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BILL: HB 1182  
TITLE: Public and Nonpublic Schools - Student Elopement - Locative Devices  
DATE: April 1, 2026  
POSITION: Favorable with Amendments  
COMMITTEE: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
CONTACT: Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director

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The Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM), on behalf of all twenty-four Maryland local school superintendents, **supports** HB 1182 **with amendments**.

This bill authorizes a school to coordinate a student's voluntary use of a locative device and monitor the student's location only if (1) the student has a documented history of wandering or elopement in the student's individualized education program (IEP); (2) the student's parent or guardian provides informed consent; and (3) the locative device cannot make audio or video recordings of other students or school personnel or allows recording capabilities to be turned off when a student is in an educational setting. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) must issue advisory guidance to schools on incorporating a student's use of a locative device and related privacy protections, as specified.

([https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2026RS/fnotes/bil\\_0002/hb1182.pdf](https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2026RS/fnotes/bil_0002/hb1182.pdf))

PSSAM supports the intent of this legislation, which authorizes schools to coordinate the voluntary use of locative devices for students with a documented history of wandering or elopement, with appropriate parental consent and privacy protections.

These devices can be powerful and effective tools to enhance student safety when used appropriately and collaboratively among families, students, and schools. We appreciate the bill's focus on voluntary use, individualized decision-making through the IEP process, and safeguards to ensure that devices do not record audio or video in educational settings.

To ensure the legislation is both workable and aligned with its intent, we respectfully request the following clarifications:

### **1. Clarify the permissive nature of school system policies**

As we understand it, the bill is intended to be authorizing and permissive. However, the current language requires that if a school system adopts a policy, it must include specific elements, including that the school has access to monitoring software. Many school systems already allow these personal devices with parental consent but do not require staff to actively monitor the devices or software.

If this provision becomes the operational “floor” for local policies, some school systems may choose not to allow these devices due to the practical challenges associated with continuous monitoring. *We believe this concern can be addressed by removing or clarifying the requirement that school systems must provide or actively use monitoring software.*

### **2. Clarify that costs remain a parental responsibility**

The bill has been presented as a voluntary, parent-driven option, with families responsible for purchasing the device and any associated monitoring services. However, as currently drafted, the language could be interpreted to require school systems to purchase devices, install related infrastructure (such as hardware for doors or windows), and maintain subscriptions for monitoring services.

We respectfully request an amendment clarifying that participation remains voluntary and that any costs associated with the device and its operation are the responsibility of the parent or guardian, unless otherwise determined through the IEP process.

### **3. Provide liability protections for schools and staff**

If the above clarifications are made, we further request explicit language that protects school systems, schools, and staff from liability related to the performance or malfunction of devices, software, or monitoring systems. This would not affect existing responsibilities for in-person student supervision, but would ensure that schools are not held liable for technology failures or monitoring-related issues beyond their control.

With these clarifications, we believe this legislation can provide families with an important additional safety tool while remaining practical and sustainable for school systems to implement. Safeguards for students, families, and school staff are essential to ensuring this technology is used effectively and responsibly.

PSSAM respectfully requests a **favorable report with amendments**.