
TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT

Testimony to the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

In support of

Senate Bill 575: Public Schools– Mold Assessment and Remediation

February 24, 2022

Strong Schools Maryland urges a favorable vote on Senate Bill 575: Public Schools– Mold Assessment and Remediation

The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future envisions a world-class system of public schools for our state’s students. A healthy and safe learning environment for students and school staff is vital to the realization of this vision. Healthy, safe, and secure school facilities enable students, teachers, and school staff to be at their best. A well-maintained and safe physical environment fosters students’ abilities to display improved academic achievement while also contributing towards greater teacher morale and job satisfaction.

Senate Bill 575 would:

- Establish uniform standards for mold assessment and remediation so all schools understand what should be addressed in school facilities;
- Require county boards to create a process for reporting and remediation of mold in public schools; and
- Require county boards and Maryland State Department of Education to post results of mold assessments on their websites in a manner that is clear and easy to locate for the public.

In Maryland, there is currently no law that requires schools to be tested for mold despite the fact that exposure to mold can cause respiratory health problems or be fatally dangerous to children with asthma or mold allergies. This poses issues for Baltimore City schools especially as 20% of children in Baltimore City have an asthma diagnosis—which is more than double the national prevalence of 9%—and poor school building conditions, that tend to be more common in Baltimore City, can exacerbate students’ asthma. Poor building conditions and harmful air quality, like high exposure to industrial pollution, negatively affects academic achievement and contributes towards increased absenteeism due to impacts to chronic health issues. However, if Maryland invests in proper maintenance of school facilities, including assessment and remediation of mold, schools are likely to see improvements in health, reduced absenteeism, and enhanced academic performance.

The health and safety of students and school staff is essential to the success of a world-class system of public schools in Maryland detailed in the Blueprint. By passing Senate Bill 575, the Maryland General Assembly would be taking a step towards building an environment for teachers and students that is conducive to success in learning and improvement to morale. We urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 575.

[Abell Foundation, October 2020](#)

[United States Environmental Protection Agency, October 2019](#)

If you have questions or requests for additional information, you can email:

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