



# Maryland Education Coalition



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HB0352 & SB0362 - Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2024  
House Appropriations & Senate Budget and Taxation Committees  
POSITION – Informational

MEC recognizes the fiscal challenges the State of Maryland and some local jurisdictions are currently have generated less revenue than may be needed to support all public services. Therefore, we are not asking for any new amendments to the budget this year. Instead, we have the following requests and urge the general assembly to make it a priority.

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future Fund Projected Revenues and Expenditures reports that the projected Closing Fund Balance for FY 2026 will have a deficit of about -\$429 million rising to about -\$2.5 billion by FY2027! This requires Maryland to identify significant new revenue to meet the promise to public school students and families.

Therefore, **MEC urges the General Assembly to amend Senate Bill 360 & House Bill 350, Sections R00A03.04 Aid to Non–Public Schools - \$6,040,000, pages 105-106 and Section R00A03.05 Broadening Options and Opportunities - \$9,000,000, pages 106-110 and reallocate these funds for public school health and safety services statewide.**

MEC supports adequate, equitable investment of public money for public and approved private special needs schools only without discrimination still reportedly used subtly in some nonpublic schools. MEC opposes the use of any public operating or capital funds for vouchers, tax credits, or tax subsidies for all other non-public, private, parochial, or home schools with no publicly reports of how all students perform academically compared to all public school students using the same or similar data and forms of measurement.

MEC supports healthy lifestyles for staff, students and families including physical activity, behavioral, emotional, mental health, and instruction. We expect all schools to meet National School Nutrition Standards. All students must have access to social-emotional and behavioral education and services as well as regular physical activity. We also supports the allocation of funds that will help to improve school climate, health, and safety, as determined school-by-school. We work to eliminate the “School to Prison Pipeline.” Evidence shows that too many children continue to be pushed out of school. These children are disproportionately students of color, lower-income, students with disabilities or gifted and talented. Once suspended, these children are often denied crucial instruction time and wrap-around services, creating a significant risk of disengaging from school, dropping out, acting inappropriately, or illegally.

MEC believes the State must provide increased financial and programmatic incentives for local systems to develop early intervention strategies and alternative programs for low-achieving, chronically absent, at-risk, or behaviorally challenged students. Maryland cannot afford the loss of human potential, which results from unacceptably high alternative program enrollment or dropout rates within all student groups, especially disproportionate numbers of lower income, special needs, students of color or Gifted & Talented.

Therefore, **we urge the General Assembly to amend sections R00A03.04 and R00A03.05 and reallocate the \$15,040,000 to enhance school health and safety programs using evidence-based practices statewide.**

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ACLU of MD, Arts Education in Maryland Schools, Arts Every Day, Attendance Works, CASA, Children’s Behavioral Health Coalition, Free State PTA, Decoding Dyslexia of Maryland, Disability Rights Maryland, League of Women Voters of MD, Let Them See Clearly, Maryland Coalition for Gifted & Talented Ed, Maryland Alliance for Racial Equity in Education, Maryland Coalition for Community Schools, Maryland Down Syndrome Advocacy Coalition, MSC-NAACP, Maryland Out of School Time Network, Maryland School Psychologists' Association, Parent Advocacy Consortium, Public Justice Center, School Social Workers of MD, Strong Schools Maryland, Kalman R. Hettleman, David Hornbeck, Rick Tyler, Jr., Sharon Rubinstein