

Testimony in Support of House Bill 1181

County Boards of Education—Accessibility Standards—Digital Tools
Nonvisual Access Accountability Act for Grades K–12 Education

House Ways and Means Committee

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1:30 pm

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Government Relations

The Maryland State Education Association supports House Bill 1181, legislation requiring that digital tools developed or purchased by a county board of education include specifications for and meet certain criteria that enable access by students with disabilities, including nonvisual access; that said students be provided these digital tools for their learning; and that future procurement requests of and proposals from vendors for the purchase of digital tools include these specifications and operational criteria.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland’s public schools, teaching and preparing our 896,837 students for careers and jobs of the future. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3 million-member National Education Association (NEA).

MSEA members have long been tenacious advocates for policies and programs that will ensure our students are provided access to the resources and supports they need to achieve their full potential. This is particularly true of our most vulnerable students, including those with special needs. We take seriously our obligation to provide our students with special needs the fair and appropriate public education guaranteed to them in both federal and state law. By ensuring that the needs of our students with visual and physical limitations are considered when procuring digital devices to assist them in their learning, we are doing what is required in order to meet our responsibilities to them; responsibilities they undeniably deserve.

We urge a favorable report on HB 1181.