



**Testimony in amended support of
House Bill 1267: Promise Schools-Establishment**

**House Ways & Means Committee
Position: Favorable with Amendments**

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 a favorable vote on House Bill 1267: Promise Schools-Establishment as amended by the bill sponsor.**

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future envisions a world-class system of public schools for our state's students. Central to this achievement is the success of the statewide Community Schools strategy as established by the Blueprint Concentration of Poverty Grant Program. If Maryland attempts to implement Community Schools in name only, without adherence to national best practices and the long-term investment necessary to realize positive outcomes, we will not see the successes envisioned by the Blueprint.

In addition to the focused investments made in the original bill text, HB1267 includes a sponsor amendment that restores a significant portion of a national, empirically evidenced framework for implementing Community Schools including the below provisions:

- Community Schools are implemented through a student-centered framework that is supported by policies and practices that create collaborative leadership, shared accountability, capacity development, and authentic family and community engagement;

- Supports the unique needs uncovered in the course of administering the Community Schools strategy by dedicating staffing capacity at MSDE to support more than 360 individual schools across the state and creating the flexibility for high-population schools to hire additional coordinators; and
- Increases structural opportunities for student, educator, family, and community engagement through the leadership of Community Schools, completion of needs assessment, and publication for the general public of each school's completed implementation plan.

At the start of the 2022-2023 school year, Maryland had about 360 Community Schools in various stages of implementation, across 24 counties with varying levels of familiarity and investment in the strategy. There is a vital conversation about Maryland's Community Schools strategy that must be had by this General Assembly and we urge the committee to support the best practices and supports offered by House Bill 1267 and its amendment.

For more information, contact:

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