



Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC)
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MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 31, 2022

TO: The Honorable Members of the Delaware General Assembly

FROM: Ann C. Fisher, Chairperson
GACEC

RE: **Senate Bill No. 270 Air Quality and Environmental Safety in Public Schools**

The Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC) has reviewed Senate Bill No. 270, which will establish an evaluation and assessment system created by the Department of Education to determine whether a school facility is in good repair to assure that school facilities are clean, safe, and functional for staff and students. This Act also requires the Division of Public Health to establish a routine indoor air quality-monitoring program and temperature and humidity standards for schools that are published on the Department of Health and Social Services website via an information portal. It further requires the Division of Public Health to create a contractor certification program for indoor air quality services that will allow schools to contract with properly trained and certified contractors when indoor air quality remediation is necessary for a school facility, and it provides procedures for receiving and reporting indoor air quality complaints in schools. Council **supports** this legislation establishing an indoor air quality program in all free public schools, given the strong links between improved environmental conditions and overall health and well-being.

Sen. Stephanie Hansen, primary Senate sponsor, on the bill, writes:

“Nearly 140,000 children and 15,000 educators spend much of each day in our school buildings, yet there are no meaningful statewide standards for evaluating the safety, functionality, and cleanliness of those facilities, which makes prioritizing the need for specific repairs and maintenance nearly impossible. As a result, we fall further behind on the repairs that are necessary to upkeep our school facilities every year while the costs of those repairs have ballooned to over \$1 billion. The legislation I filed today will provide a pathway to developing a common standard and provide a healthy indoor environment in our school buildings throughout our state to better direct funding where it's needed most.”

Rep. Debra Heffernan, House prime sponsor on the bill stated the following:

“Physical learning environments play an important role in a child’s overall education, with significant cognitive, behavioral, and health consequences for students of all ages. We need to prioritize funding to ensure school buildings are able to meet the needs of staff and students and are free from hazardous indoor pollutants and mold. By creating statewide standards for evaluating the infrastructure and air quality of our educational facilities, we’re affirming what we know to be true; students and educators deserve to learn, grow, and work in a safe and healthy environment.”

In recent years, comparative risk studies performed by the Science Advisory Board (SAB) of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have consistently ranked indoor air pollution among the top five environmental risks to public health. “Good indoor air quality is an important component of a healthy indoor environment and can help schools reach their primary goal of educating children.” Moreover, the pandemic has highlighted the need for good ventilation and air quality to prevent the spread of disease. As stated earlier, the GACEC is in support of this proposed legislation and looks forward to its implementation.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our endorsement. Please feel free to contact me or Pam Weir at the GACEC office should you have any questions.