March 3, 2025

Senator Benson
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Maryland General Assembly

RE: **Senate Bill 468**

Senator Benson,

I am writing to add my voice of support for SB 468 to mandate later school start times for middle and high schools in Maryland. I favor this bill for 3 reasons:

- ◆ **Research supports it.** The research supporting later school start times for middle/high school students is deep and compelling. Later secondary start times are associated not just with better academic performance, but also lower levels of obesity, alcohol consumption, depression, school absenteeism, and school disciplinary actions. Other than the temporary inconvenience of adjusting to a new schedule, there appear to be no downside to later middle/high start times.

- ◆ **Districts tend to resist change until it is mandated.** Having worked with school districts all over the country, the most frequent pushback we get when clients are considering a school start time change is that they only want to do it if it won't cost them anything or only if everyone (parents, teachers, athletics directors, afterschool providers, etc.) supports the change. Both excuses ignore the research and allows the status quo to continue to fail students. In comparison, California mandated later school start times for middle/high schools starting in 2022. We have no reports of a California district being unable to comply with the law. In 1 case study we recently completed, a California district of ~50,000 students reduced their transportation costs while aligning their start times to the law.

- ◆ **It can be done.** – Prismatic supported Anne Arundel County Public Schools when it successfully changed to later middle/high school start times. Behind the scenes, adjusting bus routes was detailed and time-consuming, both for my consultants and for various district staff. However, it was implemented without additional transportation costs for AACPS.

Thank you for working to improve the lives of students.

Sincerely,

Tatia Prieto, Ed.D., MBA, PMP
President