



March 10, 2023

Chairwoman Vanessa E. Atterbeary,
Ways and Means Committee
House Office Building, Rm. 131
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chairwoman Atterbeary and Members of the Committee:

The Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland offers strong **favorable** support for House Bill 1267 – Promise Schools – Establishment. **This bill is on the 2023 legislative priority agenda of the Black Caucus.**

This legislation requires the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to annually designate at least 10 community schools – that are identified as low-performing or in need of comprehensive support and improvement – as promise schools. This bill also requires a local county board of education to evaluate and complete a comprehensive analysis of the key factors and causes of a promise school’s low performance or need for support, followed by a specified three-year plan to improve outcomes. Under House Bill 1267, the Governor must include an appropriation in the annual budget bill for the promise budget plan, as well as \$2 million for MSDE to support local boards.

Educational outcomes in Maryland have historically been lower for Black students. According to the 2022 Maryland Comprehensive Assessment, Black students scored 20 to 40 percentage points lower than their counterparts in math, English language proficiency, reading and writing comprehension, and English language arts. It is critical that impactful measures are taken to close these gaps in achievement and reduce the present disparity. By providing support to the schools that need it the most, this Legislature will help Maryland’s students reach their full potential – restoring the promise of education by fostering environments where all students can thrive. For these reasons, the Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland supports House Bill 1267 and would appreciate your favorable support of this legislation.

Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland