



Maryland Education Coalition



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SB0766: Fair Share for Maryland Act of 2024

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

POSITION - FAVORABLE

The Maryland Education Coalition (MEC) was originally founded over 40 years ago (1980) and is the oldest, most experienced, and diverse public education advocacy coalition in Maryland. MEC advocates for adequate funding, equitable policies, and transparent accountability statewide for all public school students in Maryland.

MEC strongly supports SB0766: Fair Share for Maryland Act of 2024, because it will provide resources that Maryland communities need while also ensuring that wealthy corporations and individuals are contributing their fair share to the public services, we all benefit from. If passed, it is projected to raise an additional \$1.6 billion for education, health care and other important public services.

We have consistently encouraged the Governor, General Assembly, and local leaders to constantly seek new and additional ways to raise state and local revenues to support public services and believes that passing this bill is one of several ways to effectively address Maryland's current fiscal restraints currently enjoyed by other states including those surrounding Maryland.

Among the critical needs for Maryland to significantly raise additional revenue is to ensure the Blueprint for Maryland's Future is fully funded in future years. **Revenue for the Blueprint for Maryland's Future Closing Fund Balance is projected to have a \$429 million deficit by FY 2027 - rising to over \$5.1 billion by FY 2029** and the Maryland must reserve all available revenue the promises to Fully Fund the Blueprint as defined in law and backed by the Maryland Constitution, Article VIII – Education, SECTION 1, which says – ***“The General Assembly, ..., shall by Law establish throughout the State a thorough and efficient System of Free Public Schools; and shall provide by taxation, or otherwise, for their maintenance”***. This was promised to nearly 900,000 students and their staff.

We hope the Governor and General Assembly remembers that during the 2008-09 recession, tens of millions were cut from State Aid to Education and some of our school systems had to make tens of millions in cuts to academic and student service staff including school counselors, social workers, psychologist, etc. Academic performance progress and the closing of gaps disproportionately impacts large student groups of students with disabilities, Limited English, students of color or from lower income families and progress made since has been delayed an impacted more students due to the pandemic.

The additional revenue that could be raised with the passing of this legislation could also help fund other under-funded public services statewide such as public, early child-care/education, health services, Family/Social/Juvenile Services, major repair, or replacement of aging public facilities systems, etc.

For these reasons, the Maryland Education Coalition supports SB0766: Fair Share for Maryland Act of 2024 and urges a favorable report. Our children and many lower and middle income families cannot afford to wait.

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