



February 22, 2024

Dear Chairman Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and the Education, Energy, and Environment Committee,

Mr. Chair and committee members, I am Melissa Shindel, and I am here on behalf of principals across the State of Maryland to urge favorable passage of Senate Bill 598. First and foremost, I am the proud principal of Glenwood Middle School in Howard County, Maryland. I have been an administrator in both Prince George's County Public Schools and the Howard County Public School System, have been the principal of four very different schools, and this is my 15th year as a middle school principal.

As school principals, we have firsthand experience with the day-to-day operations of schools. Our perspective is global; we have a keen understanding of the complex inner workings of a school community, which balances the whole needs of children with the implementation of educational decisions and policies. We make hundreds - if not thousands - of decisions each day, and we understand the opportunities and challenges associated with implementing new initiatives, mandated policies, and exciting opportunities at the school level. Our experiences and perspectives consider all voices - not only those of school leaders, but also those of teachers, students, parents, support staff, and community stakeholders.

Principals are charged with implementing the policies, programs and initiatives of the State Board of Education (in addition to those of federal, state and local Boards and legislators). We ensure compliance. Accountability falls on our shoulders. We ensure our teachers and students are prepared, and we do everything we can to ensure the highest levels and success and achievement for our children. Having a principal on the State Board of Education brings our breadth and depth of experience into critical decisions that are impacting our schools, teachers, administrators, communities and most of all - our students. Our voice and perspective can only help strengthen the multitude of programs and initiatives in our schools that will ultimately make public education in Maryland *world class*.

If we are truly committed to providing the very best for our children, then It is crucial that a principal have a position on the Maryland State Board of Education, and I urge favorable passage of Senate Bill 598. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Melissa Shindel