

House Bill 633

Education – Accountability and Implementation Board – Membership

Position: **SUPPORT**

Date: March 3, 2022

To: Ways and Means Committee

The Caroline County Board of Education **SUPPORTS** HB 633, Education – Accountability and Implementation Board – Membership. This bill would expand the membership of the AIB to provide for geographic representation of all areas of the State.

The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future is a massive undertaking. It is also a tremendous opportunity to ensure we do better by all kids, especially those students who have historically been underserved and under-resourced. Getting implementation right will require the effective collaboration of local boards, the State Department of Education, higher education, and numerous State and local agencies.

The Board appreciates the General Assembly’s foresight in creating a strong accountability board to accompany the increased investment in education to ensure that this effort at transformation yields the intended results and outcomes. We have been watching the work of the Accountability and Implementation Board closely and have been impressed by the intelligence, commitment, and passion for education the appointed members are bringing to their roles. However, we remain concerned that the current members do not have any direct experience with rural school systems and communities.

Education delivery is very different in rural parts of the state than it is in urban and suburban areas. We often have schools that serve huge geographic areas, which creates a variety of challenges from transportation, to providing medical and mental health services, to implementing community school models that are inclusive of families. Additionally, we face health profession shortages at a higher rate than other areas of the state, struggle more to attract new teachers due to limited housing and amenities, and have widespread and high rates of poverty.

As diligent as the current AIB members may be, there is no substitute for direct experience. We believe all areas of Maryland should have a seat at the table when it comes to the single most important government service provided – the education of our children. This legislation is a balanced approach to ensure that the most populous school districts have strong representation, while also ensuring geographic diversity of membership. Therefore, the Caroline County Board of Education respectfully requests the Committee issue a favorable report on HB 633.