

SB 821 Primary and Secondary Education - Student I

Uploaded by: Dawana Sterrette

Position: FAV

**Testimony of the
Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners
In Support of
Senate Bill 821 – Primary and Secondary Education –
Student immunization – Temporary Admission Period**

February 21, 2025

The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners supports Senate Bill 821 Primary and Secondary Education – Student Immunization – Temporary Admission Period. This legislation requires each school board to grant temporary admission to schools if a parent or guardian is unable to provide proof of immunization, but present evidence that the student has an appointment for the immunization with a health professional or local health department.

Currently, the law requires that all students from preK through 12th grade receive age appropriate immunizations. Schools must have proof of the immunizations before a student can start school. The required immunizations are:

Varicella: Two doses for students entering grades K–10

Tdap: For students entering grades 7–12

Meningococcal: For students entering grades 7–12

Students may be able to request a religious exemption if they have strongly held religious beliefs that contradict getting the vaccine

To make it easier for students, the Baltimore City Health Department offers vaccine clinics for students throughout the year.

Current law allows students with proof of an appointment within 20 calendar days to be temporarily admitted or temporarily retained in school until the immunization occurs. If the immunization does not take place within 20 calendar days, the student must be removed from school.

The goal of every school board is to have all students in seats and learning. Allowing parents and guardians additional time affords the student the ability to be in school and to learn. This extension of time will also help with chronic absenteeism, as any absence, excused or unexcused counts.

For the foregoing reasons, the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners supports SB 821 and urges a favorable report.

Dawana Merritt Sterrette, Esq.
Executive Director, Legislative and Government Affairs
dsterrette@bcps.k12.md.us
443-250-0190

Primary and Secondary Education...

Uploaded by: Gregory Proctor

Position: FAV



OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

Millard House II, Superintendent | superintendent@pgcps.org
14201 School Lane | Upper Marlboro, MD 20772 | 301-952-6008 | www.pgcps.org/superintendent

DATE: February 21, 2025

BILL: SB 821

TITLE: Primary and Secondary Education – Student Immunization – Temporary Admission Period

COMMITTEE: Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

Prince George’s County Public Schools **supports** Senate Bill 821, which requires each county board to temporarily admit a student to school if the student’s parent or guardian can provide proof that the date of the student’s immunization appointment is within 60 calendar days from the time the student is temporarily admitted into school.

Currently, the regulations allow students to be temporarily admitted to school if the parent or guardian submits proof of the immunization appointment only 20 days from the time the student is temporarily admitted to school.

From July 1 to September 30th Prince George’s County Public Schools averaged greater than 4,000 newcomer students in grades PreK -12. Newcomers are students born outside of the United States that have recently arrived in the country and are new to Prince George’s County Public Schools. Due to a variety of challenges that newcomer families face, many of these students are not able to meet the immunizations requirements in time to be counted as part of the Foundation Program resulting in millions of dollars of lost State funding each school year. For the 2025 school year, more than 900 students were identified as not being funded by the per pupil Foundation funding as they did not provide proof of immunization prior to the September 30th student enrollment submission to the Maryland State Department of Education. In addition to the lost Foundation funding, eligibility for Foundation funds is also required for receiving other services including Free and Reduced Meals, Special Education services, and Mult-lingual instruction services.

If Senate Bill 821 had been in place for the start of the 2025 school year, all but 58 students would have been included in the pupil enrollment count and Prince George’s County would have received the funding needed to educate the students who were eventually enrolled.

In addition to lost funding, the current regulations result in these students being excluded from receiving instructional services until the immunization requirements are met. Because attending school is crucial for equipping students with essential knowledge and skills that form the foundation for academic and career success, the lack of attendance has the potential to negatively impact these students’ future success and achievement in school. PGCPS understands the importance of the immunization program when considering public health and will work to ensure that all students comply; however, the current timeline is too short when considering the specific needs of these students and families. The enactment of Senate Bill 821 would be crucial in ensuring that students are able to attend school at the start of the

school year.

For these reasons, Prince George's County Public Schools requests a **favorable** report on Senate Bill 821.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Millard L. House II", followed by a stylized flourish.

