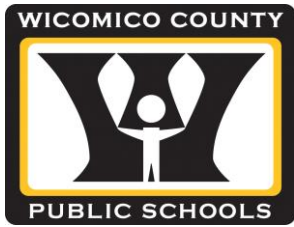


# BOARD OF EDUCATION OF WICOMICO COUNTY



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January 30, 2020

Delegate Carl L. Anderton, Jr.  
House Office Building, Room 310  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Delegate Anderton,

Thank you for sharing the proposed legislation with me on student transportation. I have reviewed the draft and am pleased to provide my support for this proposed change to the current law.

As you know, COMAR 13A.06.07.11 only permits the use of type I and II school buses or taxicabs to transport students to and from school, to afterschool programs, and to nonpublic placements. In most cases, regular school bus transportation works efficiently; however, school systems in Maryland are currently struggling because of a national shortage of school bus drivers. Adding to this challenge, school systems are working hard to meet the transportation needs of some of our most at-risk students, specifically those students who are homeless or in special education nonpublic placement.

The McKinney-Vento Act, for example, is intended to counteract the educational disruption caused by the mobility of homeless students. In accordance with this federal legislation, we must provide transportation to students experiencing homelessness utilizing a regular school bus to carry a very small number of students from their current living space to their school of origin, which is certainly not an efficient use of resources. The current law in Maryland, only allowing the use of a type I or II school bus, and therefore requiring a fully certified school bus driver to transport as few as 4 to 5 students, stretches our limited resources to even greater extremes. While COMAR does allow for school systems to request approval in writing from the State Superintendent of Schools to use alternate vehicles, those alternate vehicles are not permitted in transporting students to and from school. Therefore, this ability to seek special permission doesn't alleviate our struggle to transport these students to and from school.

Thank you so much for your ongoing support and for your efforts to assist us with this student transportation legislation. This legislation would make other viable modes of transportation available to us, and we would be able to rededicate school bus drivers to cover full routes within our district. This proposed legislation would greatly increase our ability to serve all of our students, including our most vulnerable, effectively and efficiently.

Sincerely,

Donna C. Hanlin, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools