

Support for HB525

My name is Lisa Cline. I write today from Gaithersburg, MD to support HB525, a phone-free schools bill driven by concerned parents and taxpayers. We thank the sponsors of this bill who have drafted the bill with science-backed language to sincerely try to elevate the well-being of Maryland children and compulsory education.

I have been [advocating for removal of cell phones](#) in the classroom since 2016 when my [oped in the Washington Post](#) got the attention of Montgomery County Public School's central office, which was on the cusp of allowing elementary schooler to bring smartphones to school.

I had a third-grader who was not allowed to bring Pokemon cards and stuffed animals to school, so the idea of bringing an internet-connected device was absurd and lacked a basic understand of early child development.

In middle school, we were fortunate that our principal (MCCPTA Principal of the Year Daniel Garcia) had zero tolerance for cell phones and made his own phone readily available to kids.

In high school, all bets were off. My son received a sub-standard education due to NO cell phone enforcement whatsoever.

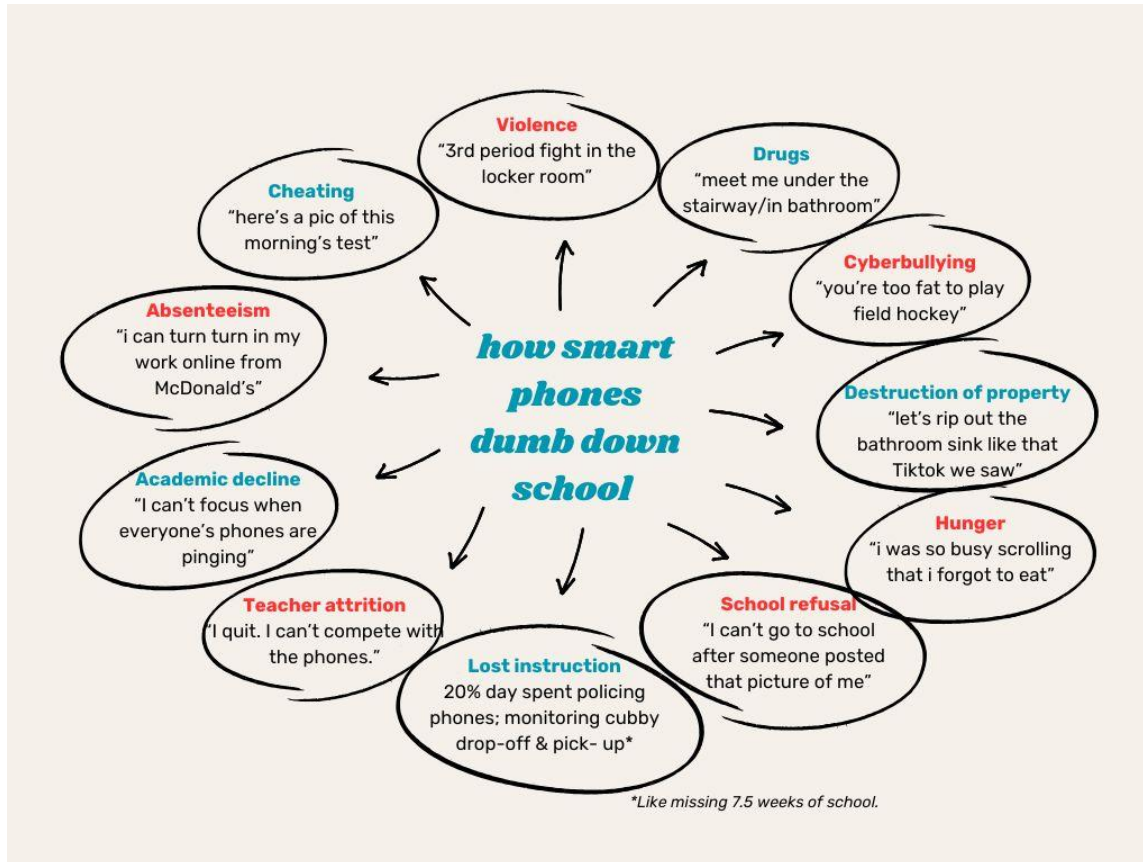
Years of advocacy later, myself and hundreds of parents and teachers forced MCPS's personal mobile device regulation, COG-RA, to be more restrictive. It has helped, but students still use phones during transition times, at lunch, and "for educational purposes." Policies varied school by school in our 210-school district. The opaqueness failed kids and teachers alike.

A few schools ran an bell-to-bell pilot last year as part of the new [superintendent's four-point safety plan](#). It was a huge success, removed ambiguity, and proved that bell-to-bell is the only way to enforce a distraction-free learning environment.

Don't think students will embrace bell-to-bell? Teacher Gina Miller shares this story:

I was talking to some students who were moving to different classes for second semester. I told them that the new teachers might be allow cell phones, which I thought would make them smile (since I'm so strict about 'no phones.') Immediately, four students at said that they no longer cared about using their phones at school. Mind you, these kids were extremely resistant to give up their phones at the beginning of the year. Pretty cool teacher moment.

To illustrate the known benefits of a phone-free K-12 education, I created this graphic for seminars I do for parents. Look at the plethora of problems associated with personal mobile devices in schools. HB525 will be a game-changer.



Please vote in favor of HB525 — for the well-being of our students, teachers, school safety, social climate, and the families of Maryland.

Sincerely,

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