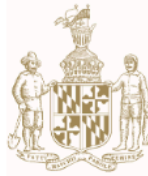**KAREN LEWIS YOUNG**
Legislative District 3
Frederick County
———
Committee on Education, Energy,
and the Environment

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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

The Honorable Guy Guzzone, Chair   January 31st, 2024
The Honorable Jim Rosapepe, Vice Chair
Budget and Taxation Committee
Maryland Senate
Annapolis, MD 21401

Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and esteemed members of this committee,

This bill, SB385 Funding for General Education Programs - Definition Alterations, will establish a workgroup to study the gaps in funding that occur in school systems across the state due to the growth in their enrollment rates. The original intent of this bill was to refine the education funding formula. How exactly that needs to be done is still a question to be answered. I also recognize a major fiscal note at this time would be an insurmountable challenge. I amended the bill so that, in partnership with stakeholders, we can determine the best path toward fair funding.

Every year, the attendance snapshot is taken on September 30th but the funding due each school system, based on that snapshot, is not disbursed until July 1st the following year. The problem is that some school systems are growing at rates that leave counties reeling to pick up the slack. In Frederick County, our school system has grown an average of more than 3% over the past 5 years leaving 782 children without state funding. Last school year, in Montgomery County, that number was 2,323 children. Prince George's County public school attendance grew by 2,366 children last school year.

The equity of education in our state is threatened if we do nothing. Whole schools of children across our state are going unfunded. With a negligible fiscal note, the workgroup will study this pressing issue and share a report before next session. I urge a favorable report.

Sincerely,

Senator Karen Lewis Young