



**Testimony in OPPOSITION of
House Bill 1200: Primary and Secondary Education – Full-Time Equivalent Enrollment Count –
Alterations (Truancy Reduction Act of 2024)**

Appropriations Committee

Position: Oppose

March 5, 2024

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 1200**, proposing changes to 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 Maryland's students. This vision, centered on global competitiveness in public education and a re-imagining of what is possible for our students to achieve, demands 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 preceding year. This proposed legislation aims to modify 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.

Nevertheless, this change fails to effectively encourage student attendance; rather, it overcomplicates a data snapshot that is intended to ensure adequate funding for schools. The calculation of FTE enrollment prescribed under this bill will prevent the State Department of Education from meeting the deadline for providing enrollment data, creating practical challenges in determining State education aid.

HB 1200 would add to administrative workload and complicate reporting requirements to no apparent benefit. It will not help us transform our education system into World-Class schools; instead, the proposed legislation will further convolute the already complex journey we face to create globally competitive schools for all students.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge an unfavorable report on House Bill 1200.

For more information, contact Kenzie Funk: kenzie@strongschoolsmaryland.org