Millard House II
Superintendent
Prince George's County Public Schools

CC: Quincy Boyd, Chief of Staff

SB 821

Uploaded by: Millard House II

Position: FAV



OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

Millard House II, Superintendent | superintendent@pgcps.org
14201 School Lane | Upper Marlboro, MD 20772 | 301-952-6008 | www.pgcps.org/superintendent

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Millard House II
Superintendent
Prince George's County Public Schools

CC: Quincy Boyd, Chief of Staff

SB 821- Primary and Secondary Education - Student

Uploaded by: Nia Callender

Position: FAV



Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director
1217 S. Potomac Street
Baltimore, MD 21224
410-935-7281
marypat.fannon@pssam.org

BILL: SB 821

TITLE: Primary and Secondary Education - Student Immunization - Temporary Admission Period

DATE: February 21, 2025

POSITION: Favorable

COMMITTEE: Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

CONTACT: Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, PSSAM

The Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM), on behalf of all twenty-four public school superintendents, **supports** Senate Bill 821.

This bill requires each county board of education to grant students temporary school admission if their parent or guardian provides proof of an immunization appointment scheduled within 60 calendar days of enrollment. Currently, regulations allow temporary admission only if the appointment is scheduled within 20 days of enrollment.

Local superintendents recognize the importance of immunization policies in protecting the health and safety of all students and staff. However, PSSAM also acknowledges that some students—particularly newcomers and those in areas with limited medical facilities —face challenges meeting the required timeframes. There are also circumstances outside of the control of students and families, or the public at large. For instance, this year there was a shortage in some vaccines that caused delays in public health clinics in Maryland, affecting some of our most vulnerable students. Regardless of the reason for a delay in obtaining the required immunization or presenting the official paperwork, these students are excluded from official enrollment counts, leading to significant losses in education funding each year.

More importantly than districts losing funding, the current regulations prevent students from receiving instructional services until immunization requirements are met, creating barriers to timely school attendance. Ensuring that students can begin school on time is essential for their academic success. Again, while PSSAM recognizes the importance of widespread immunization for public health, the existing timeline does not account for the unique challenges faced by some students and their families.

For these reasons, PSSAM **supports** Senate Bill 821 and kindly requests a **favorable** committee report.

Support_SB821_jbriggs.pdf

Uploaded by: PGCPs Board of Education

Position: FAV



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

14201 School Lane | Upper Marlboro, MD 20772 | 301-952-6115 | www.pgcps.org/offices/board-of-education

February 21, 2025

Board Chairman

Brannndon Jackson
District 6

Chairman Brian J. Feldman

Education, Environment, and Energy Committee

Maryland State Senate

Board Vice Chair

Jonathan Briggs, M.Ed. MLS
District 2

Re: SB821 Primary and Secondary Education - Student Immunization - Temporary Admission Period

Board Members

Dr. Tiffini Andorful
District 1

Position: Support

Pamela Boozer-Strother, MBA, CAE
District 3

Contact: Dr. Phelton Moss, Chair, Policy and Governance Committee
Phelton.Moss@pgcps.org | Johntel Greene, Government Relations Johntel@laperez.org

Vacant
District 4

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and esteemed members of the Education, Environment, and Energy Committee,

Robin Brown
District 5

Thank you for the work you all do on behalf of our students, educators, and staff across the state and in the Prince George's County Public Schools community. On behalf of the Prince George's County Board of Education, representing over 130,000 students, we are writing to express our strong support for SB821.

Dr. Phelton C. Moss
District 7

Zakyia Goins-McCants
District 8

This bill would require each county board to temporarily admit students under specific circumstances related to proof of immunization appointments. It would also extend the 20 calendar days to 60 calendar days. We often encounter unique student situations that, under the current 20-day immunization requirement, effectively prevent students from attending schools at a critical time in their education and restrict the number of students included in our funding formula. As one of Maryland's largest school districts, this small policy change can significantly impact our districts' overall per-pupil funding.

Lolita E. Walker, MBA, PCC
District 9

Student Member

Jamal J. Jongo

1. Student Impact: Each year, students miss valuable instructional time while families work to obtain or verify immunization records. This disruption disproportionately affects our most vulnerable students, including those from mobile families and those experiencing housing transitions. From July 1 to September 30th, Prince George's County Public Schools averaged more than 4,000 newcomer students in grades PreK -12.

Secretary/Treasurer

Millard L. House II
Superintendent

2. Financial Impact: The Foundation Program relies on headcount reporting that happens during the start of the enrollment period. When students are barred from the classroom due to immunization records, it can result in millions of dollars of lost funding to our county's education system. For SY25-26, 918 students were identified as not being funded by the per pupil Foundation funding because the students did not provide proof of immunization prior to the September 30th student enrollment submission to the Maryland State Department of Education. This resulted in a loss of \$8,469,468 Foundation funding.



3. Healthcare Access: In Prince George's County, we have observed significant challenges for families scheduling immunization appointments during the compressed time frame between summer break and school start. Medical providers are often overwhelmed with requests during this period, creating unnecessary barriers to school attendance. This legislation aligns with our commitment to supporting families rather than creating barriers.

4. Mobile Student Needs: With our diverse and dynamic student population, we frequently encounter families who move between schools, districts, states, and even countries. These families often don't receive immunization requirement notifications until they begin the enrollment process, creating additional challenges for timely school entry.

For these reasons, the Prince George's County Board of Education urges a favorable report on SB821.

We thank you for your continued support and welcome further discussion. We are prepared to provide any additional information necessary to assist in advancing this bill. We look forward to continuing to partner with you to educate, advocate, and act, together.

Sincerely,

Prince George's County Board of Education

2025 MASHN SB 821 Senate Side.pdf

Uploaded by: Robyn Elliott

Position: FAV

Maryland Association of School Health Nurses



Committee: Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee

Bill Number: Senate Bill 821 – Primary and Secondary Education – Student Immunization – Temporary Admission Period

Hearing Date: February 21, 2025

Position: Support

The Maryland Association of School Health Nurses (MASHN) supports *Senate Bill 821 - Primary and Secondary Education – Student Immunization – Temporary Admission Period*. The legislation allows local education agencies to grant up to a 60-day grace period for students to meet immunization requirements. Parents/guardians would be required to submit proof of a vaccination appointment for their children. MASHN supports this legislation because it maintains vaccination requirements while recognizing some parents may need more flexibility in the timeframe in meeting such requirements. Parents face many barriers in obtaining healthcare services for children including lack of a regular provider, transportation, and insurance issues.

We ask for a favorable vote. If we can provide any information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.

SB821.MPhA.Immunizations.pdf

Uploaded by: Aliyah Horton

Position: UNF



Date: February 21, 2025

To: The Honorable Brian Feldman, Chair, Education, Energy and Environment Committee

From: Aliyah N. Horton, FASAE, CAE, Executive Director, MPhA, 240-688-7808

Cc: Members, Senate Education, Energy and Environment Committee

Re: **UNFAVORABLE - SB 821 – Primary and Secondary Education - Student Immunization - Temporary Admission Period**

The Maryland Pharmacists Association (MPhA) urges an **UNFAVORABLE** report on **SB 821 - Primary and Secondary Education - Student Immunization - Temporary Admission Period**.

As providers and partners in public health, pharmacists are concerned about the impact of this bill on public health.

1. Classroom Exposure Risk

The 60-day temporary admission window creates an extended period where unvaccinated or partially vaccinated students may interact with immunocompromised classmates or those who cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons. This is particularly concerning for highly transmissible diseases like measles, where even brief exposure can lead to transmission.

2. Outbreak Response Challenges

During a disease outbreak, schools need immediate, accurate immunization records to respond effectively. The proposed 60-day window complicates rapid identification of at-risk students. This could delay crucial public health responses when time is of the essence. Current pharmacy-based immunization records provide instant verification capability.

3. Seasonal Health Considerations

Allowing delayed immunization verification during these critical periods poses unnecessary risks.

- The timing of school admission often coincides with the start of flu season
- Periods of increased respiratory illness transmission
- Peak times for certain vaccine-preventable diseases

4. Full Authorization of Pharmacists to Order and Administer Vaccinations Remains Critical

For years, pharmacists have advocated for the ability to vaccinate for ages 3 and up. While advancements have been made, the authorization remains fragmented. Pharmacies provide access and convenience for communities in Maryland through:

- extended hours including evenings and weekends
- reduced lost work time for parents
- walk-in availability eliminating scheduling barriers
- neighborhood locations that reduce transportation challenges; and
- the ability of multiple family members to be vaccinated in one visit.

