

Testimony for Senate Bill 720: Education – Artificial Intelligence – Guidelines, Professional Development, and Collaborative

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Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I respectfully submit favorable testimony in support of Senate Bill 720, The Artificial Intelligence Ready Schools Act.

Artificial intelligence is rapidly transforming how students learn, how educators teach, and how future workers will participate in Maryland’s economy. Schools across the State are already encountering AI technologies in classrooms, assignments, administrative workflows, and student learning tools. Yet adoption has largely occurred without consistent statewide guidance, shared standards, or coordinated professional development. SB 720 represents an important and timely step toward ensuring that Maryland approaches artificial intelligence in education thoughtfully, responsibly, and strategically.

Establishing Clear and Practical Guidance

One of the strongest aspects of SB 720 is its requirement that the Maryland State Department of Education develop and maintain publicly accessible guidance for students, educators, administrators, and families. Providing differentiated guidance for each stakeholder group recognizes that AI affects education at multiple levels and that implementation challenges vary widely across roles.

By requiring annual review and updates, the bill acknowledges the fast pace of technological change. Static policies quickly become outdated in the AI domain; therefore, an adaptive framework is essential to ensure continued relevance and effectiveness. This approach positions Maryland to respond proactively rather than reactively as new technologies emerge.

Supporting Local Implementation While Maintaining Statewide Alignment

The requirement that local school systems adopt AI policies aligned with State guidance within a defined timeframe creates necessary consistency while preserving local flexibility. Schools need clear direction, but they also require room to adapt implementation to local instructional needs.

Designating a local AI coordinator within each school system is particularly important. Successful technology adoption depends not only on policy but also on leadership capacity. Coordinators will serve as anticipating points between educators, administrators, and the State, helping translate guidance into practical classroom implementation.

Evidence-Based Evaluation and Tool Certification

SB 720 introduces an especially valuable provision by requiring a Maryland four-year institution of higher education to assist the State in evaluating and certifying AI tools annually for alignment with State guidelines . Independent evaluation helps ensure that tools adopted by schools meet standards for safety, effectiveness, and educational appropriateness.

As AI vendors increasingly market products directly to school systems, educators need trusted evaluation mechanisms. This provision helps districts make informed procurement decisions and reduces the risk of adopting tools that may not support educational outcomes or student protections.

Investing in Educator Capacity Through Professional Development

Technology adoption succeeds only when educators are prepared and supported. The bill’s statewide train-the-trainer professional development model ensures scalability while respecting educators’ time and expertise. Importantly, SB 720 recognizes that teachers should be compensated or receive professional credit for participation, reinforcing that AI literacy is a professional competency rather than an unfunded expectation.

Equipping educators with both AI literacy and technical understanding will help shift AI from a source of uncertainty into a tool that enhances instruction, creativity, and student engagement.

Aligning Education With Workforce Preparation

Requiring artificial intelligence literacy to become part of workforce preparation standards by 2027 reflects an understanding that AI competency is now foundational across industries. Maryland’s future workforce will increasingly interact with AI systems regardless of career pathway. Preparing students early ensures competitiveness for both college and career opportunities while strengthening the State’s innovation economy.

Creating a Collaborative Statewide Governance Structure

The establishment of the Maryland AI Education Collaborative creates an ongoing mechanism for coordination among educators, administrators, students, families, and labor representatives. This collaborative model encourages shared learning across districts and ensures that policy development remains informed by classroom realities.

Equally important is the requirement for regular reporting to the General Assembly on professional development, adoption levels, instructional use, and implementation outcomes . Continuous evaluation will allow policymakers to refine strategy based on evidence rather than speculation.

Conclusion

Artificial intelligence is already present in Maryland classrooms. The question before us is not whether schools will use AI, but whether they will do so with clear guidance, educator support, and student-centered safeguards.

SB 720 provides a balanced framework that:

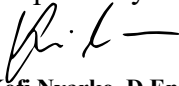
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- Establishes statewide guidance while supporting local implementation,
- Builds educator capacity through structured professional development,
- Introduces independent evaluation of AI tools,
- Aligns education with workforce needs, and
- Creates a sustainable collaborative governance model.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to issue a **favorable report** on Senate Bill 720.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued leadership in preparing Maryland students for the future.

Respectfully submitted,



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