



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Jessica Fitzwater
County Executive

HB 53 – Task Force on Education Funding and Student Population Growth

DATE: January 28, 2025
COMMITTEE: House Appropriations Committee
POSITION: Favorable
FROM: The Office of Frederick County Executive Jessica Fitzwater

As the County Executive of Frederick County, I urge the committee to give **HB 53 – Task Force on Education Funding and Student Population Growth** a favorable report.

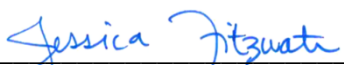
As you may know, Frederick County is the fastest-growing jurisdiction in Maryland and that trend is particularly apparent in our public-school enrollment. While many school systems are currently seeing enrollment decrease, Frederick County Public Schools' enrollment growth rate has consistently been between 9 and 10 percent during a typical 5-year cycle. This growth is a great endorsement of the quality education that FCPS provides and an asset to Frederick County as a community. However, it does not come without challenges and costs.

The current foundation formula that determines state aid uses outdated local enrollment numbers, resulting in unfunded students in jurisdictions with enrollment growth. 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. While Frederick County is one of the few jurisdictions *currently* seeing growth, student enrollment often fluctuates and other jurisdictions may face this challenge in the future.

The General Assembly passed legislation last year to form a Frederick County School Construction Workgroup. The workgroup convened over the interim, and consisted of local elected officials, school board representatives, IAC representatives, and General Assembly members. One of the recommendations of this workgroup was for the State to reevaluate the formula that HB 53 aims to study. This task force would be critical to ensuring that growing school systems are being fairly accounted for during the funding allocation process.

HB 53 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 HB 53 and I urge a favorable report.



Jessica Fitzwater, County Executive
Frederick County, MD