



**Board of Education of Howard County
Testimony Submitted to the Maryland Senate,
Finance Committee
February 9, 2023**

**Board of Education
of Howard County**

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**SB0206: UNFAVORABLE
Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size**

The Board of Education of Howard County (the Board) opposes **SB0206 Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size**.

Under current law, a county board and bargaining unit may not negotiate the school calendar, the maximum number of students assigned to a class, or any matter that is precluded by other applicable statutes. On request, parties must meet and negotiate about salaries, wages, hours, and other working conditions, including procedures regarding employee transfers and assignments and the structure, time, and manner of the access of the exclusive representative to a public school employer's new employee processing. Additionally, negotiations may include other matters that are mutually agreed to by the county board and the bargaining unit.

SB0206 would remove "maximum number of students assigned to a class" from existing statute, making it a matter that could be brought forth if mutually agreed to by both parties. While the changes made under this bill would not require school systems to begin to negotiate class size, this should remain an exemption to put this matter squarely in the authority of the local board. School systems need flexibility in class size to meet local personnel and budgetary needs that account for fluctuations in class size averages as well as vacancies. Beyond workforce fluctuations, class sizes also impact physical space needs and support/administrative staffing when additional classrooms are needed. Currently, HCPSS utilizes target student to teacher ratios and monitors these annually.

For these reasons, we urge a UNFAVORABLE report of SB0206 from this Committee.