



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

(301) 952-3700
County Council

February 25, 2026

House Ways & Means Committee

House Bill 901 - Education – Public School Students – Recognition of External Diagnosis of Autism

POSITION: FAVORABLE

Chair Wilkins, Vice Chair Feldmark, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Prince George's County Council, we respectfully submit this testimony in support of House Bill 901, which would require public school systems to recognize an external diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder provided by a qualified health care professional when determining eligibility for special education services.

Prince George's County is home to a large and diverse student population, including many children with developmental disabilities who rely on timely access to educational supports and interventions. Families often pursue medical evaluations outside of the school system due to long wait times, limited availability of specialists, or urgent developmental concerns. When these professionally obtained diagnoses are not consistently recognized within the educational eligibility process, families may experience unnecessary delays in services, duplicative evaluations, and increased financial and emotional burdens.

House Bill 901 helps reduce these barriers by promoting coordination between the health care and education systems. Recognizing qualified external diagnoses supports earlier intervention, which is critical for children with autism spectrum disorder to achieve improved developmental, educational, and social outcomes. Early access to services is widely recognized as a key factor in long-term success and can reduce the need for more intensive supports later in a child's educational journey.

The bill also promotes equity. Families with fewer resources are disproportionately affected when they must navigate multiple evaluation systems or face delays in eligibility determinations. Establishing a clear framework for recognizing external diagnoses helps ensure that students across Maryland receive more consistent and timely access to appropriate supports regardless of geography or socioeconomic status.

From a local government perspective, improving coordination and reducing duplicative processes can also help public systems operate more efficiently by avoiding unnecessary assessments and administrative delays while allowing schools to focus resources on service delivery.

For these reasons, the Prince George's County Council respectfully urges the Committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 901.

Prepared by: Ashlar Government Relations on behalf of Prince George's County Council

Wayne K. Curry Administration Building – Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772