



February 17, 2020

Thank you, Chairpersons and Committee Members, for allowing me the opportunity to testify in favor of SB1000/HB1300 with amendments. My name is McKenzie Allen and I am the executive director of the Maryland Alliance of Public Charter Schools (also known as MAPCS). MAPCS is a nonprofit organization comprised of charter school operators from across the state. We represent over 21,000 students in 45 schools over six districts.

Our public charter schools, like all public schools, are extremely excited about the opportunity to have the sustainable, reliable, and equitable funding that HB1300/SB1000 provides in Kirwan. In previous testimony, we requested that the final bill(s) support all types of public schools. We wanted to make sure the money flows directly to kids and schools, while protecting the autonomies of individual school-based decision-making. While we see detail in how the money will flow to schools for their various programs, we do see the need for amendments to support that money getting to public charters schools in the intended way and protecting their autonomies and accountability.

Below are our amendments to the favorable HB1300/SB1000:

Concentration of Poverty (COP)

Strike “GRANT” and substitute “AMOUNT” on page 30, lines 19 and 27 (existing law); page 32, line 10 (existing law) and 16; page 34, lines 21, 23, 26, and 29; page 35, lines 13 and 27; and page 36, lines 2, 5, 6, 9 and 11.

Explanation: The money is not awarded in the style of a grant. Therefore, the title should not include the word “grant”. Grant suggests the money can be withheld until the school meets certain criteria. The COP money is awarded at 100% to the school that meets eligibility to execute a plan in accordance with HB1300/SB1000.

On page 32, in line 25, in line 25, after “(iii)”, insert “1.”; in line 26, after “schools” insert “EXCEPT PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS”; after line 29, insert:

“A COUNTY BOARD MAY REQUIRE A PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL TO PROVIDE A PLAN THAT ENSURES THAT THE REQUIREMENTS OF PARAGRAPHS (2) THROUGH (8) OF THIS SUBSECTION ARE MET BUT MAY NOT EXPEND THE FUNDS DISTRIBUTED BY THE STATE UNDER THIS PARAGRAPH FOR THE CHARTER SCHOOL.”

Explanation: Public charter schools are autonomous and exempt from programming from the District and must be allowed to “buy back” services if they so choose. Because of this, we ask that public charter schools remain exempt from the districtwide plan that the board develops on the dissemination and requirements of the Concentration of Poverty money. Instead, public charter schools receive 100% of the money they are eligible for and each public charter school executes a plan of their choosing in accordance with HB1300/SB1000. Public charter schools can be included in the count of 40 schools in the District or County eligible for Concentration of Poverty.

Transitional Supplemental Instruction

On page 39, in line 22, after “MEANS” insert “THE FOLLOWING AMOUNT FOR EACH STRUGGLING LEARNER”; on page 40, in line 20, after “AMOUNT”, insert “FOR EACH STRUGGLING LEARNER IN THE SCHOOL”.

Minimum School Funding

On page 49, after line 24, insert:

“(3) THE AMOUNT DISTRIBUTED BY A COUNTY BOARD TO A PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL UNDER PARAGRAPH (1) SHALL BE EQUAL TO THE MINIMUM SCHOOL FUNDING FOR THE APPLICABLE PROGRAM UNDER THIS SECTION AFTER THE APPLICATION OF ANY ADMINISTRATIVE FEES CHARGED TO THE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL.”

Explanation: This is to ensure the minimum sums for the programming areas, particularly those for PreK and Concentration of Poverty, are awarded at the full minimum allowed by this law. If Counties and Districts are required to pass 100% of the funding on to the school for PreK and COP, the charter school administrative fee cannot be charged to this money when being passed to public charter schools. We want to uphold the intention of the law and equity of distribution of funds. The other programming items are funded at a minimum of 75% to the school, therefore a minimum of 75% will also be passed to the public charter school.

Accountability and Implementation Board

On page 69, in line 10, insert “(III)” after “(2)”; after line 13, insert:

“(II) EACH LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM THAT INCLUDES PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS SHALL ACCOUNT FOR ITS DISTRIBUTION OF SCHOOL-LEVEL FUNDING TO PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS IN ITS REPORT UNDER SUBPARAGRAPH (B) TO DEMONSTRATE COMPLIANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF §5-234 OF THIS TITLE.”

Explanation: This would require Districts and Counties to provide documentation to the accountability board/MSDE system created by this bill to report how they are funding the public charter schools in the Districts/Counties. This would help provide clarity and transparency that the funds were being equitably distributed with the intent of the law HB1300/SB1000 to public charter schools. Since charter schools are funded commensurately to traditional public schools, a separate level of accountability is required.

Thank you,



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