

**Informational
House Bill 1046
School and School-Sponsored Activities - Report of Suspected Abuse or
Neglect - Parental Notification**

**Ways and Means Committee
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The Maryland State Education Association offers this informational testimony on House Bill 1046, which would Require a school to provide notice to the parent, guardian, or caretaker of a child if a mandated reporter reports certain suspected abuse or neglect that occurs at a school or school-sponsored activity, unless the parent, guardian, or caretaker is the subject of the report; and requiring the notice to be provided not later than 24 hours after the report is made.

MSEA represents 76,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools and community colleges, teaching and supporting our almost 900,000 K-12 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA represents more than 40 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3-million-member National Education Association (NEA).

School personnel take their mandated responsibility to report suspected instances of neglect and abuse with the utmost seriousness. State law dictates the policies, procedures, and training around reporting. It establishes that Child Protective Services (CPS), within the Department of Social Services (DSS), is tasked with determining how an investigation moves forward, assessing any potential safety risks, and overseeing how to proceed with regards to parental notification. This legislation would move the responsibility of parental/guardian/caretaker notification, in some instances, out of the purview of Child Protective Services and into the scope of local education agencies (LEAs).

The shift in notification oversight to LEAs could potentially impact investigation integrity, diminish due process protection, breach confidentiality, and obscure the lines between investigators and reporters. Local districts are equipped to respond to

reported incidents where CPS has declined to initiate an investigation through established policies and procedures. This legislation extends past that scope.