
TO: Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee

BILL: Senate Bill (SB) 0720 - Education - Artificial Intelligence - Guidelines, Professional Development, and Collaborative (Artificial Intelligence Ready Schools Act)

DATE: February 26, 2026

POSITION: Support with Amendments

The Maryland State Board of Education (State Board) and State Department of Education (MSDE) extend their support for Senate Bill 720 - Education - Artificial Intelligence - Guidelines, Professional Development, and Collaborative (Artificial Intelligence Ready Schools Act), with amendments. The bill reflects a shared commitment to ensuring that artificial intelligence is integrated into Maryland’s public schools in ways that are safe, equitable, transparent, and centered on student learning. MSDE supports SB 720 with amendments that clarify roles, preserve local responsibility for tool selection, and ensure sustainable implementation.

SB 720 calls for statewide guidance on artificial intelligence, local policy alignment, the designation of local AI coordinators, integration of AI literacy into workforce preparation standards, educator professional development, and the creation of a Maryland AI Education Collaborative. MSDE has already undertaken substantial work in several of these areas, including publishing statewide AI guidance, developing implementation resources for local school systems and educators, and establishing clear expectations related to equity, privacy, academic integrity, and vendor governance. The bill’s core framework aligns with this direction and reinforces the importance of coherent statewide guardrails.

At the same time, certain provisions would benefit from clarification. As drafted, SB 720 requires Morgan State University or another four-year institution to support the Department in annually evaluating and certifying AI tools submitted by the State Superintendent and schools. While well-intended, this approach would require MSDE to assume responsibility for vetting and certifying a potentially large and rapidly evolving set of AI tools used across local school systems. Given the pace of technological change and the volume of available products, this would significantly expand state operational responsibility and introduce potential liability concerns.

MSDE therefore recommends amending this provision to require the Department to develop and publish a standardized evaluation rubric and related tools to guide local education agencies in reviewing AI tools for consistency with state guidelines. Under this approach, each local education agency would have access to resources they can use when selecting tools, such as a rubric and procurement checklists, and the Department would commit to periodically updating the tools to reflect changes in technology, law, and policy. This amendment preserves statewide consistency while maintaining local procurement authority and responsibility where it appropriately resides.

Similarly, the bill's professional development provisions reflect an important priority but prescribe a specific train-the-trainer model, compensation structure, and implementation timeline in statute. MSDE agrees that meaningful educator preparation is essential to responsible AI use and has already begun advancing professional learning in this area. To ensure flexibility and fiscal sustainability, MSDE recommends revising this section to focus on outcomes rather than a mandated delivery model. The amended language would require that educators and school leaders receive professional development of sufficient duration and quality to prepare them to use AI professionally, apply it instructionally, and understand its ethical, privacy, security, and academic integrity implications, including foundational AI concepts and safeguards against misuse or overreliance.

Finally, SB 720 establishes a Maryland AI Education Collaborative to study implementation and make recommendations. MSDE supports a collaborative structure that convenes stakeholders and informs continuous improvement. To ensure alignment with Department capacity and to promote focused deliverables, MSDE recommends specifying a two-year term for the Collaborative's work, after which the General Assembly may review its impact and determine next steps.

MSDE appreciates the thoughtful leadership behind SB 720 and shares its goal of positioning Maryland as a state that approaches artificial intelligence in education with clarity, responsibility, and foresight. With the targeted amendments described above, the State Board and the Department can fully support the bill in a manner that strengthens statewide guardrails, clarifies state and local roles, and ensures durable, high-quality implementation.

For further information, please contact Laurel Cratsley, Interim Executive Director of Government Affairs, at 443-571-5461 or Laurel.Cratsley@maryland.gov.