STRONG SCHOOLS MARYLAND'S
2023 TOUR FOR MARYLAND'S FUTURE ENGAGEMENT & IMPACT REPORT
OCTOBER 2023

S T R O N G SCHOOLS MARYLAND

Strong Schools Maryland hosted a series of events across the state as a part of our 2023 Tour for Maryland's Future this summer. This report outlines the highlights and major findings from our time in the community.

Our goals for the summer:

1. **ENGAGE and EXPAND** our statewide network of students, educators, parents, and community members.

2. **EDUCATE** communities about the Blueprint for Maryland's Future and organizing efforts.

3. **ELEVATE** regional and statewide education issues impacting communities around Maryland and community-based solutions for the upcoming legislative session.

ENGAGEMENT STATISTICS

6 tour stops across MD

363 community school visits

891 doors knocked

291 participants attended

Participants reflected on education-related issues that were most impacting their communities. Issues varied based on region and relation to education, but consistent themes emerged throughout the state:

ISSUE DEVELOPMENT

THEMES	SPECIFIC ISSUES
Blueprint-related issues	• Pre-kindergarten: *availability of spots, physical space and staffing* • Teacher/staff issues: *teacher pipeline, teacher preparation programs, staff diversity* • Community Schools: *coordination of services and partnerships* • Immigrant education: *engagement and mental health services*
Overall education concerns	• Knowledge of available resources: *communication with students and families about what resources exist and are provided* • Engagement: *local to state level engagement with communities* • Safety: *violence, police presence in schools, discipline* • Arts education: *arts prioritization in college and career readiness* • Child care: *staffing, obtaining certification*
Systemic Issues	• Affordable housing: *supports for students facing homelessness* • Food security: *basic need that is necessary for success in school* • Funding: *long term funding for the Blueprint and education and transparency in the use of funds*

MOST PRESSING ISSUES CURRENTLY:

1. Basic needs
2. Literacy
3. Safety
4. Engagement
5. Knowledge of resources

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Participants developed policy statements for the Maryland General Assembly based on the 5 priority issue areas. Throughout all the issue areas, policies developed relied on the following:

Basic Needs/Supports: Students require basic conditions to be met to allow them to be successful in school and life. Access to food and housing were two basic needs brought up as significant educational barriers.

Service Availability and Knowledge: Communities want more resources to be available to students and school communities and for general knowledge of the availability of those resources to be pervasive.

Blueprint Advocacy and Commitment: Many Marylanders are unaware of the Blueprint. Lack of education from official channels stops communities from advocating and demanding transparency from their governments.