

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT

with Amendments

Testimony to the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

In Amended Support of

Senate Bill 576: Public Schools– Air Quality Testing– Posting Online (with Amendments)

February 24, 2022

Strong Schools Maryland urges an amended favorable vote on Senate Bill 576: Public Schools– Air Quality Testing–Posting Online.

The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future envisions a world-class system of public schools for our state’s students. A healthy and safe learning environment for students and school staff is vital to the realization of this vision. Healthy, safe, and secure school facilities enable students, teachers, and school staff to be at their best. A well-maintained and safe physical environment fosters students’ abilities to display improved academic achievement while also contributing towards greater teacher morale and job satisfaction.

Senate Bill 576 would:

- Ensure that schools have good indoor air quality for its students and staff; and
- Provide clear and easy to locate information on results of air quality for the public to access on the State Department of Education and county boards’ websites.

We recommend the following amendments to further the intent of the bill:

- Inclusion of a State grant program or other equitable funding provision that allows local school systems with high-need to receive financial support to contract qualified indoor air quality investigators without trading off against resources for students;
- Require direct notification to school-based staff, students, and their families about the results of the air quality test as well as community engagement and decision-making power in what happens next; and
- Creation of an incentive to enhance equity overall, such as giving a certain amount from the State grant if schools use the services of women or minority-owned businesses.

The health and safety of students and school staff is essential to the success of a world-class system of public schools in Maryland highlighted in the Blueprint. By passing Senate Bill 576, the Maryland General Assembly would be taking a step towards building an environment for teachers and students that is conducive to success in learning and improvement to morale. We urge an amended favorable report on Senate Bill 576.

If you have questions or requests for additional information, you can email:

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