



**Testimony on SB 429/HB 504,
the Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act**

**before the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee, the Senate Education,
Energy, and the Environment Committee, the House Appropriations
Committee, and the House Ways and Means Committee**

Wednesday, February 19, 2025

**from Julie Walsh of the
Carroll Education Coalition**

OPPOSE

My name is Julie Walsh. I live in Mt. Airy and I am a mother to five children attending four Carroll County Public Schools (CCPS). I come to you today on behalf of the Carroll Education Coalition, a newly-formed group of Carroll County residents who are alarmed at the budget and staffing crisis facing CCPS, and who are committed to advocating for more funding at both the County and State levels.

CCPS serves more than 25,000 students with an annual budget of \$478 million. Outside of the classroom, its operations are leaner than perhaps anywhere else in the State: CCPS ranks 23rd in central office staff, 24th in instructional support staff, and 17th in educational support professionals. CCPS currently ranks last in the State for per-pupil spending.

Last week the residents of Carroll County learned that our Board of Education was considering a FY26 budget that would: cut 92 FTE, move around another 90 FTE, not meet employee and bus contractor compensation commitments, eliminate our nearly 50-year-old Outdoor School program, reduce students' access to laptops, and reduce funding for instructional materials.

CCPS projects that the staff cuts and relocations could result in class sizes of up to 44 at the elementary level, 40 at the middle school level, and 42 at the high school level. They expect to cut math and reading specialists from schools, in addition to other teacher and staff cuts.

Yesterday members of our coalition attended our Board of Education's budget meeting to ask for increased Carroll County funding for our schools. Today, I come to you to ask that you do what you can to relieve some of the pressure our school system is facing due to the State's fiscal situation and requirements related to the implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

Our requests are two-fold:

- 1. We ask that you oppose this bill's proposed reduction in the target per pupil foundation amount.**
- 2. Given the multiple fiscal pressures facing counties in the upcoming year, we ask that you phase in minimum school funding requirements (as defined in 5-234 of the education articles) over 3-5 years to allow counties to responsibly meet the needs of all students. Providing this flexibility will smooth out the transition for counties as they try to adjust to the new requirements.**

Thank you for your attention. We appreciate your commitment to the children of Carroll County and the entire State of Maryland.