SB 821 - MDH - EEE - LOO (1).pdf

Uploaded by: Meghan Lynch

Position: UNF



Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

February 21, 2025

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

**RE: Senate Bill 821 – Primary and Secondary Education – Student Immunization –
Temporary Admission Period – Letter of Opposition**

Dear Chair Feldman and Committee members:

The Maryland Department of Health (the Department) respectfully submits this letter of Opposition for Senate Bill (SB) 821 – Primary and Secondary Education – Student Immunization – Temporary Admission Period. This bill grants a temporary admission period of 60 calendar days for students without proof of required immunizations.

Currently, pursuant to Health-General (HG) §7-403, the Department adopted Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 10.06.04 allowing the temporary admission of students without required immunizations for up to 20 calendar days. The Department also considers requests for extensions for warranted circumstances (e.g., a temporary shortage of a particular vaccine). Over the last ten years, there have been three requests to extend the deadline for school exclusion: in 2014 due to new middle school vaccine requirements; in 2021 due to the COVID pandemic; and in 2024 due to a vaccine ordering issue.

Historically, compliance with school vaccination requirements is high – more than 98 percent. The authority granted to adopt regulations, as opposed to establishing a defined period in statute, allows the Department to adapt to evolving public health concerns. Implementing a rigid timeline through statute would hinder timely, evidence-based responses to emerging issues. The Department believes the current regulatory approach of providing families with 20 days to obtain vaccinations or acquire documentation of prior vaccination is both appropriate and necessary to maintain Maryland's high childhood immunization rates and protect Maryland children from vaccine preventable diseases.

SB 821 will unnecessarily prolong the time children without school-required immunizations remain unvaccinated, increasing the risk for acquiring a vaccine-preventable disease and the likelihood of ongoing transmission in the school setting. This would endanger vulnerable children and staff who cannot be vaccinated due to medical contraindications, putting them at a greater risk for infection.

The Department also wishes to note that local health departments have reported that students have been able to schedule their vaccination appointments and receive their required vaccines within the 20 day extension period COMAR allows. No county, including Prince George's, has approached the Department with the need for additional assistance in vaccinating students.

To the extent that school students are experiencing problems receiving necessary vaccination, the Department firmly believes the issue can be solved through cooperation at the state and local level, without the need to enact new legislation which will be injurious to the health of Maryland's school-aged children.

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Sarah Case-Herron, Director of Governmental Affairs at sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Laura Herrera Scott". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end.

Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H.
Secretary

SB 821 - MACHO - EEE - LOC (1).pdf

Uploaded by: State of Maryland (MD)

Position: UNF



**2025 SESSION
POSITION PAPER**

BILL: SB 821 – Primary and Secondary Education – Student Immunization – Temporary Admission Period
COMMITTEE: Senate – Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
POSITION: Letter of Concern
BILL ANALYSIS: SB 821 would require each county board of education to grant certain students temporary admission to schools for a specified time frame if the parent or guardian is unable to provide proof of immunization under certain circumstances; and generally relating to immunization requirements for public school students.

POSITION RATIONALE: The Maryland Association of County Health Officers (MACHO) provides a Letter of Concern regarding SB 821. Childhood immunization is a critical defense against the resurgence of vaccine-preventable diseases. MACHO recognizes the importance of ensuring school access for all students, particularly those facing barriers to healthcare. However, the proposed extension of the grace period from the current 20 days to 60 days would increase the risk of disease transmission in communities. School immunization is readily available and accessible to all community members through our local public health departments (LHDs).

The proposed extension would leave children, teachers, and families vulnerable to outbreaks of diseases such as measles, pertussis (whooping cough), and varicella (chickenpox), which spread rapidly in school settings. These diseases pose severe risks to unvaccinated and immunocompromised individuals, including infants and those undergoing medical treatments that suppress immunity. A single case of measles, which is highly contagious, can trigger an outbreak requiring extensive public health interventions, school closures, and costly contact tracing efforts.

