

2.19.25 Moore-Miller Admin Written Testimony on SB

Uploaded by: Fagan Harris

Position: FAV



STATE OF MARYLAND

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
Wes Moore

SPONSOR TESTIMONY

Senate Bill 429 and House Bill 504 – Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act

Dear Chairs Guzzone, Barnes, Feldman, and Atterbeary, Vice Chairs Rosapepe, Chang, Kagan, and Wilkins, and members of the Budget & Taxation, Appropriations, Education, Energy, and Environment, and Ways and Means Committees,

Our administration believes that investments in our public education system will ultimately grow our economy and assist in the elimination of child poverty across the state. Working with the General Assembly, together we have increased education funding by 21%, nearly \$2 billion additional dollars, since our administration's first budget. This year, despite our state's fiscal challenges, we are continuing our commitment, proposing to increase education spending by half a billion dollars.

Since we came into office:

- We have invested in early education and care, expanding access to pre-K and high-quality child care.
- We introduced and passed the Educator Shortage Act to improve the teacher pipeline, and to date, we have seen a 25 percent reduction in teacher vacancies since the law went into effect.
- We have invested in wrap-around supports for children, including tutoring, summer programs, mental health services and more.
- And we have built more robust pathways at the high school level to college and careers. The number of students participating in apprenticeship programs has quadrupled since the start of our administration.

Blueprint Evolution, Not Deviation

Our work is never finished and must continue. More is needed to be done to help ensure that every child in Maryland receives a world-class education.

We build upon the foundational work of your committees and the support provided by the General Assembly through the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, one of the most ambitious pieces of education reform in American history. This body began working on this initiative as early as 2016. Since then, you've encountered significant challenges beyond your control, including the lack of key partners who were meant to help implement the law.

When the Blueprint was passed, the state's leadership actively resisted it. The previous governor not only vetoed the bill but also ignored its existence, and MSDE lacked the leadership necessary to fully realize its vision. Compounding these challenges, the COVID-19 pandemic fundamentally reshaped public education in ways that could not have been anticipated.

That has changed and you now have eager partners in this work in the Governor's Office and at the Maryland State Department of Education who believe in the vision of the Blueprint.

Like any major reform, the Blueprint is a living framework and must adapt to stay effective and impactful. The Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act is not deviating from the Blueprint's primary goals and strategies – we are proposing to take the time needed to make strategic investments that ensure its success and adjust timelines to account for current realities in a post-pandemic environment.

Our proposal introduces common-sense adjustments to address the current realities in our education system. We are laser focused on ensuring that in this post-pandemic context, every child in Maryland is:

- learning by four,
- reading by eight, and
- college and career ready by sixteen.

Our plan outlines strategic investments aimed at ensuring the effective implementation of key components of the Blueprint, while also making targeted new investments in evidence-based strategies that address the current needs of our students, families, and educators. This includes efforts to recruit and support educators, as well as strengthen partnerships between schools and communities.

Specifically, our plan prioritizes enhancing the administration and implementation of the community schools program, while strategically pausing the rollout of collaborative time to ensure that the foundational principles are fully established for the success of this work.

Proposed Investments

We are calling for continued historic investments in our students and teachers to drive high-quality implementation of the Blueprint in the years ahead.

If enacted, our proposal would place the Blueprint Fund on more sustainable footing in the years to come. Next fiscal year, the Blueprint Fund will be exhausted, with an estimated \$81 million deficit. Our proposal would cover the FY27 Blueprint Fund deficit and reduce the FY28 deficit in half from \$2.1 billion to \$1.1 billion.

This still places the state on track to spend \$53 billion in funding for K-12 public education over the next five fiscal years – a 30 percent increase from FY25 to FY30. Our administration is not backing down from our commitment to children.

From FY25 to FY30, the state will spend \$20.76 billion in funding for the foundation formula.

Over that same time period, the state will spend:

- \$4.2 billion in funding for special education;
- \$1.5 billion in funding for pre-kindergarten;
- \$8.7 billion in funding for compensatory education;
- \$2.9 billion in funding for community schools; and
- \$3 billion in funding for multilingual learners.

Our administration **believes in the promise of the Blueprint.**

The realization of that promise comes from making sure our investments are linked to student success. Our fidelity must be to our students and their current needs, not to funding formulas.

We cannot afford for these programs to fall short of meeting the academic needs of our students. Our goal is to ensure that when this groundbreaking bill is fully implemented, Maryland will sit atop the national education rankings in every category, from 4th grade reading, to 8th grade math, to college and career readiness, to the performance of students growing up in poverty. Failure to do so would only provide ammunition for critics who claim that investments in low-income communities are futile or that funding for educators is unnecessary to achieve the desired outcomes.

Collaborative Time

The Blueprint calls for increased time for educators to engage in instructional planning, coaching, and student engagement outside of the classroom. This is also commonly known as “collaborative time” or the “60/40 rule”. It ensures that our educators have space to work together to sharpen their skills and better support students through increased opportunities for

professional development, small group instruction with students, co-teaching, and family engagement.

