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BILL NO.: SB 1026

TITLE: County Boards of Education – Budgets – Notice (Transparency in Education Spending Act)

SPONSOR: Senator Brooks

COMMITTEE: Appropriations

POSITION: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS**

DATE: March 26, 2024

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS WITH AMENDMENTS** Senate Bill 1026 – County Boards of Education – Budgets – Notice (Transparency in Education Spending Act). SB 1026 enables counties by providing additional tools to access and anticipate costs so that they can use taxpayer money wisely and budget efficiently.

This legislation sets uniform financial reporting standards for school systems – further clarifying this process so it can be understood by the residents who depend on timely and accessible information to make informed decisions about their family’s future. This will enable families across the State to understand and track how public dollars are being spent in schools and on their children’s education. This reporting is not new or more extensive than what is already required by law- but it will ensure that we are continuing to be transparent and accountable to County residents. Furthermore, this reporting will enable County leaders to access the information needed to ensure that we are providing necessary investments in education as well as being good stewards of our taxpayer’s dollars.

Baltimore County is committed to the full implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future. In every year of the County Executive’s tenure, Baltimore County has provided record funding above Maintenance of Effort, dedicating almost half of our County budget to education. The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future requires that local school systems provide additional budget information to the Maryland State Department of Education and the Blueprint Implementation board. As a shared fiduciary partner, Baltimore County respectfully requests the same level of fiscal transparency provided to State agencies. Fiscal transparency will allow County government to make informed budget decisions and optimize the use of County resources. SB 1026 will allow the State to continue empowering our families, investing in our students, and delivering on the promise of the Blueprint in every community. Baltimore County supports the amendment proposed by the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) that will allow Counties to more informatively budget and best invest in education.

Accordingly, Baltimore County urges a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report on SB 1026 from the House Appropriations Committee. For more information, please contact Jenn Aiosa, Director of Government Affairs at jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov.