

**BILL:** House Bill 755  
**TITLE:** County Boards of Education - Student Personal Electronic Device Use Policy - Establishment (Phones Away for the School Day Act)  
**HEARING DATE:** February 18, 2026  
**POSITION:** UNFAVORABLE  
**COMMITTEE:** Ways and Means  
**CONTACT:** Jessica Goff, Governmental Affairs Associate (jgoff@mabe.org)

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all of the State's local boards of education, **opposes House Bill 755 - County Boards of Education - Student Personal Electronic Device Use Policy - Establishment (Phones Away for the School Day Act)**

House Bill 755 requires each county board to develop and implement a policy to prohibit the use of personal electronic devices by students during school day hours. The policy must: (1) prohibit a student from using a personal electronic device during school day hours; and (2) require a student to store the student's personal electronic device during school day hours. There is an exception for if a student needs the device for an IEP or 504 plan. The policy developed under this section must include appropriate disciplinary measures for violations of the policy, but may not include suspension or expulsion solely for a violation of the policy.

While MABE appreciates the intent of the bill to improve conditions for teaching and learning, MABE believes that the decision on whether and how to adopt such a policy should be the responsibility of each local board of education. MABE believes that legislation which limits local board decision-making authority (like prescribing whether to have, or the content of, a student technology use policy) weakens the county board's bond with the local community and adversely impacts the community's participation in the governance and operation of their local school system.

Importantly, a 2025 Department of Legislative Services (DLS) [Issue Paper](#) states, "According to the Maryland State Department of Education, 19 [local school systems] recently updated their cell phone policies, and the remaining 5 LSS are currently reviewing or updating their policies." The same report notes that "while the concerns about the impacts of student cell phone use in schools on student learning, behavior, and mental health are compelling, the effectiveness of new laws and policies restricting their use remains uncertain... Fifty-six percent of parents believed students should be allowed to use their cell phones in schools, even during class time if approved by the teacher. Only

32% of parents support a total cell phone ban in school, even if the policy has exceptions for health or student support purposes.” This disparity only further emphasizes that the specific policies are best left up to the county boards who are most responsive to the communities they serve.

Additionally, HB 755’s mandate that students store the personal electronic devices during school day hours would require school systems to purchase storage lockers, cabinets, and or pouches for this purpose. Yet, there is no funding attached to HB 755. School budgets are stretched thin, and as noted, most already have a cell phone policy in place. It is unnecessary to legislate a one-size fits all policy statewide.

Because the majority of Maryland’s school systems have existing policies on student technology use, and because these decisions are best left to the local boards of education that are most responsive to the individual needs of their communities, MABE respectfully requests an **unfavorable** report on **HB 755**.