

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2024 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**First Reader**

Senate Bill 112 (Senator Salling)  
Education, Energy, and the Environment

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**County Boards of Education - Student Cellular Phone Use - Policy Required**

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This bill requires each county board of education to develop and adopt a policy that prohibits a student from using a cellular phone during instructional time unless a teacher expressly directs the student to use a cellular phone for educational purposes. The bill does not apply to a county board that has an existing policy on the use of cellular phones by students during school hours. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2024.**

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** None.

**Local Effect:** County boards of education can develop and adopt cellular phone use policies as specified with existing resources.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law:** Many local education agencies (LEAs) have policies in place that govern the use of cellular phones in schools or on school grounds, which are aligned with local codes of discipline. Policies vary across LEAs 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.

**Local Fiscal Effect:** For county boards with an existing policy on the use of cellular phones for educational purposes, the bill has no effect. Counties without a policy can adopt the required policy with existing resources.

The public school systems in Baltimore City and Montgomery and Prince George’s counties advise that they already have policies governing the use of cell phones in schools. Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) advises that its policy allows specific guidelines for the use of cell phones during instructional hours to be determined by individual schools. To the extent the bill would require AACPS to adopt a new district-wide policy, AACPS can adopt such a policy with existing resources.

St. Mary’s County Public Schools advises that adopting such a policy could entail significant implementation costs for magnetic pouches to isolate student cell phones during the school day. However, the Department of Legislative Services advises that because the bill does not require the use of such devices to prevent cell phone use, any increase in expenditures from purchasing magnetic pouches to prevent cell phone use during the day would be at the discretion of each county board and not a direct result of the bill.

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### **Additional Information**

**Recent Prior Introductions:** Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

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

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - January 16, 2024  
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