



National School Boards Association
1680 Duke St. FL2, Alexandria, VA 22314-3493
Phone: (703) 838.6722 • Fax: (571) 470.5108
www.nsba.org

**TESTIMONY OF VERJEANA MCCOTTER-JACOBS
Executive Director and CEO, National School Boards Association (NSBA)**

**BEFORE THE SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY & THE ENVIRONMENT
COMMITTEE MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

February 27, 2026

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Committee members:

My name is Verjeana McCotter-Jacobs, CEO of the National School Boards Association and a fellow Marylander.

For a decade, I served as Chair of the Prince George’s County Board of Education and President of the Maryland Association of Boards of Education. I know firsthand that the success of any education policy depends on the strength and preparedness of our local school boards.

Today, we are witnessing the most significant technological shift since the dawn of the internet. Artificial Intelligence offers unparalleled opportunities to personalize learning for each child; empower teachers to differentiate instruction at scale; and break down accessibility barriers for multilingual and neurodivergent learners.

However, it also introduces profound questions regarding data privacy and academic integrity. Most importantly, we must ensure that high-quality AI is available to every child. Answering these challenges requires sound policy and informed, strategic leadership. That’s why NSBA partnered with the National AI Academy to launch the AI Smart Certification.

Through this self-directed online course, education leaders gain a clear understanding of AI’s impact on teaching and district operations; master best practices for protecting student data; and develop the capacity to lead AI-driven transformation without losing the human element of education.

This isn't just theory for me; I have sat in the seats of the local leaders who will carry out this work and I have talked to them about the challenge that AI represents. As we roll this program out nationally, I see a unique opportunity for Maryland to serve as the gold standard. By pairing


Transforming public education, board by board

sound state policy with local governance expertise, we can ensure our leaders use their best judgment to navigate this frontier.

For our students' future and for our state's future, we must ensure that each Maryland student—regardless of their background—is not just an AI consumer, but a master of it. Let us give our school boards the tools, our teachers the support, and our students the edge they need to lead the world.

Thank you.