

BILL:	Senate Bill 1091	DATE:	February 26, 2024
SUBJECT:	Education - Blind and Visually Impaired Students - Textbook Equity	COMMITTEE:	Education, Energy, and the Environment
POSITION:	Information Only		
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EXPLANATION:

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) is providing information for consideration regarding potential strategies to ensure that National Instructional Materials Standards (NIMAS) files are provided to the Maryland Instruction Resource Center (MIRC) or any other producers of braille and large print materials in a timely manner.

Feedback from the MIRC indicates that one factor impacting the production of braille content is that NIMAS files (the files that make it possible to transcribe the content of a textbook into braille) are being provided after textbooks have been ordered. A revision of this structure, wherein NIMAS files are required to be provided by publishers at any initial contract signing, would allow the MIRC or other braille and large print materials providers to ensure that braille textbooks and supplemental materials are available to students in a timelier manner. Including this requirement in the language of Senate Bill 1091 would ensure the timely reception of NIMAS files.

Currently, MSDE has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the MIRC until 2027. If the above recommendation is not included in SB 1091, MSDE will attempt to include this language in our 2027 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the MIRC to ensure the timely reception of NIMAS files.

Note that the above suggestions would have an impact on small businesses. Smaller publishers do not always have the same in-house resources. Therefore, there may be a transitional period wherein smaller publishers do not have the same capability as larger publishers to produce NIMAS files. Larger publishers typically have the in-house resources to produce NIMAS files while their textbooks are being written.

We respectfully request that you consider this information as you deliberate **SB1091**. For further information, please contact Dr. Akilah Alleyne at 410-767-0504, or [Akilah.alleyne@maryland.gov](mailto:akilah.alleyne@maryland.gov)