



Testimony - SB 720,
Education - Artificial Intelligence - Guidelines, Professional Development, and
Collaborative (Artificial Intelligence Ready Schools Act)
Favorable
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
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Honorable Chairman Feldman & Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

SEIU Local 500 represents more than 20,000 education workers and public employees across Maryland, including early childhood educators, school support professionals, and higher education workers. Our members are on the front lines of implementing new technologies in our schools, and they understand both the promise and the risks of artificial intelligence in education.

Senate Bill 720 establishes a thoughtful, worker-informed framework for the responsible integration of artificial intelligence in K–12 schools. The bill rightly centers students and educators, prioritizes equity and ethical use, and ensures that artificial intelligence is implemented as a tool to support—rather than replace—human judgment, professional expertise, and educational relationships.

SEIU Local 500 strongly supports the bill’s emphasis on clear statewide guidance developed by the State Department of Education in consultation with stakeholders. Consistent guidance will help prevent a patchwork of policies across districts and protect students, educators, and school staff from misuse of emerging technologies.

We also applaud the bill’s commitment to professional development that is accessible, statewide, and compensated. Requiring that educators be paid with time, money, or

recertification credit—and prohibiting fees for participation—recognizes that successful implementation of artificial intelligence depends on respecting educators' labor and professional expertise. These protections are essential and should serve as a model for future education policy.

Equally important is the creation of the Maryland AI Education Collaborative, which explicitly includes labor unions representing teachers, administrators, and school support staff. This ensures that workers who will be directly impacted by artificial intelligence systems have a meaningful seat at the table in shaping policy, procurement, and implementation decisions. Including school support staff—who are often excluded from governance conversations—is especially critical, as these workers are frequently tasked with administrative and operational responsibilities affected by AI systems.

Finally, the bill's safeguards around procurement, evaluation, and certification of AI tools—supported by institutions such as Morgan State University—help ensure transparency, accountability, and alignment with public values rather than private vendor interests.

Artificial intelligence will shape the future of education. Senate Bill 720 ensures that this future is ethical, equitable, worker-centered, and student-focused.

For these reasons, SEIU Local 500 urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 720. Thank you to Senator Katie Fry Hester for her leadership on this important issue.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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