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February 25, 2026

Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and esteemed members of the Ways and Means Committee

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

Position: Support with Amendment

Contact: Dr. Phelton Moss, Chair, Policy and Governance Committee
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Dear Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and esteemed members of the Ways and Means Committee,

Thank you for the work you all do on behalf of our students, educators, and staff across the state and in the Prince George’s County Public Schools community. On behalf of the Prince George’s County Board of Education, representing over 130,000 students and thousands more in our school communities, we write in support of this legislation with the proposed amendments offered by Delegate Roberts.

HB901 addresses a real and growing challenge facing families and school systems across Maryland. When a child receives an external autism diagnosis from a qualified licensed professional, families deserve to know that their school will recognize that diagnosis and begin working toward the right supports without unnecessary delay. This legislation ensures that happens. The Prince George’s County Board of Education worked directly with Delegate Roberts on amendments that strengthen this bill and make it workable for school systems while keeping students at the center.

PGCPS already recognizes external diagnoses of autism and works to connect students with appropriate supports. This legislation codifies that practice statewide and ensures that no family has to fight to have their child’s diagnosis acknowledged while waiting for a school-based evaluation. For our district, which serves one of the most diverse student populations in the state, this bill reflects what we are already doing and what every school system should be doing.

The amendments proposed by Delegate Roberts are critical to making this bill effective. Amendment No. 1 clarifies that schools shall determine the appropriate supports to provide, rather than being locked into specific external recommendations that may not align with the school setting. Amendment No. 2 ensures that supports are based on the diagnosis and any recommended supports, and adds important language allowing schools to make appropriate changes to supports during the evaluation period, including



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adding or eliminating supports as necessary. These changes give schools the professional discretion needed to serve students well while still honoring the external diagnosis.

To be clear, this bill does not bypass the Individualized Education Program process required under federal law, nor does it commit school systems to providing services without professional evaluation. What it does is close the gap between when a family receives a diagnosis and when the school begins responding to it. That gap is where families lose trust and children lose time.

The fiscal note raises concerns about cost. The amendments address much of that exposure by giving schools the flexibility to determine and adjust appropriate supports rather than being required to implement every specific external recommendation. Because PGCPs already follows this practice, we do not anticipate significant new costs for our district. The real cost is in doing nothing — leaving families without a clear pathway and students without timely support.

We respectfully request that the committee adopt the proposed amendments and issue a favorable report on HB901 as amended. Dr. Moss will be testifying in person on behalf of the Board and is available to answer any questions the committee may have.

Thank you,

Prince George's County Board of Education