



**Testimony in opposition to
House Bill 739: Primary and Secondary Education – Full-Time Equivalent
Enrollment Count – Alterations (Truancy Reduction Act of 2023)**

**House Appropriations Committee
Position: Oppose**

March 14, 2023

Strong Schools Maryland is a network of education advocates dedicated to ensuring the full funding and faithful implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. **Strong Schools Maryland urges an unfavorable report on House Bill 739**, which would alter the definition of "full-time equivalent enrollment" in the calculation for State education aid to include the average number of students enrolled in kindergarten through grade 12 on September 30, December 31, March 31, and the last day of the prior school year.

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future Envisions a World-Class system of public schools for our state's students. This vision, of a globally competitive public education system and a re-imagining of what is possible for our students to achieve, requires equity-focused investment.

Per-pupil funding is calculated in part based on full-time equivalent enrollment, which, for K-12 public school students, depends upon the number of students enrolled in their schools on September 30th of the prior year. This bill seeks to change reporting requirements to an average based on multiple points throughout the school year. Student attendance is essential for academic progress and success, and we believe that robust attendance requirements should be promoted wherever possible. However, this change does not meaningfully promote student attendance; instead, it

overcomplicates a data snapshot that is intended to ensure adequate funding for schools.

This legislation would increase administrative burdens and complicate reporting requirements to no apparent benefit. It will not get us World-Class schools; instead, it will muddle the already complex journey we face to create globally competitive schools for all students.

For these reasons, we urge an unfavorable report on House Bill 739.

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