

# KIPP:Forward

March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022

To members of the Maryland Senate:

I am writing on behalf of KIPP Baltimore to advocate for and support SB 501 outlining changes to the award timeline for the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC).

I have worked in Maryland with college-enrolled students for seven years. In that time our organization has supported hundreds of students who receive funding from MHEC. This program has been instrumental in giving Maryland students access to higher education, while also providing a sustainable financial pathway to graduation.

This funding is critical for students to persist in college to completion and achieve their higher education aspirations. Our organization, KIPP Baltimore, supports the earlier award date of April 15th, but we recommend that this bill requires that all eligible Guaranteed Access Grant (GA) students are awarded, and that funds are held in reserve for GA applicants who submit their verification documents by the current deadline of April 1. *The change in award date should not penalize any GA applicant.* As the program currently stands, the GA and Educational Assistance Grant (EA) are awarded out of the same fund, notifying EA students of their award earlier should not be able to pull funding from GA recipients.

We believe that notifying EA and GA recipients earlier of their award status is critical for students and their families as they consider their best financial fit college. Therefore, KIPP Baltimore supports SB 501 with the inclusion of the amendments listed above.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brianna Callahan', with a stylized, cursive script.

Brianna Callahan, MSW  
Manager of Alumni Persistence  
KIPP Baltimore