
TO: House Ways and Means Committee

BILL: SB 507 - Individuals with Disabilities - Accessibility and Emergency Planning

DATE: April 1, 2026

POSITION: Support

The Maryland State Board of Education (State Board) and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) support SB0507, which would further reinforce the existing obligations of local boards of education by requiring them to include issues associated with accessibility for individuals with disabilities when developing solutions for physical safety concerns.

SB0507 requires local boards to report instances in which a public school facility became inaccessible for a student with a disability in a manner that could impede evacuation or an emergency response. The additional data gathered through SB0507 would be valuable to help understand the extent of accessibility issues impacting safety for all individuals in public school facilities and begin to formulate solutions.

The bill, as amended, also changes the scope of who may access the reports developed by local education agencies (LEAs), potentially making them available to a wider audience. In doing so, it will be important to ensure that information contained in these reports does not reasonably lead to the identification of any specific student or reveal personally identifiable information (PII), consistent with the protections provided under FERPA and related privacy requirements.

SB0507 builds upon the framework established in the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 13A.02.02.05 - Annual Certification, which requires that by September 30 of each year, each local superintendent of schools and the Head of the SEED School certify whether LEA emergency plans are aligned with the MSDE emergency planning guidelines. The Emergency plan certification is collected by MSDE each year and plans are analyzed by MCSS upon submission. Additionally, as outlined in Maryland Code, Education Article § 7-1501, LEAs are required to submit their emergency operations plans (EOPs) to the MCSS by August 1 of each year. The EOPs are required to provide detailed plans for how each public school will accommodate students with disabilities during emergencies.

MSDE remains committed to the accessibility and safety of all Maryland public schools for students, staff, and the community, and will work in collaboration with the MCSS to ensure compliance with state and federal laws and regulations. We respectfully request that you consider this information as you deliberate SB0507.

For further details, please contact Laurel Cratsley, Interim Executive Director of Government Affairs, at laurel.cratsley@maryland.gov.