

BILL: Senate Bill 869
TITLE: Primary and Secondary Education – Concentration of Poverty School Grant Program – Eligibility
POSITION: SUPPORT
DATE: March 7, 2023
COMMITTEES: Education, Energy, and the Environment
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The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) supports Senate Bill 869, because it would accelerate the full implementation of both the per pupil and personnel grants provided to community schools.

The Kirwan Commission recommended that significantly more resources be directed to the students who need it the most, including through the expansion of community schools. The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future Act added a concentrated poverty weight to the funding formula to support intensive services, for students and their families to enable them to succeed in school, that are coordinated and able to meet the additional needs of students in schools located in distressed communities. In addition, the Blueprint added categorical funding amounts for each school with concentrated poverty to be used to establish or enhance community schools and establish or enhance school health and behavioral services.

Specifically, The Blueprint phases in the mandate to provide a fixed amount for each school that meets a 55% threshold of students living in poverty. This fixed funding is to be used to provide a community schools coordinator and a health services practitioner, who may work under a school health services program, school-based health center, or community-partnered school behavioral health services program. In addition to this fixed amount of funding, there is also an additional per pupil amount for each student enrolled at the school.

This per pupil funding (in combination with the per pupil funding enhancements provided through the compensatory education funding formula) is used to provide programs and services identified in a school’s needs assessment. Examples of such services include:

- Additional extended learning time including before and after school, summer, and extended school year;
- Additional social workers, counselors, psychologists, and restorative practice coaches;
- Vision and dental care services, and physical wellness including providing food for in-school and out-of-school time and linkages to community providers;
- Behavioral health services such as mental health practitioners and providing professional development to provide trauma-informed interventions; and
- Family and community engagement and supports including informing parents of academic course offerings, opportunities for children, and available social services as well as educating families on how to monitor a child’s learning.

MABE supports Senate Bill 869 because it would achieve the intended 55% poverty threshold sooner, thereby providing more schools with state funding and more students and families with critically needed community school services that much sooner.

For these reasons, MABE requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 869.