

SENATE BILL 368

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5lr2597
CF 5lr1316

By: **Senator Watson**

Introduced and read first time: January 17, 2025

Assigned to: Education, Energy, and the Environment

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **County Boards of Education – Student Cellular Phone Use Policy –**
3 **Establishment**
4 **(Maryland Phone-Free Schools Act)**

5 FOR the purpose of requiring each county board of education to develop and implement,
6 not later than a certain school year, a policy limiting the use of a cellular phone by a
7 student during the school day except under certain circumstances; and generally
8 relating to county boards of education and a student cellular phone use policy.

9 BY adding to
10 Article – Education
11 Section 7–136
12 Annotated Code of Maryland
13 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

14 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
15 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

16 **Article – Education**

17 **7–136.**

18 **(A) IN THIS SECTION, “INSTRUCTIONAL TIME” MEANS ANY TIME DURING**
19 **THE SCHOOL DAY, EXCEPT A STUDENT’S LUNCH PERIOD.**

20 **(B) NOT LATER THAN THE 2026–2027 SCHOOL YEAR, EACH COUNTY BOARD**
21 **SHALL DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A POLICY TO LIMIT THE USE OF CELLULAR**
22 **PHONES BY STUDENTS DURING INSTRUCTIONAL TIME.**

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



(C) EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN SUBSECTION (D) OF THIS SECTION, THE POLICY DEVELOPED UNDER THIS SECTION SHALL:

(1) PROHIBIT A STUDENT FROM USING A CELLULAR PHONE DURING INSTRUCTIONAL TIME;

(2) REQUIRE A STUDENT TO STORE THE STUDENT'S CELLULAR PHONE IN A SECURE PLACE DURING INSTRUCTIONAL TIME; AND

(3) PROHIBIT A STUDENT FROM USING THE SOCIAL MEDIA APPLICATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA WEBSITES DETERMINED BY THE COUNTY BOARD DURING SCHOOL HOURS.

(D) THE POLICY DEVELOPED UNDER THIS SECTION MAY NOT PROHIBIT A STUDENT FROM USING A CELLULAR PHONE:

(1) FOR ANY PURPOSE DOCUMENTED IN THE STUDENT'S INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM OR SECTION 504 PLAN;

(2) TO MONITOR OR ADDRESS A STUDENT'S DOCUMENTED HEALTH ISSUE;

(3) DURING AN EMERGENCY EVENT; OR

(4) WHEN DIRECTED BY AN EDUCATOR OR ADMINISTRATOR FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES.

(E) (1) A POLICY DEVELOPED UNDER THIS SECTION SHALL INCLUDE APPROPRIATE DISCIPLINARY MEASURES FOR VIOLATIONS OF THE POLICY, INCLUDING A WARNING FOR AN INITIAL VIOLATION.

(2) THE DISCIPLINARY MEASURES ADOPTED UNDER PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION SHALL BE ENFORCED BY AN ADMINISTRATOR.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 2025.