

Testimony HB531  
Budget and Taxation Committee  
Position: Support  
February 17, 2022

Delegate Atterbeary, Chair and Delegate Vice Chair and Members of the Ways and Means Committee, I am here to urge your support of HB531 the “Maryland Association of Environmental and Outdoor Education Grant - Funding and Evaluation – Extension.”

My school district, Calvert County Public Schools, was the first district in Maryland to achieve 100% Maryland Green Schools status. This was not only an honor, but a statement about the priorities of the school district. I have been Superintendent of Calvert County Public Schools since July 1, 2014 and was so glad to discover the long-term investment my district was making in environmental education.

Green Schools are schools which have chosen to maintain a healthy environment that can support a successful learning environment while saving energy, valuable resources, and money. The *Green School* drive has been pulsating through our schools since the inception of our environmental education program we call CHESPAX. Environmental Education is important in our district and staff work closely with local, state, and regional partner agencies to provide hands-on environmental education experiences for our students.

The Chesapeake Bay and the Patuxent River and other natural settings serve as living laboratories for students to use their science content and skills to learn to make responsible decisions regarding the environment we call home.

The Maryland Association of Environmental Outdoor Education (MAEOE) has been leading and managing the Maryland Green Schools program since 1999. We are proud to say that Calvert County was the first school district in Maryland where 100% of our K-

12 schools are certified. Of those 24 schools, 11 of them have reached a sustainable status. Queen Anne's County Public Schools joined us in 2020 and we would like to see other school districts achieve 100% Green Schools status.

The Green School Application process requires a dedicated person or group of individuals with a passion to cultivate a green climate in their school. Our Green School coordinators must enlist a team at the staff and student level to ensure each objective is met and that the school is successful. It requires commitment of administrators, staff, students, partners, and the community.

The Green Schools Act makes a difference for school districts like ours, where we are committed to having all schools maintain their Green Schools status and to those school districts that would like to get there. There is no monetary award to become green, but these funds which go out to teachers, schools, and partners throughout the state can strengthen programs and inspire new ones. This will have long-term implications and support school system sustainability goals. Our greatest motivation is teaching our students the importance of being good stewards of our environment for our future.

Please support this Bill and Maryland Green Schools.

Daniel Curry, Ed.D.  
Superintendent  
Calvert County Public Schools