Mohammed Choudhury
State Superintendent of Schools

BILL:	House Bill 686	**DATE:**	February 22, 2022
SUBJECT:	Safe School Indoor Air Act	**COMMITTEE:**	Environment and Transportation
POSITION:	Support		
CONTACT:	Ary Amerikaner 410-767-0090 ary.amerikaner@maryland.gov		

EXPLANATION:

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) supports House Bill 686, **Safe School Indoor Air Act.** The health impacts of inadequate ventilation have become evident during the COVID-19 pandemic. The educational impacts of inadequate ventilation are also significant. The concentration of carbon dioxide in a space affects the ability of students and teachers to remain alert, attentive, and engaged.

MSDE and the Interagency Commission on School Construction (IAC) released risk reduction strategies in 2021 that highlighted the IAC's Educational Sufficiency Standards which indicate that rooms in a school building should have a maximum of 1,200 parts per million (ppm), but emphasized that carbon dioxide levels in that environment should mostly be below 1,000 ppm. Levels in the 600-800 ppm range are indicative of very good ventilation. This bill adds monitoring and remediation strategies to address levels of carbon dioxide that are not consistent with the standards established by the IAC through required inspections of classrooms that exceed 1,200 ppm.

Following the initial development of the program as outlined in the bill, the ongoing monitoring required can be accomplished with portable equipment that is fairly inexpensive and provides data that can be directly exported to an associated application. The annual reporting will maintain accountability and keep the public informed. MSDE is prepared to work closely with the Maryland Department of the Environment and local boards of education to successfully develop and implement the Safe School Indoor Air Program.

We respectfully request that you consider this information as you deliberate **HB 686**. Please contact Ary Amerikaner, at 410-767-0090, or ary.amerikaner@maryland.gov, for any additional information.