

Written Testimony in Support of SB720

Artificial Intelligence Ready Schools Act

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

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Submitted by: Brad Searle, Founder & CEO, LaMancha AI

Position: FAVORABLE

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Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 720, the Artificial Intelligence Ready Schools Act.

About the Author

I come to this issue from three converging perspectives:

As a federal AI executive: I serve as the Deputy Chief Data and AI Officer at Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR), where I led the deployment of the Navy's first enterprise generative AI platform on Azure Government. This included achieving a full Authority to Operate (ATO) in a record eight months, training over 2,000 personnel, and briefing Navy leadership up to the Vice Admiral level. I was nominated for the GITEC 2026 Excellence in Cybersecurity Award for this work. I understand enterprise AI governance — the procurement frameworks, the security accreditation, the risk management — at the most demanding level in the federal government.

As a parent: My oldest son, Jacob, has cerebral palsy. He was an early adopter of generative AI, using ChatGPT to build his own Etsy store and a campaign website for a friend. I successfully advocated to include ChatGPT as an assistive technology in his IEP — one of the first such accommodations in our district. Jacob has since transitioned to a

504 plan, where that accommodation remains in place. I serve on the Cerebral Palsy Foundation's Parent Advisory Circle and previously sat on the Executive Board of Reach for the Stars, a foundation for children with CP.

As a school district volunteer: Based on my professional and personal AI experience, I was invited to join the Calvert County Public Schools AI Committee, where I helped draft the district's first AI guidance for staff. The school board continues to consult me on AI matters. This hands-on experience showed me both how much districts need AI policy guidance and how few resources exist to help them create it.

These three perspectives — enterprise AI governance, parent advocacy, and district-level policy development — led me to found **LaMancha AI** and build the Blueprint Platform.

Why This Bill Matters — And Why It Can't Wait

Artificial intelligence is already in Maryland classrooms. Students are using ChatGPT for homework. Teachers are experimenting with AI lesson planning. Administrators are evaluating AI-powered tools for everything from grading to scheduling. But in most districts, there is no policy governing any of it.

Nationwide, only **40 out of approximately 13,500 school districts** — 0.3% — have published formal AI guidance (The 74Million, 2026). Meanwhile, **92% of students** now use AI as their primary research and brainstorming tool, up from 66% just one year ago (DemandSage, 2026). **54% of students** and **53% of teachers** used AI for school during the 2024-25 year (RAND Corporation, 2025). The gap between adoption and governance is not just concerning — it is a liability.

The Workforce Our Children Are Entering

This is not only a school governance issue. It is a workforce preparation issue.

AI is fundamentally reshaping the labor market our students will enter. In February 2026 alone, AI models demonstrated the ability to complete complex, multi-hour professional tasks autonomously — writing functional code, conducting legal analysis, producing financial models. Industry analysts project that **up to 50% of entry-level white-collar positions** could be displaced or fundamentally restructured within the next one to five years.

I think about this as a father of three children in Calvert County Public Schools. My oldest son, Jacob, has cerebral palsy. ChatGPT is part of his 504 plan — it serves as an equalizer that opens doors his disability would otherwise close. He's used it to build his own Etsy store and create a campaign website for a friend. For Jacob, AI isn't a threat — it's a tool that expands what's possible.

But all three of my children are growing up in a world where the ability to work effectively alongside AI will not be optional — it will be a baseline expectation. The districts that teach students to use AI responsibly, ethically, and skillfully will prepare them for this future. The districts that delay — waiting for perfect policy while students navigate AI without guidance — will leave them behind.

This is why SB720 matters. It is not just about compliance. It is about ensuring Maryland's students are prepared for the world they are actually entering.

SB720 addresses this gap by establishing a structured, statewide approach to AI in education — one that puts students and teachers at the center while ensuring responsible, equitable adoption.

The Compliance Challenge Districts Will Face

SB720 creates six concrete obligations for every county school system:

1. **Adopt an AI policy** within 120 days of MSDE guidance
2. **Designate an AI Coordinator** as liaison to the State
3. **Procure AI tools** through the state procurement framework
4. **Participate in professional development** programs
5. **Report data** on AI usage to the Maryland AI Education Collaborative
6. **Align all AI use** with MSDE guidelines and best practices

These are the right requirements. But 24 county school systems — many with limited technology staff and competing budget priorities — will need practical, affordable tools to meet them.

The Solution Already Exists

At LaMancha AI, we anticipated exactly this need. We have built the **Blueprint Platform** (blueprint.lamancha.ai), an AI-powered, self-service platform that guides districts through creating comprehensive AI policy — much like TurboTax guides individuals through tax preparation.

