



**Board of Education of Howard County
Testimony Submitted to the Maryland Senate,
Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
March 25, 2021**

**Board of Education
of Howard County**

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**HB0373: FAVORABLE W/AMENDMENTS
Education - Child Abuse and Sexual Misconduct Prevention - Hiring Emergent
Employees**

The Board of Education of Howard County (the Board) supports **HB0373 Education - Child Abuse and Sexual Misconduct Prevention - Hiring Emergent Employees** for the potential burden it lifts from school systems in the hiring process while still maintaining the integrity of the law.

Following passage of HB0486 in 2019, school systems were required to begin a new background review procedure for all applicants seeking positions involving direct contact with minors. While the bill's intent was the identification of sexual misconduct of school system applicants where cases during previous employment did not rise to the level of a Department of Social Services or police report, procedurally, the bill mandated extensive new administrative processes.

HB0373, introduced by the original sponsor of the 2019 bill, includes various provisions to address the many hurdles school systems have had in implementing HB0486. Specifically, it allows school systems to hire emergent employees for 60 days while awaiting responses from previous employers, during which time the school system can rescind an employment offer or dismiss the employee when the background review is completed. Additionally, HB0373 allows school systems to share employment history reviews to cut down on duplication of work when teachers move between counties, as well as limits how far back review of former employers (outside school systems) must go to 10 years.

As the 2019 legislation also covered contracted employees, an area our Transportation staff would like to see amended is the provision in (F) and (G) on page five allowing county boards and non-public schools to share and use employment reviews completed by another county board or non-public school. Bus drivers often change companies similar to teachers moving between counties – when a review is completed by one company an employee could authorize the transfer of that report to their new employer to cut down on repetitive reviews of the same history. This could ultimately speed up the hiring process for an industry where personnel shortages already exist.

For these reasons, we urge a FAVORABLE report of HB0373 from this Committee to include the amendments from the House.