

BILL: Senate Bill 180
TITLE: Public and Nonpublic Schools - Auto-Injectable Epinephrine and Bronchodilators - Use, Availability, Training, and Policies
DATE: March 20, 2024
POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means
CONTACT: John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) supports Senate Bill 180 with amendments to conform it to House Bill 86, as already amended and passed by this Committee.

MABE greatly appreciates the amendments adopted in the House to remove from this bill the provisions regarding the emergency use of injectable epinephrin, and to ensure the appropriate role for the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) to develop statewide guidance in consultation with local school systems.

MABE wants to assure the legislature that local school systems are already operating in accordance with Maryland law and School Health Services Guidelines that comprehensively address routine and emergency student health services (Sections 7-401 and 7-426 of the Education Article). Under the law, MSDE and the MDH 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. State 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. Key responsibilities of the school health coordinator include 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.

MABE has a track record of supporting legislation in recent years to ensure that school health guidelines are updated and strengthened, including bills enacted to ensure that school health plans adequately address students with diabetes and students with sickle cell disease. These bills were crafted to ensure a high degree of care and heightened awareness among school personnel regarding the needs of students with diabetes, sickle cell disease, at risk for anaphylaxis due to food allergens, 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. Again, MABE supports the well-intended policy changes underlying this legislation regarding asthma and the availability and use of inhalers.

For these reasons, MABE requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 180, with amendments to conform it to House Bill 86.