

SB147MOU.pdf

Uploaded by: Justin Ready

Position: FAV

JUSTIN READY
Legislative District 5
Carroll County

—
MINORITY WHIP
—
Finance Committee



James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 315
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3683 · 301-858-3683
800-492-7122 Ext. 3683
Justin.Ready@senate.state.md.us

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 18, 2026

Senator Justin Ready
SB 147 Education - Agreements, Procurement Contracts, and Memoranda of Understanding - Reporting and Publication

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and members of the Education Energy and the Environment Committee,

Senate Bill 147 requires local school systems to report and publish procurement contracts and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) on their public websites. These contracts shape everything in education such as curriculum resources to student data privacy.

This bill promotes fiscal responsibility, promotes parental engagement, and provides a consistent uniform standard. The tax payers of Maryland deserve to know how their dollars are being spent, especially when a school system is entering multi-million dollar contracts for new software or services. Additionally, more third-party oversight and engagement in our education system, especially from parents and guardians will increase student's quality of education.

The House sponsor has submitted an amendment to clarify the procurement contract language to better comply with the intent of the bill, as pointed out by DLS in the fiscal note. I am supportive of that amendment.

I respectfully request a favorable on SB 147.

Letter of Support with Amendment SB0147_HB0116.pd

Uploaded by: Alita-Geri Carter

Position: FWA



Tc4health@gmail.com
www.qualequityaccess.com

February 16, 2026

BILL: SB0147/HB 116 – Education - Agreements, Procurement Contracts, and Memoranda of Understanding - Reporting and Publication

COMMITTEE: Education, Energy, and Environment

POSITION: Favorable with Amendment

RE: Statement of Support with Requested Amendments

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Honorable Members of the Education, Energy, and Environment Committee,

I am Alita-Geri Carter, the owner of Qualequity Access, LLC., a consultancy grounded in data-driven transformation that advocates for quality, equity, access, and accessibility in healthcare and education. I am the mother of two children with disabilities, a former practicing nursing practitioner, special education parent advocate, and public health servant.

I am writing to express my support for the transparency goals of **Senate Bill 0147/House Bill 116**. For too long, the execution of multi-million-dollar contracts and "in-kind" agreements has occurred behind closed doors, leaving parents and taxpayers with no way to evaluate whether our school systems are prioritizing student outcomes or institutional convenience.

While I support the bill's intent, I am concerned about specific **loopholes** that could undermine the law:

The "Information Withheld by Law" Loophole: Section 2-307(B)(2) exempts contracts that include information that "may be withheld from disclosure by law". This phrasing is overly broad and allows school systems to shield entire contracts if a single line-item is deemed confidential. **Requested Amendment:** Require that contracts be published with **limited redactions** rather than being exempted in their entirety.

Lack of Real-Time Accountability: The bill allows for a compilation report to be issued annually by October 1. In a fast-moving school year, an annual report is a post-mortem, not a tool for active oversight. **Requested Amendment:** Require all non-exempt contracts to be posted to the local school system's website within **14 business days** of execution, rather than 30.

The Human Cost of Contractual Failure

Transparency is not an abstract concept; it has a direct impact on student safety and dignity. During the **2024-2025 school year**, we witnessed a total collapse of school bus transportation services in Prince George's County Public Schools.

Stranded Students: Children were left waiting for 3 to 4 hours, and in many cases, buses never arrived.



Tc4health@gmail.com
www.qualequityaccess.com

Financial Burden on Families: Parents were forced to pay out-of-pocket for Lyfts and Ubers to ensure their children reached school safely.

Dignity and Safety: Combined routes forced Pre-K and Kindergarten students to sit on buses for 2+ hours, leading to humiliating toileting accidents.

When leadership is unwilling to provide answers on the execution of these contracts, it creates a crisis of trust. Without the transparency mandated by SB0147/ HB 116, parents have no way to see the performance requirements or penalty clauses that should have protected our children.

Personal Testimony:

In light of these extreme circumstances, parents, community members, and advocates have repeatedly sought information regarding the failures of agreements funded by our taxpayer dollars. Yet, we have not received a dignified response. Instead, we are forced to navigate a burdensome process: filing Maryland Public Information Act (MPIA) requests, enduring delays that exceed 30 days and violate the law and requesting mediation. We then wait for 90 days or longer as required by statute before we can even file a complaint with the Public Information Act Compliance Board. Even then, we may not achieve the transparency and accountability our tax dollars, communities members, families, and students demand.

Conclusion

SB0147/HB 116 is a vital step toward reclaiming public oversight of our education budget. By closing these loopholes, we can ensure that school leadership remains focused on the only metric that matters: the well-being and success of our students.

I respectfully urge a Favorable with Amendments report on SB0147/HB 116.

