



**Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.**  
State Superintendent of Schools

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Dear Local School Systems,

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) supports the use of electronic signatures that conform to the standards of [The Maryland Uniform Electronic Transactions Act, Md. Code Ann., Com. Law II §21-101 et seq.](#) The creation of a statewide standard is important so that Local School Systems can adopt the same standard and ensure consistency with the MSDE. For more information please refer to [the Commercial Law Article, § 21-101 Definitions \(i\) Electronic signature and § 21-108: Attribution and effect of electronic record.](#)

An electronic signature method must demonstrate and authenticate the particular person as the signer. It can be as simple as a multi-factor authentication (such as codes or secure links sent via email or text or challenge questions) or as complex as digital signatures that utilize a cryptographic operation. The level of risk associated with the transaction, as determined by local, State and/or Federal policy, dictates the complexity of the digital signature. There are four requirements beyond attribution:

- Intent to sign
- Consent to sign electronically
- Association of the signature with the record (the system used to document the signature must keep associated records)
- Record retention (check with your legal department regarding record retention requirements)

The MSDE endorses the acceptability of any system that meets the four requirements and can authenticate the person as the signer through a minimum of a multi-factor authentication (attribution). Electronic signature systems need to provide the functionality to easily store and retrieve digital records, over time. Also, it is vital to be able to save signatures for time periods determined by your legal department that may need to comply with Local, State, and Federal regulations. Please note that the Maryland Student Records System Manual mentions the validity of digital signatures in electronic records but is not as complete as the definition outlined in The Maryland Uniform Electronic Transactions Act and will be updated based on the new definition contained in this memo.

If you have questions please contact Dale Cornelius, Chief Information Officer, at MSDE: [dale.cornelius@maryland.gov](mailto:dale.cornelius@maryland.gov).

Best Regards,

Karen B. Salmon, PhD  
State Superintendent of Schools