



**Board of Education
of Howard County**

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**Board of Education of Howard County
Testimony Submitted to the Maryland House of Delegates,
Appropriations Committee
March 5, 2025**

HB1403: UNFAVORABLE

**Primary and Secondary Education - Full-Time Equivalent Enrollment Count - Alterations
(Truancy Reduction Act of 2025)**

The Board of Education of Howard County (the Board) opposes **Primary and Secondary Education - Full-Time Equivalent Enrollment Count - Alterations (Truancy Reduction Act of 2025)** as an inadequate replacement for the current student enrollment count.

HB1403 attempts to replace the current September 30 official student enrollment count for funding purposes with a calculation that looks back at four points in time during the prior school year. Under the bill, enrollment would be the average of enrollment snapshots taken on the last day of the month in September, December, March, and the final day of school.

The logistics and timing of this bill, however, concern the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). It would substantially delay the enrollment verification process used for the school system budget, given it would not be available until the end of the school year, and likely even further delayed following Maryland State Department of Education review and certification of the official number. State and local budgets are currently adopted by May/June. The precise impact of such a change would need to be studied to determine if the average of these dates is, in fact, a better indicator of future funding needs of the school system.

If the intent of HB1403 is to address concerns with using a snapshot in time as the basis for school system funding, the proposed solution is merely a different variation of the current problem of funding based on a lagging indicator, especially in fast growing districts. If the intent as noted in the new title of the reintroduced bill is "truancy reduction," such counts are unlikely to impact student attendance. At the very least, more research and analysis should be done to determine what measures may more accurately reflect future school system enrollment and the subsequent funding needs before legislating such measures.

For these reasons, we urge an UNFAVORABLE report on HB1403 from this Committee.