

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader - Revised

House Bill 14

(Delegate Foley)

Ways and Means

Education, Energy, and the Environment

County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation -
Information Collection and Reporting Requirements

This bill requires, under specified conditions, local school systems to include in their annual report to the State Board of Education (SBE) on bullying, harassment, and intimidation incidents that, after a thorough and impartial investigation, are determined to have been motivated in whole or in substantial part by personal characteristics of the individual being bullied, harassed, or intimidated. It also requires each local school board to post annually in a prominent location on its website information about such incidents. A local school board may not publish any information that could be used to identify an individual student. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) can update existing forms, policies, and guidance with existing resources. No effect on revenues.

Local Effect: None. Local school systems can include the required data in their annual reports (and post it on their websites) using existing resources.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The standard reporting form developed by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) must include – for incidents believed to have been motivated in whole or substantial part by any actual or perceived characteristics of the individual being bullied, harassed, or intimidated – the personal characteristics that motivated the incident.

Local school systems must include incidents motivated by the personal characteristics of the individual being bullied, harassed, or intimidated in the annual report submitted to SBE if:

- there has been a substantial increase in incidents of bullying, harassment, or intimidation for students in that group over the previous school year; or
- there is a disproportionate incident rate of bullying, harassment, or intimidation for students in that group.

Current Law: “Bullying, harassment, or intimidation” is intentional conduct, including verbal, physical, or written conduct, or an intentional electronic communication that:

- creates a hostile educational environment by substantially interfering with a student’s educational benefits, opportunities, or performance, or with a student’s physical or psychological well-being, and is:
 - motivated by an actual or a perceived personal characteristic including race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, familial status, or physical or mental ability or disability;
 - sexual in nature, as specified; or
 - threatening or seriously intimidating; and
- occurs on school property, at a school activity or event, or on a school bus; or substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a school.

Incidents of bullying, harassment, or intimidation may be reported to a local school board by a student, parent, guardian, close relative, or school staff member. Information reported in the forms is confidential and may not be redisclosed except as specified under federal law, and it may not be made a part of student’s permanent educational record. MSDE must create a standard form to report such incidents, as specified (*for incidents believed to have been motivated by personal characteristics, the bill requires the form to indicate the personal characteristics, if known, that are believed to have motivated the incident*).

Local school boards must submit summaries of forms they receive to the State Board of Education by January 31 of each year. In turn, MSDE must submit a report by March 31 each year to specified committees of the General Assembly that includes a summary of the information included in the victim of bullying, harassment, or intimidation report forms filed with the local school boards the previous year.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education; Anne Arundel County Public Schools; Baltimore City Public Schools; Baltimore County Public Schools; Frederick County Public Schools; Montgomery County Public Schools; St. Mary's County Public Schools; Wicomico County Public Schools; Department of Legislative Services

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