

Cellphones in school: a public safety issue

LOCAL BLOG NETWORK

Once again, a heavy hand is making an appearance in Prince George's County at the expense of students in the school system. In the 1990s, it was a teen curfew. Later, it was school uniforms. This time, there is talk of [greatly restricting access to cellphones](#). Instead of teaching students the appropriate time to use a cellphone, the Prince George's school board would rather make students lock them up during the school day. It appears the school board needs a reminder of why cellphone bans like this are a bad idea.

I am a product of the Prince George's schools, graduating from High Point High School in 1999 -- the year the country's worst high school shooting took place in Littleton, Col. Cellphones were not as common then. If they had been, I imagine some of the hysteria that accompanied that tragedy, especially from parents, could have been alleviated.

Given Columbine, and then Virginia Tech, keeping cellphones from students is public safety issue. It's laughable to hear board member Donna Hathaway Beck (At Large) argue that students need to be focused on academics while in school; it's been clear for years that the school board itself needs to focus on academics. In 2007, instead on focusing on how to improve the system, the members were concerned about [stripping voting rights](#) from the student member of their board.

Instead of taking the time and expense to enforce a ban on cellphones during school hours, a more productive approach would be for the board to institute a policy of teaching students the proper time and place to use their cellphones.

[Kenny Burns](#) blogs at [Maryland Politics Today](#). The Local Blog Network is a group of bloggers from around the D.C. region who have agreed to make regular contributions to All Opinions Are Local.

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