



**Testimony in SUPPORT of**  
**House Bill 495: Education – Antidiscrimination Policies – Policy and Notice Requirements**

**Ways and Means Committee**

**Position: Support**

February 12, 2025

At Strong Schools Maryland, we work to support the faithful implementation and full funding of the promises legislated through the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. The Blueprint envisions a public school system that provides every student with a safe, inclusive, and equitable learning environment. As such, **Strong Schools Maryland urges a favorable report on House Bill 495**, which seeks to enhance transparency, accessibility, and knowledge of antidiscrimination policies in Maryland.

While schools have antidiscrimination policies in place, these policies can be difficult to access and inconsistently communicated to students, family, and school staff. According to the National Library of Medicine, incidents of prejudice and discrimination in schools have increased in the past decade. They recommend enacting inclusion on nondiscriminatory policies for schools and classrooms and that school personnel, parents, and students raise awareness of these policies.<sup>1</sup> HB495 provides an adjustment to current standards by requiring that schools and/or school systems make their antidiscrimination policies clear, accessible, and actively communicated to all members of the school community.

House Bill strengthens the implementation of antidiscrimination policies by:

- Ensuring accessibility of the antidiscrimination school policies by mandating the expansion of the languages into which the policy is translated, provision of resources for oral interpretation, and publication of the information in multiple locations, both online and in person around the school community.
- Increasing understanding and knowledge of antidiscrimination policies by providing trainings for both students and staff on said policies.

Every student, family, and teacher in Maryland deserves to learn and work in an environment where they feel valued, protected, and supported. However, policy does little for the members of the school community if it is not accessible, communicated, and understood by the school community. By ensuring this access, House Bill 495 advances the Blueprints vision of equity and inclusion in Maryland public schools.

**For these reasons, we urge the committee to issue a Favorable Report on House Bill 495.**

**Please contact** Kenzie Funk at [kenzie@strongschoolsmaryland.org](mailto:kenzie@strongschoolsmaryland.org) for additional questions.

<sup>1</sup> [Promoting Fair and Just School Environments: Developing Inclusive Youth](#)