

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
First Reader

House Bill 755 (Delegate Wolek)  
Ways and Means

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County Boards of Education - Student Personal Electronic Device Use Policy -  
Establishment (Phones Away for the School Day Act)

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This bill requires each local board of education to develop and implement, by the 2026-2027 school year, a policy to limit the use of “electronic communication devices” (devices) by students during the school day hours, which includes all the hours of the school day from the start of the day until the end of the day. During school day hours, local policies must prohibit the use of devices and require students to store devices in a manner determined by the local board to ensure the device is not carried on the student’s person. Policies may not prohibit a student from using devices for any purpose documented in the student’s individualized education program or Section 504 Plan. Each school must designate one or more telephones in the school to be used by students to contact a parent, legal guardian, or other responsible adult during school day hours if necessary. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.**

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** None, the bill pertains to local boards of education.

**Local Effect:** Local boards of education can likely develop and implement device policies with existing resources. Revenues are not affected.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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Analysis

**Bill Summary:** “Electronic communication device” means any portable electronic device carried or transported by a student to receive, send, or record voice, image, or text content.

Under the bill, “electronic communication device” does not include a device provided by a local board of education for instructional purposes or a medical device provided by a medical professional for a student’s health care needs.

**Current Law:** Most local school systems have policies governing the use of cell phones in schools or on school grounds, which are aligned with local codes of discipline. Policies vary across school 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 and the State Board of Education convened the Task Force on Student Cell Phone Use in Schools in spring 2025 to review policies across the State on allowable student use of cell phones in schools and develop guidance and recommendations. In August 2025, the State Board passed a [resolution](#) reinforcing the recommendations from the task force’s [guidance document](#) and encouraging local school systems to regularly revisit and assess their current policy to ensure it satisfies community needs and aligns with task force recommendations; and requesting that school systems clearly define expectations for their student cell phone use policies.

Additionally, MSDE advises that the agency has partnered with Phones in Focus, a national research study that gathers educators’ input on school cell phone policies, with a goal of developing evidence-based recommendations for policies that support academic learning, social well-being and student focus.

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### **Additional Information**

**Recent Prior Introductions:** Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See HB 57, HB 147, HB 192, and HB 630, and SB 29, SB 130, SB 368, and SB897 of 2025 and SB 112 of 2024.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland State Department of Education; Anne Arundel County Public Schools; Montgomery County Public Schools; Frederick County Public Schools; Prince George’s County Public Schools; St. Mary’s County Public Schools; Wicomico County Public Schools; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 15, 2026  
jg/clb

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