

Supporting Statement for SB863

As a concerned parent and advocate for students with disabilities in Prince George's County, I strongly support the passage of SB863, the Prince George's County Special Education Service Delivery, Transparency, and Accountability Act. Families across our county have experienced years of instability, missed services, unfilled one-to-one aide positions, and a lack of transparency that has directly harmed our children's educational progress and emotional well-being. This bill finally provides the structural oversight, accountability, and resources needed to correct these long-standing failures.

SB863 addresses the core issues families have raised for years. By requiring full-time salaries and benefits for one-to-one aides, the bill stabilizes a workforce that has historically suffered from high turnover and chronic vacancies. Our children cannot learn, grow, or remain safe when essential support positions remain unfilled for weeks or months at a time. This bill ensures that the individuals who support our most vulnerable students are treated as valued professionals, not disposable labor.

The quarterly reporting requirements are equally critical. For too long, families have been left in the dark about service delivery, compensatory services owed, and staffing shortages. SB863 mandates transparent, data-driven updates so that parents, the Board of Education, and the Maryland State Department of Education can monitor progress and intervene when necessary. Transparency is not optional-it is the foundation of trust.

Additionally, the requirement for annual professional development ensures that staff who support students with disabilities are properly trained and equipped. Our children deserve educators and aides who understand their needs and can deliver services with fidelity.

Finally, the independent audit is essential. Families have repeatedly raised concerns about missed

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services, budget lapses, and chronic noncompliance. An external review will provide the clarity and accountability needed to rebuild a system that has failed too many children for too long.

SB863 is not just a policy-it is a lifeline for families who have been fighting for basic compliance with federal law. It is a step toward restoring dignity, safety, and educational opportunity for thousands of students with disabilities in Prince George's County. I urge the General Assembly to pass this bill without delay.