

Education Advocacy Coalition

for Students with Disabilities

SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

House Bill 870: Division of Rehabilitation Services and Developmental Disabilities Administration - Memorandum of Understanding

March 23, 2023

Position: Support

The Education Advocacy Coalition for Students with Disabilities (EAC), a coalition of approximately 40 organizations and individuals concerned with education policy for students with disabilities in Maryland, supports House Bill 870, which would require a memorandum of understanding between the Division of Rehabilitation Services and the Developmental Disabilities Administration. EAC members have a long history of representing or working with students with disabilities in special education matters, including older students who are preparing to transition out of the school system.

For the past six months, several EAC members have served on the Commission to Study the Division of Rehabilitative Services (the Commission). One of the Commission's responsibilities was to consider methods for improving the relationship and communication between transition professionals at the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) and the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA). In its interim report, the Commission recommended DORS enter a memorandum of understanding with DDA to "enable DORS to access the necessary medical, psychological, and school documentation of DDA applicants seeking DORS services." The EAC supports this recommendation and agrees that access to medical, psychological, and school documentation will support DORS in better serving consumers.

To this end, the Commission also recommended that a deep dive be conducted into the DORS and DDA documentation requirements to streamline the necessary supporting documentation of services. As one Commission member noted in comments before the last Commission meeting, a formalized data-sharing and partnership process is needed to ensure the timely flow of information between DORS, DDA, and Community Rehabilitation Providers.

For these reasons, the EAC supports House Bill 870.

Respectfully submitted,

Rene Averitt Sanzone, The Parents' Place of Maryland

Linda Barton, MSED, Education Advocate

Beth Benevides, Howard County Autism Society

Rich Ceruolo, Parent Advocacy Consortium

Michelle Davis, ABCs for Life Success

Jennifer Engel Fisher, Weinfeld Education Group

Ann Geddes, Maryland Coalition of Families

Beth Ann Hancock, Charting the Course, LLC

Kalman Hettleman, Independent Advocate

(over)

Morgan Durand Horvath, M.Ed., Abilities Network
Rosemary Kitzinger and Marjorie Guldan, Bright Futures, LLC
Ande Kolp, The Arc Maryland
Rachel London, Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council
Leslie Seid Margolis, Disability Rights Maryland
Ellen O'Neill, Atlantic Seaboard Dyslexia Education Center
Ronza Othman, National Federation of the Blind of Maryland
Rebecca Rienzi, Pathfinders for Autism
Jaime Seaton, BGS Law
Kelly Spanoghe, Education Advocate
Karleen Spitulnik, Decoding Dyslexia Maryland
Wayne Steedman, Steedman Law Group
Maureen van Stone, Annie Carver, Tyler Cochran, Project HEAL at Kennedy Krieger Institute
Liz Zogby, Maryland Down Syndrome Advocacy Coalition