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Legislative District 10
Baltimore County

Education, Energy, and the
Environment Committee

Energy Subcommittee

Chair, Joint Electric Universal
Service Program Workgroup



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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 602
County Boards of Education – Special Education Service Delivery
Models- Publication Requirement

Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
February 19, 2025

Chairman Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you on SB 602, County Boards of Education – Special Education Service Delivery Models- Publication Requirement. This bill strengthens transparency for Maryland students while also clarifying obligations and practices regarding the provision of special education services to students in both public and private schools.

Under current law, each local county board of education must publish a list of the special education service delivery models that are offered in the local school system on their website. This requirement ensures that parents, educators, and the public know about the range of special education services available in public schools—such as resource rooms, in-class support, self-contained classes, and related services like speech or occupational therapy. However, the existing statute focuses primarily on students enrolled in public schools and does not explicitly address children with disabilities who are placed in private schools by their parents.

While many assume private school students with disabilities are entirely outside the scope of the public system, federal law under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) imposes specific obligations on local school systems regarding “parentally-placed private school students.” IDEA requires local school boards to identify, locate, and evaluate such children—a process often called “Child Find”—and to spend a proportionate share of their federal special education funds on “equitable services” for them. These services may include therapies, consultations, or other supports. Unfortunately, many parents and private school administrators are unaware that any publicly funded support is available at all, a gap in knowledge that significantly undermines the benefits intended by federal law.

SB 602 addresses this gap by explicitly defining “parentally-placed private school student” in Maryland law, thereby aligning our Education Article with federal requirements. The bill makes it clear that these students, who are enrolled in private or religious schools by their families rather than placed there by a public agency, are entitled to a share of federally funded

special education services. More importantly, SB 602 ensures transparency by requiring each county board to publish not only the service delivery models in its public schools but also those that are specifically available to parentally placed private school students. By having these options listed online, families, private school educators, and advocates will immediately understand the supports that a local school system can provide. Whether that includes speech therapy, occupational therapy, or other counseling and consultative services, parents will have a clear roadmap to seek assistance for their children's unique needs.

This legislation is needed in Maryland to eliminate confusion, ensure equity, and enhance compliance with federal law. The current statute does not make explicit that local school systems must publicly communicate the availability of specialized services for private school students with disabilities. Consequently, many parents do not realize that federally funded benefits—designed precisely to help children succeed—are within reach. SB 602 closes this information gap, harmonizes state requirements with those of the IDEA, and reinforces Maryland's commitment to supporting children with disabilities wherever they attend school. By clarifying roles, responsibilities, and processes, this bill stands to improve the consistency and quality of special education services offered across our state.

For these reasons, I urge a favorable report on SB 602.

With kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Benjamin T. Brooks".

Benjamin Brooks