. This is especially the case because even off-campus social media and technology use has the potential to affect students and school communities regardless of prohibitions during the school day. DRM has previously urged this legislature to forgo outright cell phone bans in favor of research and resource creation, such as that proposed by Senate Bill 897, which will create a Student Technology and Social Media Resource Guide. Students, teachers, and parents/caregivers need to be supported with resources and education on digital literacy, agency, and citizenship.

Engaging in research and resource creation, rather than outright bans, will also prevent any unintended harmful effects on students with disabilities, who already face significant barriers to academic and social engagement in their school environments. One goal for advocates in ensuring access for students with disabilities is identifying viable assistive technology by relying

¹ Office of the Surgeon General (OSG). Social Media and Youth Mental Health: The U.S. Surgeon General’s Advisory. US Department of Health and Human Services (2023).

² [More States Are Moving to Ban Cellphones at School. Should They?](#); [What Are the Best Ways to Manage Cellphones in Schools?](#)

on the technology that students are already using. When students use existing technology such as smart phones as communication devices, organizational tools, timers, etc., they often feel more comfortable utilizing their accommodations and assistive technology. However, these students are not immune from the dangers presented by these devices and will also be well served by the creation of a technology and social media resource guide.

Authorizing the development and publication of a student technology and social media resource guide will promote healthy technology use by students with and without disabilities with the goal of creating a positive school climate.

For these reasons, the EAC supports Senate Bill 897. Contact: Leslie Seid Margolis at lesliem@disabilityrightsmd.org or 443-692-2505.

Respectfully submitted,

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