



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Jessica Fitzwater
County Executive

SB 0385 – Education – Funding for General Education Programs – Definition Alterations

DATE: January 31, 2024
COMMITTEE: Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
POSITION: Favorable with Amendments
FROM: The Office of Frederick County Executive Jessica Fitzwater

As the County Executive of Frederick County, I urge the committee to give **SB 385 – Education – Funding for General Education Programs – Definition Alterations** as amended a favorable report.

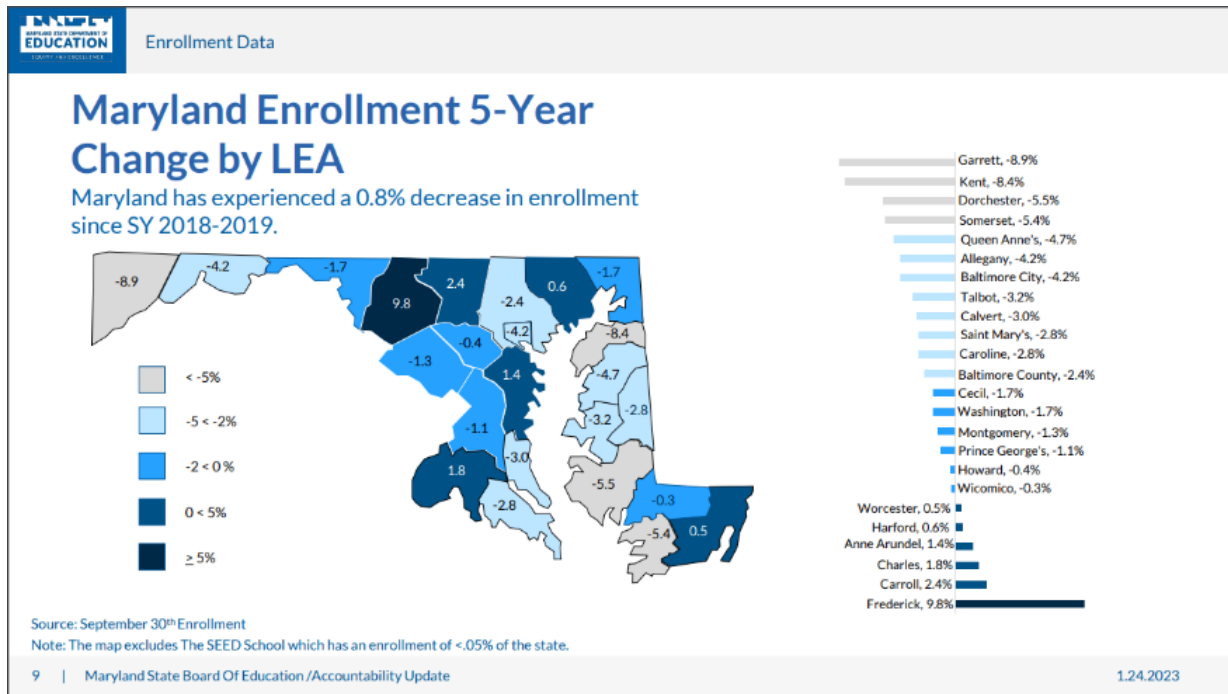
As you may know, Frederick County is the fastest-growing jurisdiction in Maryland and that trend is particularly apparent in our public school enrollment (see attached graphic). While many school systems are seeing enrollment decrease, Frederick County Public Schools' enrollment growth rate has consistently been at 9.8%. This growth is a great endorsement of the quality education that FCPS provides and an asset to Frederick County as a community.

However, the current foundation formula determines state aid using local enrollment numbers that have a built-in lag. Local enrollment is measured on September 30th of the prior school year, which means the State share of per-pupil funding does not reach school systems until the following school year. This puts a disproportionate burden on jurisdictions with high rates of enrollment growth, such as Frederick County. As student enrollment increases, school systems and the Counties that fund them need state support for the infrastructure and resources necessary to meet the needs of each student at the time that they are in our schools.

SB 385, as amended, establishes a task force to look at this issue and make recommendations for adjustments to the funding provisions regarding student enrollment counts. As with many issues, I believe the first step to finding a solution is to bring together the many stakeholders and experts.

Thank you for your consideration of SB 385 and I urge a favorable report.

Jessica Fitzwater, County Executive
Frederick County, MD



The graphic above was obtained from the Maryland State Department of Education September 30th Enrollment Report published January 2023.