

BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Brandon M. Scott
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of School Commissioners

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**Testimony of the
Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners
In Opposition of House Bill 598
Education – Funding for General Education Programs –
Definition Alterations**

March 16, 2023

The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners opposes House Bill 598 because it seems to only cater to those school districts that have a growing enrollment and those school districts with declining enrollment may not make out well in this newly crafted definition.

Current law to define enrollment count is the greater of (1) The full-time equivalent enrollment; (2) The 3-year moving average enrollment. The current law takes into consideration of not only declining enrollment but the idea that there is a high mobility rate in some school districts requiring that there be funding available to teach students that come and go through the school system for various societal reasons. This legislation will only benefit those school districts that have historically increasing enrollment.

Any change in how to calculate enrollment should also be strongly reconsidered as we move into the Blueprint for Maryland Future's funding. During the Kirwan Commission meetings and the subsequent discussions on the Blueprint for Maryland Future's legislation, enrollment count and determining concentration of poverty numbers were all considered and any changes needed to the funding formula were made and/or required the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to come back to the General Assembly with an alternative. The only change in the funding formula was provided by MSDE in its final report on the Neighborhood Indicators of Poverty. This final report has shed light on the inadequacy of the current identification for poverty used by the State. The current methodology does not truly reflect poverty, nor concentrations of poverty, as the Blueprint requires the State to do so. Using the methodology that MSDE described in the report would provide for a consistent, more refined mechanism for counting poverty statewide that directs resources to students who need them most.

For the foregoing reasons, the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners opposes House Bill 598 and urges an unfavorable report.

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