

March 29, 2023

The Honorable Brian Feldman
Chair, Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: House Bill (HB) 119 – County Boards of Education – Curriculum Guides and Course of Study – Requirements

Dear Chair Feldman,

The State Board of Education (State Board) respectfully submits this letter to the committee regarding **House Bill (HB) 119, County Boards of Education – Curriculum Guides and Course of Study – Requirements**. While the State Board appreciates the interest and support in authorizing additional authority over curriculum throughout the State, the State Board **opposes** this bill because we believe it is unnecessary.

HB 119 would significantly alter the process for the development of curriculum in the State of Maryland and would potentially have the unintended consequence of upending the longstanding and collaborative relationship between the Maryland State Board of Education, the Maryland State Department of Education, local school systems, and local superintendents.

The State Board has significant concerns about provisions in HB 119 requiring the State Superintendent to withhold 10% of State funding budgeted for the current fiscal year from local school systems if it is determined by the State Superintendent that “every element of the policy and guidelines established by the State Board” is not followed.

The State Superintendent of Schools, Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), and the State Board have established processes and relationships for the development and adoption of regulations, curricular frameworks and guidelines with our local education agencies and stakeholders in the State. The bill does not allow for necessary flexibility to address complex situations and circumstances that may arise because of policies and guidelines adopted by the State Board.

Additionally, the State Board holds that the appropriate withholding authority is already provided by statute in section §2–303 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, which states that:

“If an educational institution, a county board, or a nonpublic prekindergarten program, or nonpublic school subject to the requirements of § 26–704 of this article violates any of these provisions, the State Superintendent, by written notice, may require the State Comptroller to withhold from that institution, board, program, or school:

- (i) All or any part of an appropriation made by the General Assembly; and
- (ii) All or any part of any other payment from funds budgeted by the State.”

The withholding language in the bill could create unnecessary and duplicative statutory processes.

The State Board remains laser focused on working towards successful implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future and our Strategic Plan to deliver dramatic transformative change to Maryland’s educational system and improve educational opportunities and outcomes for all of Maryland’s nearly 900,000 students.

Educational transformation is a people process that requires maximum collaboration and cooperation among the key stakeholders in order to be successful. The State Board remains committed to working with all partners to carry out necessary transformational changes to our State’s educational system.

As a result of these considerations, the State Board asks the committee to deliver an unfavorable report on **House Bill 119**. The State Board is always open to collaboration with the committee to address critical issues facing our State’s school system, and welcomes further conversations. If you have any questions, please contact Zach Hands, Executive Director of the State Board, at zachary.hands1@maryland.gov or at 443-915-6094.

Sincerely,



Clarence C. Crawford
President, Maryland State Board of Education