

EDUCATION ADVOCACY COALITION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

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

March 4, 2026

Position: Support

The Education Advocacy Coalition for Students with Disabilities (EAC) is a coalition of nearly 50 organizations and individuals committed to advancing education policies that protect and support Maryland students with disabilities. The EAC supports House Bill 1046, which requires schools to notify a student's parent or guardian if a mandatory reporter reports suspected abuse or neglect that occurs during school or a school-sponsored activity; the report must be made within 24 hours.

Many EAC members represent or work with families who have students with disabilities, for whom vulnerability to abuse and neglect is statistically higher. Students with disabilities often rely on adults for personal care and face challenges communicating when something is wrong. When suspected abuse occurs in a school setting or at a school-sponsored activity on- or off-campus, these students may be unable to clearly report what happened or may not recognize that an incident was abusive. This bill's requirement that schools notify a parent or guardian within 24 hours when a mandatory reporter files a report of suspected abuse or neglect at school is therefore especially critical.

Prompt notification ensures that parents or guardians can intervene quickly. For students who struggle with verbal communication, have developmental or cognitive disabilities, or face barriers in self-advocacy, this swift communication helps ensure that early warning signs are not missed and that the child's safety and well-being are promptly addressed.

For these reasons, the Education Advocacy Coalition supports House Bill 1046.

Contact: Leslie Seid Margolis at lesliem@disabilityrightsmd.org or 443-692-2505.

Respectfully submitted,

Selene Almazan, Attorney

Linda Barton, Education Consultant

Beth Benevides, Autism Society of Maryland; Co-Chair, Education Advocacy Coalition

Ellen Callegary, Attorney (retired)

Melanie Carlos, Partnership for Extraordinary Minds
Stephanie Carr, SL Carr Education Consultants
Rich Ceruolo, Parent & Advocate
Michelle Davis, ABCs for Life Success
Jennifer Engel Fisher, JEF Consultants
Beth Ann Hancock, Charting the Course
Leilani Hardy, Maryland Coalition of Families
Morgan Durand Horvath, Abilities Network
Ande Kolp, The Arc Maryland
Leslie Seid Margolis, Disability Rights Maryland
Monica Martinez, Martinez Advocacy
Ellen O'Neill, Atlantic Seaboard Dyslexia Education Center
Ronza Othman, National Federation of the Blind of Maryland
Kate Rabb, The Law Offices of Joseph & Rabb
Rebecca Rienzi, Pathfinders for Autism
Jaime Seaton, BGS Law
Ronna Stanley, Loud Voices Together Educational Advocacy Group
Wayne Steedman, The Steedman Law Group
Guy Stephens, Alliance Against Seclusion and Restraint