

SENATE BILL 586

F1
SB 769/25 – B&T & EEE

6lr1403
CF HB 704

By: **Senator Guzzone**

Introduced and read first time: February 5, 2026

Assigned to: Budget and Taxation and Education, Energy, and the Environment

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Community Eligibility Provision Expansion Program – Establishment**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing the Community Eligibility Provision Expansion Program
4 in the State Department of Education to provide funding to eligible schools that
5 participate in the federal community eligibility provision of the child nutrition
6 programs; and generally relating to the Community Eligibility Provision Expansion
7 Program.

8 BY adding to

9 Article – Education

10 Section 7–606

11 Annotated Code of Maryland

12 (2025 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

13 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
14 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

15 **Article – Education**

16 **7–606.**

17 (A) IN THIS SECTION, “PROGRAM” MEANS THE COMMUNITY ELIGIBILITY
18 PROVISION EXPANSION PROGRAM.

19 (B) THERE IS A COMMUNITY ELIGIBILITY PROVISION EXPANSION
20 PROGRAM IN THE DEPARTMENT.

21 (C) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ADMINISTER THE PROGRAM.

22 (D) (1) THE PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM IS TO PROVIDE FUNDING IN

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 ACCORDANCE WITH PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION TO ELIGIBLE SCHOOLS
2 THAT PARTICIPATE IN THE FEDERAL COMMUNITY ELIGIBILITY PROVISION OF THE
3 CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS.

4 (2) THE STATE SHALL PAY THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE
5 APPLICABLE FEDERAL PAID REIMBURSEMENT RATE AND THE FEDERAL FREE
6 REIMBURSEMENT RATE, AS SET ANNUALLY BY THE U.S. SECRETARY OF
7 AGRICULTURE UNDER 42 U.S.C. § 1759A.

8 (3) THE FUNDING PROVIDED UNDER THE PROGRAM IS INTENDED TO
9 COMPLEMENT AND NOT REPLACE FEDERAL FUNDS RECEIVED UNDER THE
10 COMMUNITY ELIGIBILITY PROVISION OF THE CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS.

11 (E) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL:

12 (1) DEVELOP A PROCESS FOR COUNTY BOARDS TO PARTICIPATE IN
13 THE PROGRAM BASED ON FUNDING AVAILABILITY;

14 (2) ENSURE THAT PROGRAM FUNDING IS DISTRIBUTED BASED ON
15 THE CONCENTRATION OF POVERTY IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS WITHIN THE JURISDICTION
16 OF EACH COUNTY BOARD;

17 (3) CONSIDER GEOGRAPHIC DIVERSITY IN DETERMINING FUNDING
18 PRIORITIZATION; AND

19 (4) DISTRIBUTE FUNDS TO ELIGIBLE COUNTY BOARDS.

20 (F) FOR FISCAL YEAR 2028 AND EACH FISCAL YEAR THEREAFTER, THE
21 GOVERNOR SHALL INCLUDE AN APPROPRIATION OF \$10,000,000 IN THE ANNUAL
22 BUDGET BILL FOR THE PROGRAM.

23 (G) IT IS THE INTENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY THAT THE STATE, EACH
24 COUNTY BOARD, AND PARTICIPATING NONPUBLIC SCHOOLS MAXIMIZE THE USE OF
25 ALL AVAILABLE FEDERAL AND STATE FUNDS IN CARRYING OUT THE REQUIREMENTS
26 OF THE PROGRAM.

27 (H) (1) ON OR BEFORE JULY 1, 2027, AND EACH JULY 1 THEREAFTER,
28 THE DEPARTMENT SHALL REPORT TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, IN ACCORDANCE
29 WITH § 2-1257 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE, ON THE PROGRAM.

30 (2) THE REPORT REQUIRED UNDER THIS SUBSECTION SHALL
31 INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION FROM EACH LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM:

1 **(I) THE STATUS AND OUTCOMES OF THE PROGRAM; AND**

2 **(II) THE AMOUNT OF SCHOOL MEAL DEBT INCURRED BY**
3 **STUDENTS, DISAGGREGATED BY THE INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL, AND HOW THE LOCAL**
4 **SCHOOL SYSTEM RESOLVED THE DEBT.**

5 **(3) IF ANY SCHOOLS WITHIN A LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM ARE ELIGIBLE**
6 **TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM DUE TO AN IDENTIFIED STUDENT PERCENTAGE**
7 **OF 25% OR GREATER, BUT ELECT NOT TO PARTICIPATE, THE LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM**
8 **SHALL INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IN THE REPORT REQUIRED UNDER**
9 **THIS SUBSECTION:**

10 **(I) THE REASONS THE SCHOOL ELECTED NOT TO PARTICIPATE**
11 **IN THE PROGRAM;**

12 **(II) AN ESTIMATE OF THE NET COST OR SAVINGS TO THE**
13 **SCHOOL IF THE SCHOOL HAD ELECTED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM;**

14 **(III) THE PROJECTED COST OF OPERATING THE PROGRAM IN**
15 **THE SCHOOL; AND**

16 **(IV) THE ANTICIPATED AMOUNT OF FEDERAL**
17 **REIMBURSEMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAM.**

18 **(4) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL PUBLISH THE REPORT REQUIRED**
19 **UNDER THIS SUBSECTION ON ITS WEBSITE IN A SEARCHABLE AND DOWNLOADABLE**
20 **FORMAT, DISAGGREGATED BY LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM AND INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL.**

21 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
22 1, 2026.