

Dear Madam Chair, Madam Vice Chair, and Members of the House Ways and Means Committee:

My name is Meghann Boosinger and I am writing today in support of HB 1168.

As I wrote in an email to the Maryland State Board of Education on September 4, 2024, *“I would love to see a process in place for if this ever happens again. Parents need to be informed and supported...we need access to resources and help.”* I am providing this written testimony to demonstrate my commitment through action and support Dawn Gile’s House Bill 1168 to instill that change.

While I support the bill in its entirety, two provisions are especially meaningful to me: ensuring transparency and access to resources for parents following a credible allegation of sexual abuse, and strengthening record retention policies.

My son was a student in a third grade classroom when a teacher was accused of sexual abuse at Severna Park Elementary School. From the time of the first accusation, it was three weeks before the school notified any parents; and four more weeks after that before any mental health resources were provided. Before I heard from the school, I heard about it from another parent. Within hours, text messages and emails were circulating with information—some accurate, others not. Fear and confusion spread rapidly throughout our community.

As a parent, my first instinct was to protect my child and ensure he was safe. Yet I was faced with an unimaginable task: how do you ask a nine-year-old boy questions about something so serious? How do you help him process information that even adults struggle to comprehend?

In the weeks that followed, those conversations at home became increasingly difficult. My son questioned whether the adults he trusted were safe. He expressed guilt for not having protected his classmates. He came into our room at night with questions no child should have to ask.

Importantly, those conversations were necessary regardless of how the legal case ultimately concluded. That is what I want to emphasize. Providing parents with timely information and access to counseling resources is not a presumption of guilt, nor is it a judgment about the accused. It is an acknowledgment that when a teacher is removed under serious allegations, children are impacted immediately. Parents need guidance. We need evidence-based resources. We need clarity within appropriate legal boundaries. Due process is fundamental—but so is the emotional well-being of the students sitting in those classrooms.

House Bill 1168 ensures that, if this ever occurs again, families will not be left to navigate fear and uncertainty alone.

I was also deeply troubled to learn during the investigation that the school district maintains a policy of deleting emails after 30 days. In cases involving serious allegations, the burden of proof is already significant. The failure to retain email correspondence risks the deletion of essential documentation and compromises transparency, accountability, and organizational memory. Email correspondence often reflects key decisions regarding personnel and student safety. Automatically erasing those records after such a brief period can impede investigations and hinder the legal process.

Thoughtful record retention policies—ones that balance responsible storage management with legal and ethical obligations—better protect students, families, school employees, and the broader community. House Bill 1168 would help ensure that such protections are in place.

I respectfully urge you to support this legislation.

Sincerely,

Meghann Boosinger