



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony in Support of HB 291
County Boards of Education - Bid Advertisement Threshold and Electronic
Posting of Hearing Notices and Bid Advertisements**

This legislation modernizes how local boards of education fulfill certain public notice requirements. These are small but meaningful changes that will save money and enable school districts to more effectively reach the public.

First, the bill updates a specific public hearing notice requirement. Maryland public schools have to hold a public hearing for a new school site under certain circumstances. Currently, if a hearing is to be held, it must be advertised in a newspaper of general circulation in the county. This bill would give the school board the option to advertise the hearing on their website instead.

Second, the bill updates requirements for advertising a public school system small procurement. Current state law provides three options for advertisement: 1) a newspaper, 2) Maryland Contract Weekly, or 3) both electronic and physical posting on a bid board. The latter two options are extremely outdated. Maryland Contract Weekly ceased publication in 2006; the eMaryland Marketplace is the State of Maryland's current online procurement system for all solicitations for state, county, schools, and universities. Similarly, physical bid boards are an outdated option. HB 291 allows school boards to use modern methods of advertising procurements. Note: the change in threshold from \$25,000 to \$100,000 is not substantive as \$100,000 is current practice per Education §5-112(b)(2) and State Finance and Procurement §17-502.

Providing for online posting of this information can save county boards of education money as they grapple with tight budgets. The newspaper legal notice requirement dates back to the 1970s and is not a particularly effective means of providing information to the public in the 21st century.

This bill will allow our local boards of education to operate more efficiently, promptly, at lower cost, and with broader reach.