



Board of Education of Howard County
Testimony Submitted to the Maryland House of Delegates,
Appropriations Committee
March 16, 2023



Board of Education
of Howard County

Antonia Watts, *Chair*

Yun Lu, Ph.D., *Vice Chair*

Linfeng Chen, Ph.D.

Jennifer Swickard Mallo

Jacky McCoy

Jolene Mosley

Abisola Ayoola
Student Member

Michael J. Martirano, Ed.D.
*Superintendent
Secretary/Treasurer*

HB0598: FAVORABLE W/AMENDMENTS

Education - Funding for General Education Programs - Definition Alterations

The Board of Education of Howard County (the Board) supports **HB0598 Education - Funding for General Education Programs - Definition Alterations** with amendments to preserve existing statutory authority for school systems to maximize funding to support ongoing fixed costs.

HB0598 alters the “enrollment count” calculation under Education Article §5-201 which is the foundation for school funding on a per pupil basis. Specifically, it deletes the current provision defining “enrollment count” as the greater of the full-time equivalent enrollment (enrollment as of September 30 of the prior year) or the three-year moving average enrollment (average of the three prior years enrollment as of September 30). New language under the bill creates an average enrollment change calculation which takes the prior school year full-time equivalent enrollment minus the difference over the prior three years divided by two, and then adds that to the prior year full-time equivalent enrollment.

The proposed calculation is presumably intended to take into account past trends in school enrollment to inform future enrollment counts given the traditional prior year enrollment lags current year actual counts. While this new calculation could result in a higher enrollment count when the enrollment is growing compared to the enrollment as of September 30 of the prior year, this also means the new calculation could result in lower enrollment counts when populations drop over three years. Because school systems can currently use the greater of full-time equivalent enrollment or the three-year moving average to lessen the burden of swings in enrollment, Howard County Public School System staff and the Board recommend this option remain in statute. Additionally, where the new average enrollment change included in HB0598 has the potential to increase counts when enrollment is trending up, an amendment is recommended that would add this as one of the “greater of” options available to schools.

Thus, lines 2 through 6 on page 3 would read:

[(e)] (F) “Enrollment count” means the greater of:

- (1) The full-time equivalent enrollment;
- (2) The 3-year moving average enrollment; or
- (3) THE SUM OF THE PRIOR SCHOOL YEAR FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT ENROLLMENT AND THE AVERAGE ENROLLMENT CHANGE.

With the above changes, we urge a FAVORABLE report of HB0598 from this Committee.