

March 5, 2024

Honorable Ronald L. Watson Ph.D
James Senate Office Building Rm 121
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Senator Watson

Subject: Urgent Support Needed for SB883 - Addressing Pandemic Learning Loss and Supporting Teachers

As a retired-rehire educator, principal and executive school leader in Maryland, I implore you to support SB883, a pivotal bill aimed at addressing the severe learning loss and challenges faced by the Maryland educational system due to loss of learning during COVID-19.

After retiring in August, 2019, I have returned to fill in the gap as interim principal at Tulip Grove Elementary School. I witness daily the real-world implications of teachers working tirelessly to close academic gaps that has been exacerbated since that pandemic, while managing the attrition of seasoned teachers. **SB883** is not just legislation; it is a lifeline for our educational system, offering hope and practical solutions to combat the learning loss and support our teachers.

SB883 confronts critical issues including the drastic decline in math proficiency among Maryland 8th graders, which has fallen by 40% between 2019 and 2023. This decline is not just a statistic; it represents a generation of students **at risk of falling irreparably behind**. The bill recognizes the importance of innovative approaches like intensive tutoring, as recommended by Dr. Miguel Cardona, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education and the Annenberg Foundation, and seeks to remove barriers to implementing such approaches at scale in communities across Maryland.

Your support for SB883 is imperative not only in addressing the learning loss but also in supporting our teachers, who are the bedrock of our education system. As the pandemic has exacerbated teacher burnout and attrition, it's imperative to provide resources and support that uphold the dignity and effectiveness of our educators. SB883 addresses these needs by supporting students and educators, while updating background check procedures to fit 21st-century learning tools.

I urge you to consider the profound impact your support for SB883 will have on the future of education in Maryland. SB883 offers a viable solution by adopting best practices in 21st-century learning, helping schools meet this pivotal moment effectively.

Thank you for your time and attention to this critical matter. I look forward to your positive response and support for Maryland students and educators.

Sincerely,

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