



**Testimony in SUPPORT of
Senate Bill 1026: Transparency in Education Spending Act**

Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Position: Favorable

March 6, 2024

Strong Schools Maryland envisions a Maryland with equitable student outcomes created through empowered stakeholder engagement. With record breaking investments in the education system, accountability and transparency of Blueprint funds and their alignment with their intended goals is a necessity. **As a result, Strong Schools Maryland supports SB 1026.**

Senate Bill 1026:

- Requires that an approved county budget be posted on the county board’s public-facing website, in an easily identifiable location. Transparency is a step towards meaningful public engagement that will help local governments be more responsive to their communities’ needs and improve the government’s trust within the community¹;
- Provides clarity and flexibility in how a local board of education can transfer funds between major categories of its annual budget allowing the board to make decisions and act in the best interest of the students in the county; and
- Directs the State Board of Education to create a uniform reporting system that increases transparency and timely reporting of education-related financial information allowing the public to more meaningfully and easily engage in their county’s budget process.

Currently, in codified Blueprint law, the AIB and MSDE are to collaborate to implement a “financial management system and student data system” capable of tracking and analyzing progress towards Blueprint goals. Despite being the third year since the passage of the Blueprint, there has been no proof or update from the AIB, the leading Blueprint implementation agency, that this important provision of the law is being carried out. As a result, the public has little to no access to transparent, user-friendly fiscal accountability regarding Blueprint implementation.

The proposed legislation reinforces Blueprint law and ensures that Maryland’s school systems and the public are equipped with the most up-to-date financial information and systems to make World-Class schools in Maryland a reality.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 1026.

For more information, contact Riya Gupta at riya@strongschoolsmaryland.org.

¹ [Government Finance Officers Association](#)