



Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech-Language Pathologists & Music Therapists

Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Dennis R. Schrader, Secretary

Carolyn Stine, Chair – Oluremi Dean, Executive Director
4201 Patterson Avenue, Baltimore MD 21215 Phone: 410-764-4725

February 16, 2022

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky
Chair, Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

RE: SB 577 - Public Schools – Self Contained Special Education Classroom- Use of Video Recording Devices – Letter of Concern

Dear Chair Pinsky and Committee Members:

The Board of Examiner for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech-Language Pathologists & Music Therapists (the Board) is submitting this letter of concern for Senate Bill (SB) 577– Public Schools – Self Contained Special Education Classroom – Use of Video Recording Devices.

The use of video recording devices in self-contained Special Education classrooms will have a direct impact on speech-language pathologists (SLPs) employed within the school setting. One of the Board’s concerns relates to how “abuse and neglect” is defined. Self-contained classrooms may include students who have a history of aggressive behaviors that require physical restraints to manage. Teachers, classroom staff members, and SLPs who are trained and authorized to perform physical restraints, when necessary, are not clearly protected. SB 577 does not outline how potential complaints against teachers or SLPs who use such restraints on a student will be evaluated for appropriateness and fidelity. SB 577 is also unclear on how it will be determined that an investigation involving a classroom staff member is warranted. Will decisions made by teachers, SLPs, or other classroom staff made in good conscience in a crisis situation be second guessed, criticized, or punished?

Another concern is that parents of students in school settings have the right to refuse permission to video record their child(ren) while in school. If a parent does not give permission for his/her child to be video recorded, the Board is unsure how this situation will be addressed.

The Board of Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech-Language Pathologists and Music Therapists is concerned that SB 577 does not provide enough information on the investigative process, and as such, has the potential to pose more harm than good to both students and classroom staff members, including SLPs. Therefore, the Board respectfully asks that you consider this information and urge an unfavorable report on SB 577.

The opinion of the Board expressed in this letter of concern does not necessarily reflect that of the Department of Health or the Administration.

If you would like to discuss this further, please contact the Board's Executive Director, Ms. Oluremi Dean, MS at Oluremi.Dean@maryland.gov or 443-844-7172.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Oluremi Dean". The signature is written in a dark grey or black ink on a white background.

Oluremi Dean, MS
Executive Director
State Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers,
Speech-Language Pathologists, and Music Therapists

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