



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SPONSOR TESTIMONY

**HB 53 - Task Force on Education Funding and Student Population Growth**

The Honorable Ben Barnes, Chair  
Appropriations Committee  
Maryland House of Delegates  
6 Bladen Street, Room 131  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Chair Barnes, Vice-Chair Chang, and Esteemed Members of the Appropriations:

House Bill 53 seeks to create a task force to study the State's current spending formula for Local School Systems (LSS). The Task Force will comprise members of the General Assembly, state agencies, and local education institutions to examine the challenges related to the timing of student enrollment counts and the related apportionment of state funds to LSS experiencing growing populations. The recommendations from the Task Force will be sent to the Governor and Maryland General Assembly to inform future policymaking addressing the impact of delayed student population enrollment counts on the funding received by LSS. My office has heard repeatedly from students, educators, and administrators that the current methodology for apportioning is not equitable—especially for growing systems.

**Current Allocation Methods Leave Some Students Out:** Currently, school funding is calculated on student enrollment counts conducted once a year, with additional funding for specific demographic enrollments, such as students experiencing poverty or who need special education supports. The formula uses actual enrollment counts conducted in the fall of the prior fiscal year. However, for growing jurisdictions, this timing leads to perpetual underfunding. Students who join the LSS in the spring or fall are not reflected in the funding allocation. By studying the effect of delayed enrollment counts, the Task Force will provide insights and recommendations for the funding formula to efficiently and quickly allocate necessary funds for each system's population moving forward.

**Schools Need the Right Resources to Support Their Students:** Underfunding due to inaccurate student counts creates significant difficulties for appropriate school staffing and ancillary resources, leading to lower-quality services for all students. Schools with growing populations often face cash flow issues due to the undercount and then must rely on county and local reserve funds until state funding is received. The inability to secure the appropriate funding causes staffing shortages and impacts necessary assistance programs, such as English as a Second Language (ESL) and special needs education. The Task Force's recommendations will ensure students, staff, and their LSS's current needs are met.

**There is a Precedent for Updating the Formula—Especially to Deliver for our Students:** The current formula has been amended previously to account for student enrollment decline—but critically, not for student enrollment growth. Insights from the Task Force's report will enable the General Assembly to improve the funding formula so we meet the current and future needs of LSS regardless of their

population trends. The task force's goal is to enable schools to provide adequate resources and assign appropriate staffing when needed.

The Task Force will examine the connection between growing student populations and the necessary funding and make recommendations for improving the allocation of school funds. By establishing a Task Force to study these issues, House Bill 53 will guide careful thought and consideration to ensure that funding is equitably distributed, students are appropriately supported, and school systems can thrive across the state.

For these reasons, I urge your support for House Bill 53 and respectfully request a favorable report.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kris Fair". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kris" and last name "Fair" clearly distinguishable.

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Delegate Kris Fair  
District 3, Frederick County