

**Written Testimony Submitted for the Record to the  
Maryland House  
Ways and Means  
For the Hearing on  
Local School Systems - Equivalent Access Standards - Digital Tools  
(Nonvisual Access Accountability Act for K-12 Education) (HB 0547)  
February 24, 2022**

**SUPPORT**

Free State PTA represents over 34,000 volunteer members and families in over 500 public schools. Free State PTA is comprised of families, students, teachers, administrators, and business as well as community leaders devoted to the educational success of children and family engagement in Maryland. As the state's premier and largest child advocacy organization, Free State PTA is a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families, schools and communities and a strong advocate for public education.

**Free State PTA submits this testimony in support of House Bill 0547 – Local School Systems - Equivalent Access Standards - Digital Tools (Nonvisual Access Accountability Act for K-12 Education).** This bill requires local school systems to provide equivalent access to digital tools for students with disabilities:

1. Including the development, purchase, and provision of certain digital tools.
2. Requiring a local school system to establish a process to evaluate a digital tool under consideration for purchase for nonvisual access by a certain employee of the school system
3. Requiring a vendor who provided a digital tool that fails to meet equivalent access standards to modify the digital tool at the vendor's expense; etc.

Such actions are consistent with our PTA position concerning the belief that all children have the right to a quality public education, which allows each child the opportunity to reach their fullest potential. PTA supports a variety of public education and related support services that ensure that all children can receive appropriate public education

Additionally, providing proper technology can assist special needs students to better keep pace with their peers and to allow for schools to integrate special needs students better and more easily to general education classes. Accordingly, House Bill 0547 supports students with special needs by providing the tools they need to be successful.

Free State PTA speaks up for every child, and this legislation provides for adequate and equitable resources for children with special needs so that they can meet their full potential. Our Association urges that special needs students have a successful inclusion program that includes resources available to support the appropriate needs of the children, which could include additional staffing, individualized learning, and appropriate technology. This bill provides the resources needed for special needs students. It is for these reasons above that Free State PTA urges a favorable vote in support of House Bill 0547.

Testimony is presented on the behalf of

*Marla Posey-Moss*

Marla Posey-Moss, President  
Free State Parent Teacher Associatio