

Education Advocacy Coalition

for Students with Disabilities

SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL 1204

Public and Nonpublic Schools—Student Elopement—Notice and Reporting Requirements

March 27, 2025

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Education Advocacy Coalition for Students with Disabilities (EAC) is a coalition of nearly 50 organizations and individuals concerned with education policy for students with disabilities in Maryland. The EAC supports House Bill 1204, which would impose notice and reporting requirements on schools when students elope from their school buildings.

EAC members represent or work with many students whose disabilities may, for a variety of reasons, impel them to elope, sometimes with fatal consequences. Some students have disappeared for hours and been located miles from their schools; others have been found in nearby bodies of water or sometimes in their school parking lot with traffic coming and going. Many schools are located on or near busy streets. For any student who elopes, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) and the Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) and Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) processes offer proactive ways of addressing the behavior. House Bill 1204 would require same-day notification to parents if their child elopes from the school.

Notice is especially important for students who have IEPs or BIPs, as elopement may signal that the IEP is not appropriate or that the strategies outlined in the BIP are not working and need to be changed. Additionally, if a child successfully leaves the school building, same-day notice to parents will enable them to take appropriate steps to ensure that their child is safe after school and during the evening.

For these reasons, the EAC supports House Bill 1204

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Respectfully submitted,

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House Bill 1204 in Senate: Education Advocacy Coalition Testimony

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