

HOUSE BILL 288

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(PRE-FILED)

6lr0176
CF SB 218

By: **Chair, Ways and Means Committee (By Request – Departmental – Education)**

Requested: September 29, 2025

Introduced and read first time: January 14, 2026

Assigned to: Ways and Means

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **State Superintendent of Schools – Prolonged State of Emergency – Authority to**
3 **Declare**

4 FOR the purpose of authorizing the State Superintendent of Schools to declare a prolonged
5 state of emergency for an event that prevents regular, in-person attendance at a
6 public school for a specified period of time; and generally relating to the State
7 Superintendent of Schools and a prolonged state of emergency for public schools.

8 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
9 Article – Education
10 Section 7–14A–01(a) and (e)
11 Annotated Code of Maryland
12 (2025 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

13 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
14 Article – Education
15 Section 7–14A–01(c) and 7–14A–02
16 Annotated Code of Maryland
17 (2025 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

18 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
19 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

20 **Article – Education**

21 7–14A–01.

22 (a) In this subtitle the following words have the meanings indicated.

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



(c) “Prolonged state of emergency” means a state of emergency declared by the [Governor under Title 14 of the Public Safety Article] **STATE SUPERINTENDENT** that prevents regular, in-person attendance at a public school for at least 14 consecutive school days.

(e) “Virtual education” means academic instruction:

(1) In which one or more technologies are used to deliver a significant portion of the teaching to students entirely or primarily online; and

(2) In which students and instructors participate remotely from separate locations.

7–14A–02.

(a) If there is a prolonged state of emergency, a county board may transition the public schools in the county to virtual education under an approved virtual education plan, subject to the limitations of this section.

(b) (1) (i) On or before June 1, 2024, a county board shall, in consultation with county administrators and school staff, adopt a virtual education plan for use during a prolonged state of emergency.

(ii) A county board shall use the county board’s continuity of learning plan in effect during the 2020–2021 school year to form a virtual education plan.

(2) A virtual education plan shall include the following components:

(i) A staffing and personnel assignment plan;

(ii) A student instruction plan;

(iii) A student assessment and learning support plan;

(iv) A social and emotional learning plan;

(v) A community communications plan;

(vi) A technology plan;

(vii) A nutritional and health services plan; and

(viii) A plan for return to in-person instruction.

(c) A county board shall update the virtual education plan every 2 years.

(d) (1) If a prolonged state of emergency requires the cessation of in-school

attendance at a public school and the county board determines virtual education is required, a county board immediately shall implement the virtual education plan and transition the public school to virtual education.

(2) (i) A county board may adjust the virtual education plan to fit the specific needs of the schools affected and the specific circumstances of the emergency.

(ii) A county board shall submit an adjusted plan to the State Board as soon as practicable.

(e) (1) Within 10 calendar days of receipt of a virtual education plan, the State Board shall:

(i) Accept the plan; or

(ii) Return the plan to the county board for specific modification.

(2) If an adjusted virtual education plan is returned, the county board shall modify and resubmit the plan within 5 calendar days after the date the plan is returned.

(f) The county board shall publish the most recent version of the virtual education plan on the county board's website.

(G) NOTHING IN THIS SUBTITLE MAY BE CONSTRUED TO LIMIT OR INTERFERE WITH THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH UNDER TITLE 18 OF THE HEALTH – GENERAL ARTICLE IN THE EVENT OF A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 2026.