

**BILL:** Senate Bill 112  
**TITLE:** County Boards of Education - Student Cellular Phone Use - Policy Required  
**POSITION:** OPPOSE  
**DATE:** January 17, 2024  
**COMMITTEE:** Education, Energy, and the Environment  
**CONTACT:** John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) opposes Senate Bill 112.

MABE appreciates the intent of this bill to improve conditions for teaching and learning by requiring that each school system adopt a policy regarding student cell phone use in the classroom. However, MABE believes that the decision on whether and how to adopt such a policy should be the responsibility of each local board of education. In addition, because this bill would mandate local policies imposing strict prohibitions on cellular phone use in a classroom unless expressly permitted by the teacher, in enacted it would likely result in mandatory changes to student discipline policies and practices as well.

Local boards of education play a vital role in governing the local school system, advocating for public education, and engaging local communities and promoting participation by parents and other community members in the education process so that everyone feels a responsibility for, and ownership of, Maryland's public schools and our students' futures. The development and adoption of local board policies on the use of cell phones in the classroom should certainly be the subject of this locally-drive policy-making process.

Again, MABE believes that by retaining decision-making authority at the local level, local boards of education can fulfill their obligation to consider educational practices, available resources to implement those practices, community input, and academic and financial accountability.

MABE is resolved to continue to support programs to prepare students for college and career readiness through access to online learning, educational technologies, and high-quality digital content; create a fully technology-proficient PreK-12 educator workforce; and provide equitable access to current and emerging technologies for all students and educators and expanded opportunities for parents, families, and the community.

For these reasons, MABE requests an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 112.