



**Testimony in SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT of
House Bill 64: Task Force on Education Funding and Student Population Growth**

**Appropriations Committee
Position: Favorable with Amendment**

February 3, 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 House Bill 64 and the creation of a Task Force on Education Funding and Student Population Growth as a necessary response to a critical flaw in Maryland's school funding system.

Maryland's education funding formulas rely on prior-year enrollment counts that fail to reflect the students actually enrolled in schools today. In fast-growing jurisdictions such as Frederick County, schools are absorbing significant numbers of new students without the funding required to serve them. This disconnect leads to overcrowded classrooms, staffing shortages, and diminished services for students and educators across the state.

While House Bill 64 is an important step forward, the task force will only succeed if it includes voices that reflect the students most affected by enrollment growth and funding delays. *Strong Schools Maryland urges an amendment to include one representative of students with disabilities, one representative of students who are Limited English or multilingual learners, and one representative of students who are eligible for FARMs or are from lower-income households.*

According to 2024 enrollment data, FARMs students comprise approximately 50% of Maryland's public school population, Multilingual learners represent 13.1%, and students with disabilities make up 12.7%. Each group has distinct needs, is defined in federal and state law and COMAR regulations, and is supported through targeted funding streams. Excluding their perspectives would undermine the task force's ability to develop equitable and effective recommendations.

Including knowledgeable representatives of these student groups is essential to ensuring the task force's work reflects classroom realities and aligns with the goals of the Blueprint. Without these voices, the task force risks producing recommendations that perpetuate existing inequities.

For these reasons, Strong Schools Maryland urges a favorable report on House Bill 64 with the proposed amendment.

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