

BILL: Senate Bill 549
TITLE: Education – Public Schools – Seizure Action Plans (Brynleigh Act)
DATE: March 3, 2020
POSITION: OPPOSE
COMMITTEE: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs
CONTACT: John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) opposes Senate Bill 549 in favor of providing the school health needs of students with seizure disorder through the administration of student health plans, including seizure action plans.

MABE has supported legislation in recent years to ensure that school health guidelines are updated and strengthened. In this context, MABE does not object to the bill's proposal that parents, healthcare providers, and school health personnel and administrators develop seizure action plans for students with a seizure disorder. However, this bill goes much further, by requiring system-wide professional development and a system-wide school health curriculum mandate for a seizure education program.

Again, MABE has recently supported legislation enacted to ensure that school health plans adequately address students with diabetes and students with sickle cell disease. These bills were enacted to ensure a high degree of care and heightened awareness among school personnel regarding the needs of students with diabetes, sickle cell disease, and other health conditions including seizure disorders.

Local boards of education place a very high priority on student health, by ensuring that schools are operating in accordance with adopted state school health guidelines and local policies and procedures intended to provide a health and safe school environment conducive to student learning.

MABE also wants to assure the legislature that local school systems are already operating in accordance with Maryland law that provides for emergency care planning for all students under the Code of Maryland Regulations 7-401 and 7-426. Under the law, MSDE and the Maryland Department of Health must provide technical assistance to schools to: implement the adopted guidelines, train school personnel at the local level; and develop a process to monitor the implementation of the guidelines. The law also establishes the office of the school health services program coordinator, who is responsible for implementing State and local health policies in the public schools; ensuring that public schools adhere to local health services guidelines; and communicating State and local health policies to the parents and guardians of public school students.

For these reasons, MABE requests an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 549.