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Education, Energy, and  
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Chair, Joint Committee on  
Cybersecurity, Information Technology  
and Biotechnology

## THE SENATE OF MARYLAND

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

### **Testimony in Support of SB 704 - State Department of Education and Department of Information Technology - Evaluation on Artificial Intelligence in Public Schools**

March 19, 2025

Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee.

Thank you for your consideration of SB 704, which marks a critical step toward recognizing and integrating artificial intelligence (AI) into Maryland's public schools. This legislation will equip state and local officials with the necessary insights to assess AI's role in education and develop informed policies that balance innovation with responsibility.

Over the last year, AI has surged across industries, including education. Tools like OpenAI's ChatGPT have raised concerns about bias, cybersecurity, and misinformation. However, while AI presents challenges, it also offers tremendous benefits. Educators can use AI to streamline administrative tasks, easing workloads in lesson planning, grading, and assessments. For students, AI-powered tutoring provides personalized, one-on-one learning support, enhancing student's learning outcomes.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, AI-driven tools expand access to language learning, career exploration, and adaptive instruction, ensuring that every student, regardless of background or ability, receives a high-quality education.<sup>2</sup>

In this context, Delegate Ebersole and I were appointed to the Southern Regional Education Board's Commission on Artificial Intelligence by the Speaker and Senate President. We have been working with policymakers in Southern states as well as leaders in education and business to develop policy recommendations to inform how we implement AI into our classrooms. The recommendations from the Commission are attached to my testimony.

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<sup>1</sup> Colordao AI in K-12 Education\_December 2024.pdf

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.coloradoedinitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Colorado-Roadmap-for-AI-in-K-12-Education\\_August-2024.pdf](https://www.coloradoedinitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Colorado-Roadmap-for-AI-in-K-12-Education_August-2024.pdf)

Last year, MSDE sent out a survey to LEAs regarding their use of AI in schools. Of the 16 LEAs that responded, only 2 had an Artificial Intelligence Policy; however, 10 of 16 LEAs reported they have implemented generative Artificial Intelligence. LEAs are using AI, but they are doing so without clear guidance. Attached to my testimony are a summary of preliminary results that MSDE provided to my office.

SB 704 takes the first step in implementing AI responsibly by directing the **State Department of Education** to evaluate AI's use and readiness in public schools through:

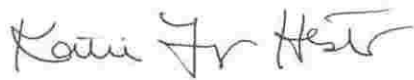
- 1) **A statewide survey** assessing local school systems' current AI policies, technological infrastructure, staffing, planning, and familiarity with AI tools.
- 2) **An implementation readiness review** to determine how the State Department of Education can best support AI integration in schools.
- 3) **A collaboration with the Department of Information Technology** to review AI-driven systems that assist with student learning, curriculum development, and educator support.

Surveys will be distributed to county boards by **August 1, 2025**, with responses due by **October 1, 2025**. The findings will inform strategic AI integration and ensure Maryland schools remain competitive in an increasingly technology-driven world.

If we fail to address AI's role in education now, we risk leaving students unprepared for the evolving workforce and teachers without the necessary tools to adapt. This legislation is essential to modernizing our education system alongside technological advancements.

For these reasons, *I request a favorable report on SB 704.*

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Katie Fry Hester". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Katie" being the most prominent.

Senator Katie Fry Hester  
Howard & Montgomery Counties