Respectfully Submitted,
Alita-Geri Carter, MSN, DNP-C, CPNP-PC, BCPA
Resident, Howard County, MD

SB147_Esko_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Rebekah Esko

Position: FWA

Yes on HB116/SB147

Esteemed Chair and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

Trust and transparency are important to our schools. HB116/SB147 will help stakeholders including parents and community members understand and be aware of the organizations that are working with our schools. The current situation includes an inadvertent lack of transparency, which harms trust and can lead to misunderstandings.

Allowing school staff and leadership to simply direct parents to a website listing organizations working with our schools will save time and facilitate accurate communication. The information will also be a helpful resource to individuals and businesses interested in finding trusted organizations.

Please give HB116 /SB147 a favorable report.

Reading the bill, it seems wise to have a slight change. The Bill currently contains this wording:

19 (2) THIS SECTION DOES NOT APPLY TO A PROCUREMENT CONTRACT
20 OR MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING THAT INCLUDES INFORMATION
THAT:

21 (I) MAY BE WITHHELD FROM DISCLOSURE BY LAW; OR

22 (II) IS PROHIBITED FROM DISCLOSURE BY LAW

I propose that, instead of exempting entire contracts or memoranda of understanding, that where possible, the contract or memorandum of understanding still be listed with the non-disclosable information redacted.

Thank you,
Rebekah Esko
Ellicott City

SB147 OPPOSE.pdf

Uploaded by: Grace Wilson

Position: UNF



SB0147 – EDUCATION – AGREEMENTS, PROCUREMENT CONTRACTS, AND MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING – REPORTING AND PUBLICATION

February 18, 2026

EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT

OPPOSE

Grace Wilson, Director of Legislation & Policy (410.440.1758)

Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) opposes **SB0147 – Education – Agreements, Procurement Contracts, and Memoranda of Understanding – Reporting and Publication**. This bill requires that on or before September 1 of each year, all county boards, county superintendents, schools in public elementary or secondary systems in the State, the State Board, and State Superintendent report a list of each procurement contract or memorandum of understanding entered into in the proceeding fiscal year. The county board is authorized to submit this report on behalf of schools and the superintendent. The State Department of Education is annually required to issue a report compiling this information.

Additionally, before September 1, 2026, all local school systems are required to make publicly available on county websites each agreement the local school system entered into from July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026. Any agreement entered into after this date is required to be made publicly available on the website within 30 days of the agreement being entered into.

This bill imposes redundant and burdensome reporting requirements on local education agencies (LEAs), including county boards, superintendents, and schools. There are multiple reporting requirements already in place for LEAs that mandate this information to be made publicly available. Section 5-112 of the Education Article requires LEAs to report contract awards over \$100,000 on eMaryland Marketplace Advantage, a public State procurement website. In addition, Section 5-115 of the Education Article requires LEAs to report to the Department of Budget and Management all expenditures exceeding \$25,000 to be posted on the State's Open Data Portal. Finally, AACPS posts contract awards over \$25,000 publicly at Board of Education of Anne Arundel County meetings.

Furthermore, AACPS already publicly posts contracts that are procured via competitive bidding at the time of award. However, there are hundreds of contracts awarded as micro-purchases every year ranging from field trips to consulting agreements valued at less than \$5,000. As this bill does not establish a minimum threshold for reporting procurement contracts or memorandums of understanding, all such micro-purchases would be required to be reported publicly in accordance with the bill. The amount of staff time required to track and publicly post these micro-purchases is impactful, while the fiscal impact from these micro-purchases is minimal.

Ultimately, the staff time required to meet the reporting requirements of SB0147 leaves less time for LEA purchasing staff to commit to their core mission to make sure staff and students are provided with the tools they need at a price that reflects the best value to the school system. Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests an **UNFAVORABLE** committee report on SB0147.

SB 147 - Oppose - Contract Procurement Reporting.p

Uploaded by: Jessica Goff

Position: UNF



621 Ridgely Avenue, Suite 300, Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-5414 · 800-841-8197 · Fax: 410-841-6580 · MABE.org

BILL: Senate Bill 147
TITLE: Education - Agreements, Procurement Contracts, and Memoranda of Understanding - Reporting and Publication
HEARING DATE: February 18, 2026
POSITION: UNFAVORABLE
COMMITTEE: Education, Energy, and the Environment
CONTACT: Jessica Goff, Governmental Affairs Associate (jgoff@mabe.org)

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all of the State's local boards of education, respectfully **opposes SB 147 Education - Agreements, Procurement Contracts, and Memoranda of Understanding - Reporting and Publication**. While MABE shares the General Assembly's commitment to transparency and responsible stewardship of public resources, school systems already provide substantial public access to procurement information. SB 147, in practice, does not improve transparency in a way that is workable, legally sound, and respectful of local governance structures.

