

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 311
Ways and Means

(Delegate Kaufman, *et al.*)

Public Schools - Individuals With Disabilities - Accessibility and Emergency
Planning

This bill requires each local school system to, as a component of required regular safety evaluations of each public school, identify and, if necessary, develop solutions for issues of accessibility for individuals with disabilities. Each local school system must, as a component of required annual reports to the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS), include instances in which a public school facility became inaccessible for a student with a disability in a manner that could impede evacuation or an emergency response. An annual report to MCSS may be disclosed to a member of the General Assembly upon request, but otherwise (1) must be confidential; (2) may not be disclosed; and (3) is not considered a public record and must be exempt from inspection under the Maryland Public Information Act (PIA). **The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: MCSS can carry out the bill's requirements with existing resources. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: The bill's changes to safety evaluation and reporting requirements are not expected to materially affect local school system finances, as discussed below. No effect on revenues.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Current Law: Chapter 30 of 2018, the Maryland Safe to Learn Act, required each local school system, by June 15, 2019, and regularly thereafter, to conduct a safety evaluation of each public school under its jurisdiction. The evaluations must (1) identify and, if necessary, develop solutions for physical safety concerns, including issues with building security and (2) identify and evaluate any patterns of safety concerns on school property or at school-sponsored events.

In December 2019, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), in consultation with disability advocacy groups, updated the Emergency Planning Guidelines for Local School Systems and Schools to accommodate, safeguard, and evacuate students, staff, and visitors with disabilities on public school grounds in accordance with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Each local school system must update its emergency plan to comply with the update of MSDE's guidelines and regulations. If a student with an individualized education program (IEP) requires specific accommodations for evacuation in an emergency, the student's IEP must include accommodations for the student during an emergency. If a student with a 504 plan requires specific accommodations for evacuation in an emergency, the student's 504 team must discuss and address the student's needs, as necessary.

Each local superintendent of schools and the head of the SEED School must annually certify to the State Superintendent that required emergency plans are being implemented and send a copy of the local school system's central administration emergency plan to the State Superintendent of Schools, if updated from the previous year.

Each local school system must annually submit a report to MCSS that includes, for the immediately preceding school year (1) aggregate data about threats made against any school or school system facility; (2) information about any school lockdowns, evacuations, or other emergency responses that occurred; (3) incidents in which a public school's emergency plan failed in part or in whole to function as anticipated in an emergency or an emergency drill; and (4) school hours spent in an emergency or an emergency drill. Each local school system must also, in consultation with the center, update each emergency plan to correct identified weaknesses.

Building Accessibility Requirements

Public schools in Maryland must meet the ADA Standards for Accessible Design, much of which is covered in [Chapter Four](#) of the Guide to the ADA Accessibility Standards, as well as State regulations to the extent they are more stringent than ADA requirements. ADA standards cover, among other things, accessible routes to doors, placement of entry controls, door height and width, and door hardware.

Maryland's Public Information Act, Generally

PIA establishes that all persons are entitled to have access to information about the affairs of government and the official acts of public officials and employees. Each governmental unit that maintains public records must identify a representative whom a member of the public may contact to request a public record. The Office of the Attorney General (OAG) must post all such contact information on its website and in any Public Information Act Manual published by OAG.

Local Fiscal Effect: The bill does not alter federal or State law regarding accessibility of school buildings. Therefore, even though the expanded evaluation and reporting requirements under the bill may reveal the extent of any accessibility issues, including noncompliance with ADA or State law, this analysis assumes that the bill itself does not increase costs related to compliance with current law regarding accessibility of school buildings. Local school systems can include the required information in annual reports to MCSS with existing resources.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See HB 694 and SB 851 of 2025.

Designated Cross File: SB 507 (Senator Zucker) - Education, Energy, and the Environment.

Information Source(s): Baltimore City Public Schools; Anne Arundel County Public Schools; Montgomery County Public Schools; St. Mary's County Public Schools; Wicomico County Public Schools; Maryland State Department of Education; Interagency Commission on School Construction; Maryland Center for School Safety; Department of Legislative Services

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Analysis by: Scott P. Gates

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510