Thank you Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and members of the Ways and Means Committee for your many years of dedicated public service.

I first want to applaud the General Assembly for having the foresight to develop oversight of the Implementation of Blueprint for Maryland's Future by developing an Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB).

The AIB's objectives, processes and operational models were developed over the course of the last 8 years, which included an International Health Emergency (COVID-19) that had and continues to have sustaining impacts on the educational success of our students. Currently, the financial situation of the state is compelling the Governor and General Assembly to make some very tough choices in education spending. Further, federal and local revenue uncertainty has created a very challenging situation for all local education agencies.

The issue before all of us is how do we maintain accountability and support successful implementation of the Blueprint while ensuring these mutual fiscal challenges do not derail the educational opportunities and successes of our students. That will require a level of educational expertise that the AIB lacks under its current business model and approach to LEA oversight.

By taking the steps to modify the process by which the state works with local education agencies to implement Blueprint with fidelity, as laid out in HB 1421, each and every student will be given the opportunity to succeed in their educational endeavors, move forward in their education journey with confidence they can read, comprehend math, sciences and civics and explore their potential thru the cultural and physical education that the Maryland Education system is known for with confidence and fidelity.

I have seen many examples and personally addressed instances where the AIB lacked the acumen and expertise to understand Blueprint law, curriculum, education finance and/or all of the complexities associated with our education system. LEAs and our state board have had to divert from education service delivery manpower resources to address these misinterpretations, misunderstandings and sometimes regrettably ignorant disrespectful, authoritative approach of the AIB. It leaves uncertainty in its wake and erodes at both public and inter-agency trust. I believe that HB 1421 goes a long way to removing these barriers to Blueprints success, upholds the AIBs true mission and purpose and increases administrative efficiencies of our education systems.

The State Board of Education already has a strong, benevolent relationship with all stakeholders in education, and the resources to best determine the most successful approach to mitigating, correcting and improving our LEAs, and understanding how best to compel LEAs not in compliance to do so immediately. Combined with the diligence and determination of the AIB and detailed information they could continue providing to the State Board, we can directly address the concerns of almost every education stakeholder in MD as it relates to the under-regulated and misguided authority of the AIB under current law.

Finally, I want to say as someone who has sat in the seat of the parent, of the volunteer, of the planner, of the President of AACPS Board of Education (2018-2024), of the representative of every school board

member in MD as President of MABE (2023-2024), of the representative for MD in national educational affairs (2020-2024), and now of the common citizen who cares deeply about our students and their future, that HB 1421 is the best opportunity to update the AIB oversight system to better meet the needs of our kids, our LEAs and those whom serve their mission.

I sincerely ask for you to support HB 1421 and am available for questions or follow-up, as appropriate.

Regards,

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