Vendor Contracts Contain Extensive Confidential and Proprietary Information

School system procurement contracts often contain a significant amount of confidential and proprietary information. These contracts may include, among other things: proprietary pricing formulas and negotiated cost structures; competitive business information; and student data protection provisions and security safeguards. Although SB 147 includes language intended to exempt information that is prohibited from disclosure by law, the practical reality is that posting contracts wholesale creates substantial risk for local school systems. Determining what must be redacted requires careful legal review and technical expertise, and even inadvertent disclosure could expose a school system to legal liability or compromise student data and system security. Moreover, the requirement to publicly post full contracts may discourage vendors from contracting with school systems. These unintended consequences ultimately affect students and taxpayers.

Local boards already comply with the Maryland Public Information Act (MPIA), which strikes a careful balance between public access and the protection of confidential information. SB 147 disrupts that balance by mandating proactive disclosure on a scale that significantly increases risk.

School Systems Are Already Working Toward Increased Transparency & SB 147 Duplicates Existing Vendor Payment Reporting

There are multiple reporting requirements already in place for local school systems that mandate this information to be made publicly available. Section 17-502 of the State Finance and Procurement Article requires LEAs to report contract awards over \$50,000 on eMaryland Marketplace Advantage, a public State procurement website. In addition, Education Article Section 5-115 requires local school systems to report to the Department of Budget and Management all expenditures exceeding \$25,000, and to be posted on the State's Open Data Portal. Moreover, many school systems go further in expanding public access to procurement information. For example, Montgomery County Public Schools has published its [procurement manual](#) and all of its [awarded contracts](#) on its website to increase transparency and accountability to the public. Montgomery County Public Schools also publishes annual vendor payment information on its [Funding Accountability and Transparency](#) site, where payments of \$25,000 or more are searchable by vendor and fiscal year. [Howard County Public Schools' Funding Accountability and Transparency](#) page allows the public to view vendor payments by fiscal year for vendors receiving \$25,000 or more. Adding another reporting requirement is duplicative and burdensome and diverts limited administrative resources away from instructional priorities and student services, when school systems are already stretched thin.

Procurement Thresholds Differ for Legitimate Reasons

Local boards of education in Maryland adopt and implement their own procurement policies that reflect differences in district size, purchasing volume, staffing capacity, and operational needs. Mandating identical reporting and posting requirements ignores these differences and penalizes systems that are already acting in good faith to improve transparency. For example, [Baltimore County Public Schools](#) requires formal bids for procurements of \$50,000 or more, while [Howard County Public School System's policy](#) sets informal quote requirements at \$10,000 and above and formal solicitation requirements at \$50,000 and above. These locally adopted thresholds and procedures demonstrate that procurement practices vary across local school systems in ways consistent with local governance authority under State law. SB 147 does not adequately account for these differences. Treating all procurement contracts and agreements as functionally equivalent ignores the reality of how school systems operate.

Memoranda of Understanding Serve Distinct Purposes

Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) are often used for purposes that are fundamentally different from procurement contracts. MOUs are often utilized for: interagency cooperation; shared services arrangements; and programmatic collaborations that do not involve traditional procurement. Requiring MOUs to be reported and posted in the same manner as vendor contracts conflates distinct legal instruments and creates confusion rather than clarity. In many cases, MOUs do not involve payments, competitive bidding, or vendor relationships at all, yet SB 147 would subject them to the same reporting requirements.

Significant Administrative Burden Without Resources

SB 147 would require school systems to identify, review, redact, post, and continuously update a large volume of agreements, contracts, and MOUs, while also producing new annual reports. These tasks require staff time, legal review, and technical infrastructure that many LEAs—particularly smaller and rural systems—simply do not have. The bill does not provide funding, staffing support, or a centralized statewide system to facilitate compliance. As a result, the administrative burden will fall directly on local school systems, diverting resources away from classrooms and students.

Erosion of Local Board Authority

Local boards of education are the governing bodies responsible for procurement, fiscal oversight, and accountability to their communities. SB 147 shifts decision-making and reporting control away from locally accountable boards and toward a prescriptive statewide mandate, undermining long-standing principles of local governance embedded in Maryland's education system.

Conclusion

MABE respectfully opposes SB 147 because it is duplicative and administratively burdensome, while creating risks related to confidentiality and procurement efficiency. Transparency in school system spending already exists in compliance with existing thresholds and requirements established by the General Assembly, and this bill does not meaningfully enhance it in a way that justifies its costs and consequences. For these reasons, MABE urges the Committee to issue an **unfavorable report on SB 147**. MABE remains committed to working with the General Assembly on targeted, practical approaches that strengthen transparency while preserving local governance and protecting student and system interests.