



Mohammed Choudhury
State Superintendent of Schools

BILL: Senate Bill 662 **DATE:** March 23, 2022
SUBJECT: Access to Counsel in Evictions **COMMITTEE:** Judiciary
Special Fund – Funding
POSITION: Support
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EXPLANATION:

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) supports **Senate Bill 662 - Access to Counsel in Evictions Special Fund – Funding**. This bill provides an additional \$11.8 million in funding to increase access to legal representation for low-income Marylanders facing eviction.

The uncertainty of the last two years has had comprehensive and consequential impacts on students and their families. Ensuring that students had the opportunity to return to school in-person was critical for students who rely on the school day for nutrition, access to health services, and the stability that accompanies the structure of the school environment.

Students also require stability outside of the school building. For decades, research has shown that affordable and consistent housing is inextricably linked with successful student outcomes.¹ With those impacts shown so starkly, it is clear that housing policy is education policy.² Continuity of location is necessary to limit the number of students experiencing homelessness and having to move frequently and suddenly, which has consequences for the academic and social-emotional well-being of students.

Even before the pandemic, in school year 2018-2019, 17% of students across Maryland experienced mobility, enrolling or withdrawing within an academic school year.³ In Baltimore City, 30% of students experienced mobility. Around the country, there is growing recognition of the impact COVID has and will continue to have on students whose families are newly facing housing insecurity.⁴

¹ [Student Mobility: How It Affects Learning](#); [Student Mobility and the Increased Risk of High School Dropout](#); and [The Causes and Consequences of Student Mobility](#)

² [HOUSING POLICY IS SCHOOL POLICY](#)

³ [State Board Enrollment Pres. January 2022](#)

⁴ [Evictions: Children will bear the brunt of a looming crisis](#)

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Other jurisdictions around the country have offered similar assistance to students and families facing potential eviction with efficacy, in large cities like Atlanta.⁵ Housing policies and interventions can have profound, measurable impacts at the school level.⁶ The Department strongly supports the intent of this legislation, which will help reduce the number of transient students and maintain necessary continuity for families.

We respectfully request that you consider this information as you deliberate **SB 662**. Please contact Yousuf Ahmad, at 410-767-0504, or yousuf.ahmad1@maryland.gov, for any additional information.

⁵[FACT SHEET: The White House and Department of Justice Announced 99 Law Schools in 35 States and Puerto Rico Continue to Answer the Attorney General's Call to Action for Stronger Access to Justice and Court Reform on Eviction Prevention | The White House](#)

⁶<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/failing-atlanta-school-cut-its-turnover-rate-in-half-with-help-from-lawyers/>