



Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

CREATING CHANGE • IMPROVING LIVES

House Ways and Means Committee

February 11, 2026

HB 311: Public Schools – Individuals with Disabilities – Accessibility and Emergency Planning

Position: Support

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council (Council) creates change to make it possible for people with developmental disabilities to lead the lives they want with the support they need. As a statewide public policy organization led by people with developmental disabilities and their families, we support HB 311 as a step toward making Maryland a place where everyone can access their school.

WHAT does this legislation do?

- Adds “associated issues of accessibility for individuals with disabilities” to the already required safety evaluation conducted by each local school system.
- Adds additional reporting about when a public school facility became inaccessible for a student with a disability “in a manner that could impede evacuation or an emergency response”

WHY is it important?

- **Students with disabilities have the right to accessible, public education.** This means buildings meet the minimum requirements under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and services required under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) are in place so students with disabilities are safe and supported, including during emergencies.
- **Too often, students with disabilities are not adequately supported during emergencies.** Published stories about students with disabilities being left alone during fire drills or not being notified at all about emergencies reveal there still is much work to be done.¹
- **Schools need to implement their emergency plans to keep everyone safe.** In 2017, the Maryland General Assembly passed HB 1061 (§7-435) to require LEAs address the needs of students, staff, and visitors with disabilities in their emergency plans. HB 311 will follow through on that requirement to ensure these plans are not only developed, but implemented.

While investments in education equity are without question needed, including for people with disabilities, the Council believes that the amount, purpose, and timing of such efforts must take into consideration the needs of all Marylanders with disabilities. Funding for this bill should not be offset by limiting essential funding for other critical needs, most immediately the Developmental Disabilities Administration community services that thousands of Marylanders depend upon.

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¹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/2024/11/10/disabled-students-active-shooter-drills/>