

**Testimony in Support with Amendments for Senate Bill 267  
AP Opportunities Act of 2020**

**Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee  
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1:00 PM**

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The Maryland State Education Association supports Senate Bill 267, legislation that creates Advanced Placement (AP) exam fee funding for students with financial needs. This is a good policy proposal that should move forward if done in conjunction with an amendment to SB 190/HB 150, the FY21 Budget Bill and an amendment to SB 267 to make this funding a required appropriation in the future.

This Administration initiative, sadly, is not accounted for in their budget bill. While a budget amendment is not the purview of this committee, clearly a funding source must be identified so that this legislation becomes a reality rather than only existing rhetorically. In conjunction with passing this bill, MSEA suggests adding \$1.1 million for this initiative in the FY21 budget through an equivalent reduction to the governor's allocation for the BOOST voucher program to pay for this needed public school investment.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our 896,837 students for careers and jobs of the future. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3 million-member National Education Association (NEA).

AP exam fees, even reduced by the College Board to \$53 per exam for students with financial needs, can be a barrier to access to participate in an exam that could earn course credits in college. This barrier is real in Maryland. As the policy note points out, while 36% of high school students qualify for free or reduced priced meals (FRPM), only 14% of 110,200 AP exams taken in 2018 were from FRPM qualifying students. A funded AP Opportunities Act will increase this participation rate and, at a minimum, better prepare students for college-level classes and, in the best case scenario, actually earn them credits that could save thousands of dollars in higher education tuition expenses.

Luckily, a majority of school districts in the state already provide this financial benefit with the help of federal funds. This state commitment could fill the void in the districts that don't cover this cost today and will offset the cost for the districts that do, thereby freeing up local resources to help expand other programs or supports in the school.

**The General Assembly can fill the leadership and funding void left in the Administration's FY21 budget proposal by passing Senate Bill 267 and identifying the funds necessary to**



**make it a reality for thousands of students next year and into the future. We urge a favorable report of this bill along with the necessary funding amendments.**