

Written Testiony - HB 394.pdf

Uploaded by: Reusing, Grace

Position: FAV



POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION

Bill: House Bill 394- Fees for Summer School Courses – Prohibition

Position: Support

Date: January 17, 2021

The Maryland Office of the Public Defender respectfully requests that the Committee issue a favorable report on House Bill 394.

Under this legislation, a student would not be charged a fee or tuition to attend summer school if the student: 1) attends school in the district; 2) requires the course in order to graduate; and 3) previously took the course and did not successfully complete or receive credit for the course.

Charging fees or tuition to attend summer school is especially harmful to indigent students. Over half of the local school districts within the state of Maryland charge tuition, which places summer school out of the reach of our clients. The sad fact is that all of our juvenile clients live in poverty and their family's inability to pay summer school tuition hinders their ability to graduate. Access to a public school graduation should remain free at all times of the year, including the summer months. Without these required courses needed for graduation, students are ultimately unable to earn a high school diploma. HB 394 will help end the cycle of poverty perpetuated by lack of educational access.

In short, summer school enrollment fees guarantee that indigent students in the state of Maryland are discriminated against solely because of their family's income. For these reasons, the Maryland Office of the Public Defender urge a favorable report on HB 394.

HB 394 - Public Schools – Fees for Summer School C

Uploaded by: Zwerling, Samantha

Position: FAV

Testimony SUPPORT of House Bill 394
Public Schools – Fees for Summer School Courses – Prohibition

Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
March 24, 2021

Samantha Zwerling
Government Relations

The Maryland State Education Association supports HB 394. The legislation would prohibit LEAs from charging summer school fees of students who meet certain conditions.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our 896,837 students for careers and jobs of the future. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3 million-member National Education Association (NEA).

Under this legislation, a student would be eligible for this exemption if they: 1) attend school in the district; 2) require a summer school course in order to graduate; and 3) previously took said course and did not successfully complete it.

For many students who fall into this category, paying to repeat a needed summer school course could be cost prohibitive, particularly if the student comes from a family with a low-income. One's family's financial limitations should not serve as a barrier to their high school graduation, especially after encountering academic obstacles due to the pandemic. Every effort should be made on the part of the school and the district to ensure that all students successfully complete their high school careers.

Currently, the cost for taking a summer school course varies from district to district, with some charging hundreds of dollars per course. Some offer discounted tuition for students who are FARMS eligible, which can serve a tremendous help. Even still, the discounted cost could remain a financial hardship for too many families.

As educators and LEAs are working hard to make up for the learning loss caused by the pandemic, the General Assembly should also consider the cost to LEAs when implementing this necessary legislation. The State should make every effort to help keep these budgets whole during this time.

Ensuring that Maryland's students receive a free public education is the responsibility of the state legislature and the taxpayers. **MSEA urges a Favorable Report on House Bill 394.**

HB0394 Howard Co BOE Testimony 032421 for EHEA - S

Uploaded by: Howard County, BOE

Position: FWA



**Board of Education of Howard County
Testimony Submitted to the Maryland Senate,
Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
March 18, 2021**

**Board of Education
of Howard County**

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**HB0394: FAVORABLE W/AMENDMENTS
Public Schools - Fees for Summer School Courses – Prohibition**

The Board of Education of Howard County (the Board) supports **HB0394 Public Schools - Fees for Summer School Courses - Prohibition** with amendments to address ambiguous language and logistical roadblocks to accomplishing the intent of the bill.

HCPSS offers summer programs to enable students to participate in interventions, take challenging courses at the elementary, middle, and high school levels to advance their studies, as well as an opportunity for students to recover credit. During a typical summer, approximately 50 students enroll in credit recovery courses, with a discounted tuition cost of \$50 per credit recovery course. Approximately 400 students retake an original credit course in which they did not earn credit at a cost of \$550 per course. Tuition reduction is applied automatically for students with an active Free and Reduced Meals (FARMS) status, with an application process for additional financial assistance.

As written, HB0394 is unclear on how a course for which a tuition waiver is required would be identified. Specifically, in Howard County, when students register for summer courses, it does not indicate if they have previously taken and/or received credit for the course or are first-time course takers. Additionally, as students have the option to take more courses than the number required for graduation, it would be difficult to distinguish when a summer school course fits the parameters of the bill as “credit for the course is a high school graduation requirement.”

To this end, suggested amendments include limiting payment for courses to credit recovery courses whose express purpose are to support students who have already taken, but did not earn credit in a course. The suggested amendment would only apply the waiver to students needing the credit to graduate imminently as there are other opportunities for students to recover credits throughout their academic career through existing programs. With these changes, HCPSS believes the language would more precisely meet the intent of the bill – to reduce barriers to graduation for students who find themselves in need of credits they previously attempted when nearing graduation.

In particular, the Board recommends adding “credit recovery” in line 16 on page 1, and “that summer” in line 2 on page 2, and striking lines 4 and 5 on page 2. The amended bill would read:

A LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM MAY NOT CHARGE A STUDENT A FEE FOR ENROLLMENT IN A CREDIT RECOVERY SUMMER SCHOOL COURSE IF:

(1) THE STUDENT ATTENDS A SCHOOL IN THE LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM; AND

(2) CREDIT FOR THE COURSE IS REQUIRED FOR GRADUATION THAT SUMMER FROM A HIGH SCHOOL IN THE LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM; ~~AND~~

~~(3) THE STUDENT PREVIOUSLY TOOK THE COURSE, BUT DID NOT SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE OR RECEIVE CREDIT FOR THE COURSE.~~

Further, even with the narrowed focus under the above amendments, sufficient funding to cover the cost of the delivery of services by the local school system - similar to per pupil funding for the provision of traditional school services - should be covered under the bill. Summer courses are not required offerings, therefore the only way tuition waivers are feasible is through the collection of equivalent fees from our funding authorities. Without such funding, school systems will be forced to cut, or significantly reduce, other programming when making budgetary decisions.

For these reasons, we urge a FAVORABLE report of HB0394 from this Committee with the above amendments.

HB0394- MCPS UNFAV 032421.pdf

Uploaded by: Susskind, Danielle

Position: UNF



MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Expanding Opportunity and Unleashing Potential

850 Hungerford Drive ♦ Room 123 ♦ Rockville, Maryland 20850

BILL: HB0394
TITLE: Public Schools - Fees for Summer School Courses - Prohibition
DATE: 3/24/2021
POSITION: OPPOSE
COMMITTEE: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs
CONTACT: Danielle M. Susskind, Coordinator, Legislative Affairs
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The Montgomery County Board of Education (Board) **opposes** HB0394.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, MCPS supported waiving a certain portion of student fees for summer school courses on a sliding scale based on need. In the summer of 2020, as a result of the pandemic, MCPS provided summer school programs to all students who needed recovery at no cost and will likely do the same in the summer of 2021.

Prior to the pandemic (FY 2020) in MCPS:

- Student tuition for summer school was \$300 (full cost). Waiver rates were \$120 and \$85 for general education classes and \$140 and \$40 for ESOL classes, based on financial need.
- Operating expenses anticipated for summer school for FY 2020: \$3,331,035
- Revenue expected from tuition paid for credit bearing courses: \$884,294
- \$596,810 – total amount waived based on reduced fee eligibility

MCPS believes this should be a local decision and determined by individual school boards based on their own needs and data.

For these reasons, the Board **Opposes** this legislation and urges a unfavorable report.