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of Howard County**

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**Board of Education of Howard County
Testimony Submitted to the Maryland Senate,
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
March 5, 2025**

SB0506: UNFAVORABLE

Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Use of Reimbursement Funds by Schools

The Board of Education of Howard County (the Board) opposes **Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Use of Reimbursement Funds by Schools** as it has the potential to divert school system funds used for important student services.

SB0506 initially defines “providers” as school audiologists, school psychologists, school speech pathologists, and any other health care practitioner who provides services to a student in a school setting. The bill goes on to require all local school systems to use funds received for services provided in schools to a student enrolled in Medicaid or the Maryland Children’s Health Insurance Program (MCHP) to provide: additional positions for providers; paid internships for students seeking to become providers; and stipends for providers, including providers working in low-performing schools, that are designed to address problems in provider recruitment and retention. The Maryland State Department of Education must adopt regulations to implement the bill.

The intent of SB0506 to expand the available service providers in schools through investments in recruitment of future providers as well as retention for existing providers is supported by staff. The mandate on the specific uses of Medicaid funds under the bill, however, limits flexibility to meet student needs. The [2024 fiscal and policy analysis](#) on this bill noted “local school system expenditures likely increase beginning in fiscal 2025 to replace funding for programs that previously used Medicaid or MCHP funds.” Additional investments not allowable under SB0506 for instance include administrative costs for coordinating and billing services as well as equipment and technology used for both students and staff when providing services. While experiencing a shortage of providers, the bill also hinders the ability of the school system to use funds for positions that directly support special education students such as temporary employees or other contractual needs to meet service obligations.

For these reasons, we urge an UNFAVORABLE report on SB0506 from this Committee.