

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 0981. Three years ago, Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) suffered a major cyberattack that caused it to close for three instructional days. The impact to the system was wide scale and long lasting. Through hard work and the support of county and state resources, BCPS was able to, not only rebuild, but re-imagine its networks and digital resources. The key to BCPS's rebuild was the use of industry standard frameworks and technical expertise to implement them. Much of this support came as a response to the cyberattack and the immediate need to rebuild key infrastructure.

SB0981 seeks to establish the support for LEAs to proactively address the security needs of their infrastructure. In Maryland, LEAs vary widely in size from systems with roughly 2,000 students up to three systems that fall in the top 25 largest systems in the county. All 24 LEAs have unique needs and limited resources to address them. SB0981 requires three of the most basic security measures to protect an LEA's systems (Multi Factor Authentication, Network Monitoring, and Endpoint Protection) and builds a mechanism for those LEAs that need additional implementation support, to receive them.

The overall impact of the attack in BCPS has been felt for years and SB0981 seeks to provide support to LEAs to mitigate their risk and hopefully spare them from the need to recover. Proactive support and achievable first steps will go a long way to ensure our collective resilience in the face of ever-evolving threats.

Overall, LEAs need support to move forward with their cybersecurity initiatives. Each LEA has unique needs and SB0981 builds a reasonable starting point, prioritizing the highest value measures and supplying centralized support to achieve them.