



# MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

*Expanding Opportunity and Unleashing Potential*

15 West Gude Drive ♦ Suite 100 ♦ Rockville, Maryland 20850

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BILL: HB 689

TITLE: Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Use of Reimbursement Funds by Schools

DATE: February 21, 2025

POSITION: Oppose

COMMITTEE: Ways and Means

CONTACT: Patricia Ursprung, Coordinator, Legislative Affairs

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The Montgomery County Board of Education opposes House Bill 689.

This bill would place restrictions upon the use of funds the system receives from the Maryland Medical Assistance Program or the Maryland Children’s Health Insurance Program. In Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), Medical Assistance revenue is currently used to fund permanent special education staff members who directly support special education students; central office staff to support monitoring, collecting, and ensuring compliance with Medical Assistance billing regulations; payment of recertification fees for speech pathologists; and funding for university partnerships to create a pipeline for new speech pathologists to be employed by MCPS. MCPS generates approximately \$5.2 million in Medical Assistance revenue annually. Based on the use restrictions in the bill, only about \$2.2 million in services that are currently funded through Medical Assistance funds would be allowable, causing a \$3M shortage in our special education budget. This will have a direct, negative impact our special education students, which is the student population the reimbursement funds are currently used to support and benefit.

The bill also narrowly defines “provider” to include medical providers only, so it excludes special education teachers from the group of employees eligible for the recruitment and retention stipends proposed in the bill. Special education teachers have the same authority to bill Medical Assistance for services they provide, and in fact, services provided by special education teachers make up approximately 75% of MCPS’ reimbursement funds. Not including teachers as providers that are eligible to receive the stipend creates an inequity among employees.

In short, this bill places various restrictions on how school systems can use Medical Assistance reimbursement funds. Schools are in the best position to determine how the funds can be used to best support some of their most vulnerable and at need students. Because this bill removes that ability, the Montgomery County Board of Education opposes this bill.