



MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Expanding Opportunity and Unleashing Potential

15 West Gude Drive ♦ Suite 100 ♦ Rockville, Maryland 20850

BILL: House Bill 1179

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

DATE: March 3, 2025

POSITION: Oppose

COMMITTEE: Ways and Means

CONTACT: Patricia Ursprung, Coordinator, Legislative Affairs

The Montgomery County Board of Education opposes House Bill 1179.

This bill requires the Montgomery County Board of Education to establish a policy limiting the use of cellular phones by students during instructional time. The bill requires the policy to contain exceptions for some students in some circumstances.

On September 26, 2024, the Montgomery County Board of Education adopted a legislative platform that contains priority issues and ongoing concerns. One of the ongoing concerns is preserving local autonomy. Based on this platform position, the Montgomery County Board of Education opposes legislation that would infringe on local control. Bills that fall into this category require specific school system action and may impact areas such as school calendars, school start times, curriculum, testing, procurement, and other operational decision-making.

House Bill 1179 infringes on local control because it directs the Board of Education to adopt a policy, and dictates what the policy provisions must be. Montgomery County Public Schools has a policy that limits student use of personal mobile devices during the school day, and is also currently engaging in an “Away All Day” pilot program at certain middle and high schools so the Board can study the efficacy of amending the current policy to contain more stringent limitations on cell phone access during the school day. The Montgomery County Board of Education shares Delegate Fraser-Hidalgo’s interest in mitigating distractions to teaching and learning, but believes that the measured and data-driven process currently being undertaken by the Board should not be usurped by a legislative mandate that forces specific action.

As a result of this intrusion on local control, the Montgomery County Board of Education opposes House Bill 1179.