

JACK BAILEY
Legislative District 29
Calvert and St. Mary's Counties

Judicial Proceedings Committee



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
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September 24, 2021

Chair Shanaysha Sauls
PUP Building, 4th Floor
1000 Hilltop Circle
Baltimore, MD 21250

Vice Chair Paul Pinsky
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 West Wing
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Dr. Sauls and Senator Pinsky,

I am writing to express my serious concern regarding the lack of representation from Southern Maryland on the Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB). As you are aware, the AIB was created to have authority to oversee local school systems. As part of the establishment of the AIB, the Accountability and Implementation Board Nominating Committee was tasked with nominating members for the AIB. In this process, your Committee was required to consider a number of factors in selecting members, including geographic diversity. For that reason, I was disappointed to learn that your Committee has not nominated any members from Southern Maryland. I strongly believe that, for the geographic diversity of our State to be appropriately reflected in the membership of this Board, the AIB should include a member from Southern Maryland who understands our unique needs and circumstances.

I represent two of the three Southern Maryland counties, and have seen the high-quality education offered by the school systems in both St. Mary's County and Calvert County. I feel that the successful models that these school systems offer would be very beneficial to the AIB, as they provide a different perspective which is critical to addressing the needs of students from different backgrounds around our State. St. Mary's and Calvert counties have both also consistently maintained some of the highest graduation rates in the State. In particular, these school systems have had to address the specific needs and challenges of more rural communities. St. Mary's County Public Schools provide an outstanding example of a school system that has faced and worked through many of these challenges and that has been very successful in educating students, particularly during the pandemic when other school systems have struggled.

As the Blueprint for Maryland's Future is implemented rural systems will face issues not experienced by larger systems in the state. The significant expansion of Pre-Kindergarten to include private providers meeting stringent quality standards accounting for at least 30% of eligible providers by 2022-2023 and rising to 50% by 2026-2027 is one such challenge. Additionally, rural systems such as those I represent already face difficulties in recruiting, hiring, and retaining certificated and professional staff. These challenges will intensify as systems must add significant numbers of staff mandated by the Blueprint legislation. It is imperative that the AIB have a member who is attuned to our unique challenges and prepared to specifically address those issues in their oversight role.

If the AIB is intended to provide oversight over all of Maryland's school systems, then it is imperative that its membership understand the needs of students from all parts of our State. It is my priority as a Senator to ensure that Southern Maryland is well-represented and has a strong voice at all levels of State government. I am confident that a member from our region would provide an important perspective as the AIB pursues its objectives. Therefore, I ask that your Committee does everything within its power to see that a member from Southern Maryland is nominated to serve on the AIB.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Bailey', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke at the end.

Senator Jack Bailey
District 29
Calvert and St. Mary's Counties