

Office of the Superintendent of Schools
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

September 1, 2021

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Monifa B. McKnight, Interim Superintendent of Schools

Subject: Emergency Evacuation Devices in Schools

Question

Mrs. O'Neill asked a follow-up question regarding next steps to evacuation devices. According to this memo, an update will be provided to the Board. Also, the Board had adopted a resolution to allow flexibility in meeting deadlines through August or until the State of Emergency is lifted. Do you have an approximate timeframe of when the Board will receive an update?

Response

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) complies with House Bill 1061, *Education-Emergency and Evacuation Plans-Individuals with Disabilities*, enacted July 1, 2017. The review of information gleaned from the Maryland Online IEP system to confirm alignment of the individual student accommodations at the school to the School's Emergency Plan was not completed due to the impact of COVID-19 pandemic.

A survey to gauge the number of affected students, the provision and effectiveness of accommodations, the opportunities for students with disabilities to participate in emergency evacuation drills, and any emergency evacuation needs was not conducted due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and changes in special education staff.

Currently, MCPS does not utilize mobility devices during an emergency evacuation. The following local school systems, based on a survey, utilize mobility devices in schools that have multi-level structures or for students that have a need for such a device: Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Dorchester, Frederick, Queen Anne, and Washington County. There are different types of mobility devices in use. The costs range from \$500 to \$2,200.

MCPS also complies with the Maryland State Department of Education's updated *Emergency Planning Guidelines* regarding students, staff, and visitors with disabilities on public school grounds.

Staff in the Department of Systemwide Safety and Emergency Management will continue to dialogue with the county, municipal, and state fire marshals regarding areas of refuge relative to emergency evacuations for students and staff who may need specific accommodations. Preliminary discussions have occurred.

Next steps:

- Establish a cross-functional work group to review the various aspects of this issue and to make recommendations for any needed updates or changes.
- Continue the tasks of reviewing the Maryland Online IEP system information and complete the referenced survey.

If you should have any questions, please contact Mr. Jimmy D'Andrea, chief of staff, at 240-740-3015, or via e-mail.

MBM:JND:EAC:mmh

Copy to:

Executive Staff

Mr. Clarke

Ms. Webb