March 14, 2023

HB1211 - **Education - Compensatory Education - Maryland Neighborhood Tier System Calculation**
House Appropriations Committee, Delegate Barnes-Chair
POSITION: Favorable

The Maryland Education Coalition (MEC) mission is to advocate for adequate funding, equitable policies, and transparent accountability statewide for all public school students in Maryland, regardless of their academic, demographic, economic, or geographic status so each can reach their academic potential.

MEC has continuously been examining the methods used to identify and count the number of lower income students, because the methodology has significant implications for ensuring children have access to high quality academic programs and student services that meet each of their needs. These findings have become more urgent as found within the recently released Maryland Report Card for 2022 compared to the 2019 results.

We have long recognized the limits of the use of FARMs forms alone for data collection. So, we appreciate recent state initiatives that has allowed for the use of Medicaid to count children from low-income families. However, , we remain concerned that the current systems do not provide the full picture, especially for students whose families do not seek assistance from programs.

MEC also recognizes the value of the deep dive MSDE has done in the Reports on Neighborhood Indicators of Poverty and applauds the intent of HB 1211 for translating this work into clear, operable legislation. Using these indicators, Maryland will have a more accurate idea of where students and their families live, the degree of family poverty and the obstacles students must overcome in order to achieve academically at high levels.

We are also pleased HB1211 will not pose a risk for districts to lose funding by comparing the calculation using FARMs forms and Direct Certification versus Neighborhood Indicators defined by Tiers and allowing the method that calculates the greater number of students in poverty to be used for funding purposes.

The tiered system will only allow systems to gain, not lose by creating a more complete analysis of child poverty in Maryland and thus increasing resources where it is need most. MEC also wants to ensure that all current and any additional funding tied to lower income students follows them to the school in which they are enrolled.

In summary, the Maryland Education Coalition supports the intent and potential of HB 1211 to identify and provide more resources to students in need so they can better perform academic and we urge the committee to issue a favorable report for Maryland Neighborhood Tier System Calculation.

ACLU of MD, Arts Education in Maryland Schools, Arts Every Day, Attendance Works, CASA, Children's Behavioral Health Coalition, Free State PTA, Decoding Dyslexia of Maryland, Disability Rights Maryland, League of Women Voters of MD, Let Them See Clearly, Maryland Coalition for Gifted & Talented Ed, Maryland Alliance for Racial Equity in Education, Maryland Coalition for Community Schools, Maryland Down Syndrome Advocacy Coalition, MSC-NAACP, Maryland Out of School Time Network, Maryland School Psychologists' Association, Parent Advocacy Consortium, Public Justice Center, School Social Workers of MD, Strong Schools Maryland, Kalman R. Hettleman, David Hornbeck, Rick Tyler, Jr., Sharon Rubinstein