



Senate Bill 869

Primary and Secondary Education – Concentration of Poverty

School Grant Program – Eligibility

MACo Position: **SUPPORT WITH
AMENDMENTS**

To: Budget and Taxation and Education,
Energy, and the Environment Committees

Date: March 7, 2023

From: Brianna January and Michael Sanderson

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS SB 869 WITH AMENDMENTS**. The bill as drafted would expedite the phased-in expansion of eligibility for Concentration of Poverty funding under the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future (“The Blueprint”) starting in fiscal year 2024 for the personnel and per pupil grants under Concentration of Poverty funding. MACo supports amendments framing this potentially costly mandate on school systems and county governments to be supported by state funds, if enacted.

The Blueprint provides a phased-in approach to expanding school eligibility for Concentration of Poverty funding, allowing county boards of education and local governments – as fiduciary partners – appropriate time to plan for doing so. SB 869 would expedite this phase-in for the coming year, FY24, which will affect the State budget plan already proposed, but also county budgets currently amidst preparation.

Currently, counties are (by a formula determined in the Blueprint legislation) subject to providing a local share to schools receiving Concentration of Poverty. Counties required to do so could change in the future, however, with additional jurisdictions having to shoulder a portion of the funding for Concentration of Poverty grants. SB 869 would potentially place a costly mandate on school systems and county governments to carry out this expedited state policy ahead of the previously agreed upon phase-in schedule of The Blueprint.

Were the Committee to agree to expedite the expansion of Concentration of Poverty grant eligibility, counties believe the bill should ensure that the State pays the full share of the additional grant funding for the newly eligible schools added under the bill. Without State support, counties would have no choice but to fund this unplanned mandate. Accordingly, MACo urges a report of **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** for SB 869 to provide State funding to support any change in State policy from this or similar proposals.