



**Testimony in SUPPORT of
House Bill 1326: Primary and Secondary Education – Teachers – Retention and Support Policies,
Guidelines, and Training**

Ways and Means Committee

Position: Favorable

February 28, 2024

At Strong Schools Maryland, we envision a Maryland that leads the nation in achieving equitable student outcomes through empowered stakeholder engagement – meaningfully engaging students in the decision-making process that will impact their education and future is a must. **Strong Schools Maryland stands in support of House Bill 1326**, which will codify the right to vote on important issues, for student members of county boards of education.

In 2022, prior to the Blueprint Accountability and Implementation Board’s capacity growing to what it is today, Strong Schools Maryland decided to conduct a review of local school system/LEA’s Blueprint implementation reports that were due in 2021 and 2022. At the time, these preliminary reports asked LEAs to reflect on aspects of operations that would later be impacted by full-scale Blueprint implementation. The [2022 Teacher Diversity and Hiring Reports](#) were one example of the kind of reflective reporting that set the stage for the Blueprint implementation era.

These 2022 reports required LEAs to “evaluate its hiring practices to determine if those practices are contributing to a lack of diversity in Maryland’s teaching staff”, report on those findings, and detail the appropriate changes made in response to those findings. Few LEAs completely answered the reporting criteria in full, with just one county describing the creation of a district-level position focused on retaining diverse teachers within the system. A disturbing number of reports were nearly identical in their content, indicating the level of importance with which the report was understood to be completed.

HB 1326, in its intent for and focus on teachers, is explicitly aligned with the High Quality and Diverse Teachers and School Leaders pillar of the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future. The proposal is likely to be the legislative mandate more reluctant, comfortable-with-the-status-quo school communities will require to better align with retaining the World Class Teachers our students deserve.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on House Bill 1326.

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