

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2016 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
First Reader

Senate Bill 657 (Senator Benson)  
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

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**Task Force to Study the Impact of Cell Phone Use in Public Schools**

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This bill establishes a Task Force to Study the Impact of Cell Phone Use in Public Schools. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) staffs the task force, and the Governor designates the chair of the task force. The task force must (1) study and analyze the impact of cell phone use in public schools; (2) assess the costs and benefits of student cell phone use in public schools; and (3) consider any other relevant matters. The task force must report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly by December 1, 2016.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2016, and terminates June 30, 2017.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** None. MSDE can provide staff to the task force with existing budgeted resources. No effect on revenues.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law:** There is no relevant State law on this subject.

**Background:** According to its preliminary report on the State Education Technology Plan, MSDE found that seven school districts have a “bring-your-own-technology” program for a majority of schools to facilitate the administration of online standardized tests. However,

the use of devices is often determined by the principal and teachers at each school rather than by policy. The report also found that resistance by some school districts is centered around concerns about equity, policy, and legal implications.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland State Department of Education, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 1, 2016  
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