



**March 11, 2026**

**HB 1368**

**Special Education - Individualized Education Program - Notification of Missed Services  
(Shifra's Act)**

**House Ways & Means Committee**

**Position: FAVORABLE w/ Amendment**

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in support of House Bill 1368, with amendment. The Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

House Bill 1368 would require written notice to be provided to the parents of a child with a disability who has an individualized education program when a special education or related service aid specified in the individualized education program is missed, incomplete, or interrupted. The bill further requires the notice to provide parents with information on requesting a meeting to discuss the disruption of services.

House Bill 1368 should be supported for the benefit of all students with disabilities and their families. Many children in nonpublic schools, including faith-based Catholic schools, who receive special education and related services from the Local Education Agency (LEA), as outlined for a student on a *services plan*. While different from an *Individualized Education Program (IEP)*, a *services plan* specifically outlines the designated services that the LEA will provide for a parentally-placed student with disabilities.

Both public-school students with IEPs and parentally-placed private school students with services plans often face significant delays and disruptions in receiving services. These services are essential to the educational growth of students who are eligible for special education, under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. For students in nonpublic school settings, this issue is exacerbated by inconsistent communication between the LEA, nonpublic school staff, and families, regarding missed services. The inconsistency in communication creates unnecessary confusion and frustration for all stakeholders, as they partner for student success.

In several cases, families have had to initiate contact with the LEA to ask what was happening with services and how to proceed, rather than being proactively offered a meeting to

discuss missed services. Some families have shared with the LEA and nonpublic school administrators that they have been burdened by locating and paying for private services that should have been provided as outlined in their child's services plans. In cases where families cannot pay for private services to make up for missed services, children are significantly and negatively impacted. Families are concerned about the child's lack of progress due to the lack of services that sometimes persist for months at a time.

For the aforementioned reasons, we ask for the inclusion of the attached amendment on House Bill 1368.

## **Amendment to House Bill 1368**

### **Amendment No. 1**

Page 1, line 19, after "INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM", insert "OR IS A CHILD WITH A DISABILITY WHO HAS BEEN PARENTALLY-PLACED IN A PRIVATE SCHOOL"

### **Amendment No. 2**

Page 2, line 3, after "ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL", insert "OR A WEATHER-RELATED SCHOOL CLOSURE"

### **Amendment No. 3**

#### **Designation of Responsibility**

Page 2, line 19, after "AND", insert "(2) "THE WRITTEN NOTICE SHALL BE ISSUED, BY THE STUDENT'S DESIGNATED CASE MANAGER, OR A SPECIFIED LEA OR SCHOOL-BASED ADMINISTRATOR; AND (3)"