



**Testimony in support of
Senate Bill 913: Publicly Funded Full-Day Prekindergarten Program - Tier I
Child - Alteration of Definition**

**Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Position: Favorable**

March 7, 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 a favorable vote on Senate Bill 913: Publicly Funded Full-Day Prekindergarten Program - Tier I Child - Alteration of Definition.**

The passage of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future began a new period in Maryland's journey to achieve educational equity, especially with regard to early learning. The Blueprint established publicly-funded, full day pre-kindergarten in the state so that all children are ready to learn and be successful when they enter kindergarten. This policy was designed with equity by using a tier system to ensure families with the most need receive program benefits first. However, in its development, we missed key details in categorization of Tier I children. In doing so, we missed some of our most vulnerable populations. The Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB) has requested legislation to make technical corrections to this issue.

Senate Bill 913 would:

- Alter the law to include children with disabilities, homeless youths, and children who are from homes in which English is not the primary spoken language into the definition of “Tier I” children; and
- Fix a technical oversight in the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future to align with its goal of providing equitable educational opportunities.

Strong Schools Maryland looks forward to the full-scale, long-term implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future and its sustainable funding at the state and local levels for the duration of implementation. This can only occur through open engagement and steadfast commitment to listen and engage with stakeholders. We urge this legislature to reaffirm its promise to Maryland’s children and implement technical corrections that the AIB has requested.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable vote on Senate Bill 913.

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