



Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

CREATING CHANGE • IMPROVING LIVES

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment and Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

SB 429: Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act

February 19, 2025

Letter of Information

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council (Council) is a statewide public policy organization that creates change to make it possible for people with developmental disabilities to live the lives they want with the support they need. As such, the Council strongly supported the Blueprint for Maryland's future, and the increase in State funding to support students with disabilities, birth to 21. For students to learn, succeed, and stay on track for college and career readiness, a world-class educational system requires additional supports and services for students with disabilities, starting at birth.

While investments in public education are without question needed for all students, especially students with developmental disabilities, the Council believes that the amount, purpose, and timing of such efforts must take into consideration the needs of all Marylanders with disabilities. Funding for the Blueprint for Maryland's Future should not be offset by limiting essential funding for other critical needs, most immediately the Developmental Disabilities Administration community services that thousands of Marylanders depend upon.

WHAT does this legislation do?

- Changes the Blueprint for Maryland's Future by pausing Collaborative Time for 4 years
- Cuts the per pupil funding amount for all students and the weighted funding for economically disadvantaged students and emerging Multilanguage learners
- Freezes the Concentration of Poverty grants for community schools for 2 years
- Cuts the annual funding allocation for the Consortium for Community Supports by almost 70%

WHAT is the impact?

- **Less funding to support students with disabilities.** Every student who receives special education services would receive the same lower per pupil amount as all other students. Students with disabilities are more likely than nondisabled students to be eligible for Compensatory Education (i.e., free and reduced priced meals), they will be doubly impacted.
- **A decrease in outcomes and an increase in more restrictive placements.** When school systems receive less funding for all students, it is less likely that students with disabilities will be successful in general education classrooms, leading to more restrictive placements, where academic achievement and long-term outcomes are worse.
- **Disproportionate impact on students with disabilities.** Collaborative Time can be particularly helpful for students with disabilities. They benefit when general educators and special educators

have time together to consider data, engage in professional learning, and support each other. There is broad consensus that the best way to improve the education for students with disabilities is to improve general education.

- **Includes a study for special education.** Section 4 contains language about a study for special education and includes elements for the scope of the study that were defined by the Blueprint Special Education Workgroup in its recommendations. This study is critically important and, as the Workgroup noted, should be based on funding adequacy to narrow and close achievement gaps.

Contact: Rachel London, Executive Director, rlodnon@md-council.org