

Good afternoon, I am Tonya Tiffany, VP of Issues for the PTA Council of Howard County. The PTA council represents local PTA organizations from every Howard County School and is backed with position votes of support from PTA delegates.

The origin of SB0756 is based on the crossroads of several major events for the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS), which included budgetary limitations for capital projects, public demonstrations of USM capabilities, a contentious redistricting cycle, all held within a continuing growth phase.

The HCPSS Office of school planning has recently updated its redistricting policy to include several new considerations and the formation of an analytical approach. The next planning and redistricting cycle has just begun and follows a process defined in HCPSS policy 6010. The process includes the use of a consultant and COTS (Commercial Off The Shelf) software.

This bill intendeds to support the long-term capabilities of HCPSS rather than supplant them, using USM assistance to address any area of opportunity to gain efficiency within the framework of HCPSS policy. HCPSS is confident of its abilities at present, but there are many items unique to LEA units in the State of Maryland and Howard County that could be addressed using analytical considerations factoring in unique polygons, capital budget variables, class size change impacts, implementation of Blueprint for Maryland criteria, School facility Index variables, walk distances facilitated by prioritized capital projects, land use policy affecting enrollment, exemptions to policies affecting growth patterns, new safety criteria, PPP use, Leased facility distribution, socioeconomic factors, student data privacy and more. In addition, there are opportunities to mature processes to factor in real time data as well as long term trend analysis to the portfolio of capabilities.

PTACHC broadly and unanimously supports this bill which was written to allow a broad range of participation options. As the bill has progressed closer to potential adoption, many of the coordinating and listed parties including PTACHC would like an opportunity to refine specifics with amendments. In PTACHC's case, we would like to see clarifying language regarding funding which appears to be in a single fiscal year when the expectation was for a multi-year distribution throughout the pilot period of performance. The school system and USM have also engaged in drafting potential amendments which should be considered. PTACHC respectfully requests these are considered and balanced with the core intent to provide additional analytical support to HCPSS and share lessons learned for the State funded school system.

PTACHC looks forward to assisting in any way to make this effort a success and follow through with our core mission to advocate for the well-being of children.