



**Testimony in SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS of
Senate Bill 311: Education – The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future – Revisions**

**House Appropriations Committee
Position: Favorable with Amendment**

April 1, 2026

Strong Schools Maryland is a statewide network of parents, educators, and advocates committed to full funding and faithful implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future. We support Senate Bill 311 as a general Blueprint revisions bill. The legislation makes important technical and timeline adjustments across multiple areas of implementation. However, differences between the House and Senate versions of this bill raise critical concerns, and several provisions require guardrails to protect funding stability and equity for students. **We respectfully urge a favorable report with amendments and alignment across chambers that preserves the strongest elements of each version.**

As SB 311 moves between chambers, we want to highlight where each version meaningfully advances the goals of the Blueprint and where changes should be preserved or reconsidered.

Compensatory Education Methodology (Concur with House): We appreciate that the Senate version takes a step toward addressing the future of compensatory education methodology. However, the House version provides a stronger, more complete framework and should be maintained.

The House language ensures a more transparent and inclusive process by requiring engagement with local school systems, educators, families, and community stakeholders, along with public reporting and input opportunities. It also provides a more realistic timeline and authorizes resources to support this work.

Importantly, the House maintains the current compensatory education methodology for three years, compared to only one year in the Senate version. This longer transition period is critical to avoid disruption for school systems and to ensure that any future changes are thoughtful, data-driven, and equitable.

By contrast, the Senate language sets fewer expectations for stakeholder engagement, does not require a public-facing process, and moves on a shorter timeline. Given the significance of this funding formula for students with the greatest needs, these gaps create real risks for

inconsistency and lack of transparency. **For these reasons, we urge the House to maintain its position on compensatory education methodology and not concur with the Senate version.**

Technology Access Reporting (Concur with Senate):

We strongly support the Senate’s decision to remove language that would repeal the technology access reporting requirement. In a time when school systems continue to rely on virtual learning during inclement weather and other disruptions, understanding student access to devices and connectivity remains essential. This reporting is one of the only tools available to identify gaps in access and ensure that students, particularly those in under-resourced communities, are not left behind. Eliminating this report would reduce transparency and weaken the State’s ability to respond to inequities in real time. We urge the House to adopt the Senate position and retain this reporting requirement.

Prekindergarten Tier I Inclusion (amendment): In 2023, the AIB recommended expanding the Tier I definition to students with disabilities and multilingual learners, and the General Assembly adopted that expansion for fiscal years 2024 through 2026. As a result, children between 300% and 600% of the federal poverty level who also have disabilities or come from multilingual homes may enroll in full-day prekindergarten and be counted as Tier I for funding purposes through the 2025–2026 school year. That statutory authority is set to expire.

We are seeking an amendment to extend this timeline. If no action is taken this session, the statute will sunset and these students will no longer be counted as Tier I, which could significantly affect access and funding stability in many districts. Extending the timeline maintains continuity for students with disabilities and multilingual learners while giving the State time to evaluate the fiscal and policy implications responsibly.

Concentration of Poverty Grant Program Flexibility: SB 311 repeals the termination date limiting the use of Concentration of Poverty grant funds for certain programs required under COMAR. We support maintaining flexibility so high-poverty schools can sustain required programming allowing schools to continuously support staffing and services for students.

Community Schools and Wraparound Services: SB 311 expands the definition of wraparound services to include evidence-based academic interventions in addition to tutoring. We support this clarification. Community schools work best when they can address academic and nonacademic barriers together, and schools need flexibility to use evidence-based interventions that match student needs.

Teacher Certification and Pathways Into Teaching: SB 311 adjusts qualifications for an initial teacher certificate and recognizes additional pathways into the profession. We support efforts to strengthen recruitment and diversify the teacher pipeline while maintaining high standards, including recognition of apprenticeship completion and documented effective evaluations.

Post-College and Career Readiness and Dual Enrollment Limits: SB 311 extends the statutory authority of the State Board and the AIB to require a minimum number and type of dual enrollment courses under the post-college and career readiness pathway. Although intended to ensure baseline access, minimum requirements frequently operate as ceilings in practice. When the State sets a floor, some districts align to that floor and do not expand further. Over time, that dynamic can slow progress and entrench disparities in access across counties. Students in lower-wealth districts, multilingual learners, students with disabilities, and students from low-income backgrounds may be more likely to be limited to the minimum offering, while students in more resourced districts continue to benefit from broader and more robust dual enrollment opportunities.

If the State continues this authority, it should pair it with strong monitoring and public reporting to ensure dual enrollment access grows beyond the minimum and expands equitably across student groups and jurisdictions.

Senate Bill 311 presents an opportunity to strengthen Blueprint implementation. Preserving the House approach to compensatory education and the Senate's commitment to technology access reporting will ensure this bill advances equity, transparency, and stability for Maryland students.

For these reasons, Strong Schools Maryland respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 311 with amendments.

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Additional signatories:

Blueprint Coalition