The platform generates **18 board-ready policy deliverables** across four phases:

Phase 1: Core Policies

- Acceptable Use Policy
- Academic Integrity Guidelines
- Data Privacy & Security Policy
- Governance & Committee Structure
- Vendor Evaluation & Procurement Framework
- Risk Assessment Protocol

Phase 2: Implementation

- Implementation Roadmap
- Professional Development Plan
- Levels of AI Use Framework
- AI Literacy Standards

Phase 3: Communications

- Board Presentation Materials
- Parent & Community Communications Plan
- Staff Rollout Communications
- Student Guidance Documents

Phase 4: Compliance & Sustainability

- **SB720 Compliance Crosswalk** — maps policies directly to SB720 requirements
- **AI Coordinator Kit** — onboarding materials for the coordinator role SB720 mandates
- Annual Review Cycle
- Equity Audit Framework

Every deliverable is generated using AI, customized to the district's specific context (size, existing policies, community values, implementation timeline), and exportable as professional PDF or Word documents ready for board review.

How Blueprint Maps to SB720

SB720 Requirement	Blueprint Deliverable
Adopt AI policy within 120 days	Full policy suite (Phases 1–3)
Designate AI Coordinator	AI Coordinator Kit (Section 4.2)
Procure AI tools via state framework	Vendor Evaluation & Procurement (Section 1.5)
Professional development	PD Plan (Section 2.2)
Report to the Collaborative	Annual Review Cycle (Section 4.3)
Align with MSDE guidelines	SB720 Compliance Crosswalk (Section 4.1)

Accessibility and Affordability

We believe every district — regardless of size or budget — should be able to comply with SB720. To accelerate adoption during this critical window, we are offering **introductory early access pricing**:

- The **Explorer tier** provides a free starting point for districts to assess the platform and begin their AI policy journey
- The **Builder tier (introductory: \$99/month)** provides full document generation and AI-assisted policy development
- The **Partner tier (introductory: \$299/month)** adds team collaboration, unlimited revisions, and dedicated support
- Even at regular pricing, this represents a **fraction of the cost** of traditional education consulting engagements, which typically run \$10,000–\$50,000+

The platform supports team-based collaboration with role-based access (Editor, Reviewer, Approver), mirroring the governance structure SB720 envisions.

A Note on Timing

The bill's June 1, 2026 effective date — followed by MSDE's guidance development period, followed by the 120-day district compliance window — creates an aggressive but achievable timeline. Districts that begin planning now will be best positioned.

The Blueprint Platform is live today at **blueprint.lamancha.ai**. Maryland districts can start building their AI policy framework immediately, aligning their work with SB720's requirements before the bill even takes effect.

The Cost of Inaction

I respectfully submit that the greater risk is not in passing this bill — it is in not passing it. The absence of policy is not a neutral position. It is an active exposure. Across the country, the consequences of inaction are already playing out:

Legal liability. In 2024, a student at Hingham High School in Massachusetts was disciplined for using AI on an assignment. The school had no AI policy. The parents sued, arguing the discipline was illegitimate without written rules. Even though the school ultimately prevailed, the case consumed significant administrative time and legal resources that could have been spent on students (AALRR, 2024). A clear policy would have prevented the entire situation.

Student safety. During the 2024-25 school year, **36% of students** reported a deepfake-related issue at their school. In Beverly Hills, five eighth-graders were expelled for using AI to create fake nude images of 16 female classmates (NBC News, 2024). In Westfield, New Jersey, a similar incident led a 14-year-old victim to testify before the U.S. Senate (Fox 5 NY, 2024). Districts without AI policies have no framework for prevention, response, or accountability when these incidents occur.

Data privacy exposure. When students use free AI tools without district guidance, they enter data into commercial systems with no educational data protections. ChatGPT's own terms state it is not intended for anyone under 13 — meaning unguided

student use could expose districts to COPPA penalties of up to **\$51,744 per affected child** (FTC, 2025). If a teacher enters student names, grades, or behavioral notes into a public AI tool, that data may enter a commercial training pipeline with no FERPA protections.

Erosion of trust. Without clear policies, schools often default to detection — trying to catch students using AI after the fact. AI detection tools are unreliable and disproportionately flag non-native English speakers, creating equity and discrimination liability (NPR, 2025). **Half of all students** now say they are worried about being falsely accused of using AI to cheat (RAND, 2025). That is not a policy environment. That is a trust crisis.

Inconsistent governance. Without statewide guidance, each teacher makes individual judgment calls about AI — creating wildly inconsistent experiences for students across classrooms, schools, and districts. This inequity compounds existing gaps.

Every month without policy is a month where these risks accumulate. The question is not whether Maryland's school districts will eventually need AI governance — it is whether they build it proactively, with community input and legislative support, or reactively, after an incident forces their hand.

Conclusion

SB720 is thoughtful, comprehensive legislation that will position Maryland as a national leader in responsible AI adoption in K-12 education. The requirements it establishes are achievable, the tools to support compliance already exist, and the cost of inaction is both real and growing.

I strongly urge a **favorable report** on SB720.

Respectfully submitted,

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