All LHDs report ample appointment availability to meet school system needs. Maryland's 20-day grace period provides sufficient time for families to obtain required vaccinations. LHDs and school health services work collaboratively to ensure that children receive vaccinations promptly, even in the most vulnerable communities. LHDs and school-based health clinics offer extensive immunization services, conduct outreach to families, and work with providers to remove barriers to access. Expansion of the grace period undermines these efforts, which could delay vaccination further and increase non-compliance.

Prolonged delays in vaccination can lead to disruptions in education. An outbreak could force schools to exclude unvaccinated students for extended periods, disproportionately impacting educational access for the very students the bill seeks to support. Maryland has made significant progress in maintaining high immunization rates among school-aged children, and SB 821 threatens to reverse these gains.

LHDs and students would benefit from strengthening immunization programs through enhanced school-based vaccination programs, increased funding for public health outreach, and targeted assistance for families experiencing barriers to compliance. MACHO would welcome the opportunity to work collaboratively on policies that balance equitable school access with Maryland's strong commitment to public health.

For the reasons outlined above, MACHO submits this Letter Of Concern for SB 821. For more information, please contact Ruth Maiorana, MACHO Executive Director at рмаioral@jhu.edu or 410-937-1433. *This communication reflects the position of MACHO.*

SB 821 - LOI - MSEA.pdf

Uploaded by: Samantha Zwerling

Position: INFO

Letter of Information
Senate Bill 821
Primary and Secondary Education – Student Immunization – Temporary Admission Period

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Means Committee
February 21, 2025

Samantha Zwerling
Government Relations

The Maryland State Education Association offers this informational testimony on SB 821, which would require each County Board to temporarily admit a student to school if the student's parent or guardian cannot provide proof of immunization. Under this legislation, a parent or guardian of a student granted temporary admission would be required to provide evidence of the student's appointment with a health professional or local health department to receive a required immunization, reconstruct a lost record, or acquire evidence of age-appropriate immunity on a form provided by the Maryland Department of Health. The date of a student's appointment with a health professional or local health department may not exceed 60 calendar days from the date the student is granted temporary admission. A parent or guardian of a temporarily admitted student would be required to provide evidence of a student's required immunizations on the next school day following the student's appointment with a health professional or local health department.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students so they can pursue their dreams. 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 believes that required immunizations are essential to the creation of sustainable and healthy learning environments for students and education employees. MSEA also believes admission of non-immunized students to any

school by any competent authority presents a potential threat to both students and education employees.

As drafted, this legislation would not mirror existing regulation established in COMAR 10.06.04.06 that excludes a student from school who has been temporarily admitted or retained on the next school day following the appointment date if the student's parent or guardian fails to provide evidence of required immunizations.

Maryland State Law (COMAR 10.06.04.03) currently requires all students enrolled in prekindergarten through Grade 12 to receive age-appropriate immunizations and dictates that a school must have proof of immunizations before allowing a student to begin school. If evidence of the required vaccines was not provided, the student would be excluded from school. Students without the required documentation are temporarily admitted and given twenty (20) calendar days from the date of admission to provide evidence of immunization compliance, per COMAR 10.06.04.06.

To be temporarily admitted to or retained in a preschool or school, the student's parent or guardian is required to present evidence of the student's appointment with a health care provider. The date of the appointment may not be later than twenty (20) calendar days following the date the student was temporarily admitted or retained. The student will be excluded from school the next day following the appointment date if the parent fails to provide evidence of required immunizations.

When evaluating this legislation, the Committee should review existing regulation under COMAR 10.06.04 on granting temporary admission to students, and the timeframe a parent or guardian must provide evidence of required immunizations. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) suggests that schools and providers should work to ensure that students are vaccinated before school entry, such as during the enrollment process, which is often several months before school starts.¹

¹

<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/72/wr/mm7245a2.htm#:~:text=This%20kindergarten%20class%20became%20age,20reduced%20access%20to%20vaccination%20appointments.>

Non-immunized students can significantly affect schools by increasing the risk of outbreaks of preventable diseases, leading to potential disruptions in learning due to student absences from illness, potential school closures, and increased strain on school healthcare systems, all while jeopardizing the health of both students and staff due to the potential spread of contagious diseases within the school community.

MSEA understands that this legislation is intended to provide additional time for student immunization; however, we are concerned with the extension of the timeframe and how this legislation would differ from current regulation.