



MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Expanding Opportunity and Unleashing Potential

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

BILL: Senate Bill 343

TITLE: County Boards of Education – Post College and Career Readiness Pathways – Payment of Costs

DATE: February 18, 2026

POSITION: Support

COMMITTEE: Education, Energy, and the Environment

CONTACT: Patricia Ursprung, Coordinator, Legislative Affairs

The Montgomery County Board of Education supports Senate Bill 343.

This bill authorizes county boards of education to develop and implement income eligibility guidelines for the payment of costs associated with college preparatory programs, such as the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program and Advanced Placement courses.

On August 21, 2025, the Montgomery County Board of Education (Board) adopted a legislative platform that contains priority issues and ongoing concerns. One of the Board's priority issues was to curtail costs associated with Blueprint-required funding of college preparatory programs.

Currently, the Blueprint for Maryland's Future (Blueprint) requires school systems to cover the costs of Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) exams for all students who meet the College and Career Readiness standard. In FY25, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) spent close to \$5 million on AP and IB exams. At that time, the per-exam fees were as follows: \$90 for the AP exam, \$138 for the AP Capstone exam, and \$123 for the IB exam. The cost of each exam increases annually. A portion of the \$5 million was spent on exams that were purchased but never taken because the student either canceled or simply failed to show up for the exam.

Montgomery County is economically diverse. As a result, our schools provide services to families that experience substantial financial need, those who are fully economically stable, and many that fall somewhere in the middle. The Board is committed to making sure all students have access to the educational opportunities contained within the Blueprint and understands that not all families need the same level of support to make access possible. In order to maximize the funds that are allocated to us from our funding partners, the Board supports Senate Bill 343, which would allow



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us to utilize income eligibility guidelines to determine the level of financial support a family could receive in connection with participation in college preparatory programs. Any flexibility would better allow the Board to utilize the limited funds available to support all students attending MCPS. Equitable access to academic programs and opportunities for all students is not achieved through equal financial support to all families.

The Board requests a **favorable** report on Senate Bill 343.