Let's be clear: Teachers should be treated like professionals and be empowered to work together. But we need to think through implementation. Right now, we need an estimated 12,000 to 15,000 additional teachers to meet the Blueprint's requirement that teachers be provided more time for collaboration. Without more teachers, it is not yet logistically feasible to implement collaborative time as called for in the Blueprint, while driving the intended benefits for student achievement.

Research shows that collaborative time can lead to stronger academic outcomes. But multiple studies also show that instructional time - that is, classroom time spent on a particular subject - is associated with academic achievement. We must ensure that the collaborative time policy amidst a teacher shortage does not have the unintended consequence of reducing instructional time for students and negatively impacting academic achievement. Further, as demand for teachers grows, we must ensure that efforts to fill positions do not disproportionately draw educators away from schools with higher concentrations of poverty.

Lower-income schools already face greater teacher vacancies than their better-resourced counterparts, and increased competition for teachers could further disadvantage these schools. Lastly, research finds that *how* collaborative time is implemented matters, and the form of collaboration may have varying degrees of efficacy for student achievement, demonstrating the need to ensure districts and schools are ready to effectively deploy this model.

To ensure school districts have adequate time to recruit and retain enough teachers for the successful implementation of collaborative time, we recommend a four-year pause.

Recognizing that high-quality teachers are one of the most significant drivers of student achievement, we will use this pause to focus on two key strategies aimed at strengthening Maryland's teacher workforce:

- 1) **Teacher recruitment**, to ensure we have the requisite number of high quality teachers, and
- 2) **Teacher retention**, to ensure they have the support, opportunities, and working conditions necessary to make teaching a long-term career path. **We cannot simply hire our way out of the teacher shortage** – we must focus on immediately supporting our current educators. The core elements of our teacher retention strategy include collaborative time innovation, teacher coaching, and training and mentorship for school leaders – all of which are essential to building a strong, resilient workforce and which I will address in more detail later in my testimony.

1. Teacher Recruitment

By pausing implementation, we can address the core issue – ensuring there are enough teachers in our classrooms.

Since the 2019-2020 school year, the number of teachers with conditional licensure has tripled, now accounting for 10% of the workforce. Currently, 1,600 classrooms statewide lack a teacher. To tackle this challenge, we are expanding pathways into the profession, broadening our search for future educators, and actively recruiting talent in new and innovative ways.

One key investment is funding the **Grow Your Own Initiative**, which provides a fully funded path to full teacher licensure – debt-free – while allowing participants to earn a salary with benefits, receive on-the-job training, and benefit from mentoring. This program will make it easier for school-based staff, high school graduates, and career changers to enter the profession, helping to diversify our workforce and reduce vacancies in high-poverty schools – both critical steps toward closing opportunity gaps and improving student achievement.

We are also determined to show the country that **Maryland is the best state to be a teacher**. With the goal of attracting talented educators from other states, we will help recruits navigate processes to become a teacher in Maryland, provide relocation bonuses for experienced out-of-state teachers to cover a portion of their relocation expenses, and reduce barriers for licensed out-of-state teachers to obtain a Maryland teaching license.

2. Teacher Retention

While teacher recruitment is critical, teacher turnover is equally critical to Maryland’s teacher workforce needs and student achievement. Research shows that school-level working conditions, including opportunities for teacher collaboration, shared decision-making, accountability systems, and resources for teaching and learning, are associated with teacher retention. The Collaborative Time Innovation grants, the Academic Excellence program, and the Maryland School Leader Academy created through this bill drive at the heart of the teacher experience in Maryland.

Collaborative Time Innovation

We will use this strategic pause to test innovative models for teacher collaboration. We will administer Collaborative Time Innovation (CTI) grants, multi-year grants for piloting innovative models for teacher roles and collaborative time.

Research shows that supporting every child in the context of widening differences in student outcomes post-pandemic requires finding ways to ensure every child has an expert teacher in charge of their learning, receives small group support as they need it, and is known and has

relationships with caring adults. This will require organizing teacher time differently to work with students in small and larger groups, finding time for teachers to work with families, and creating time for teachers to work in teams with expert support to plan lessons, review student progress and adjust instruction. This is not “add on top” of existing structures that aren’t working now or simply about a required ratio of instructional versus non instructional time, but rather rethinking what the student and teacher day looks and feels like from start to finish.

Through the CTI demonstration grants, LEAs will have the ability to pilot models of whole-school teaching in a small number of schools. The models include elements such as smaller learning communities, bell schedules that optimize teacher collaboration, and shared content teams led by instructional experts that lead to improved outcomes for students.

This work is critical because it ensures that our collaborative time model, once fully implemented, will not only better serve our teachers, but will also affirmatively drive gains in student achievement.

Academic Excellence Program

Educators are our greatest asset, and investing in their development is critical to ensuring student success. The Academic Excellence Program is designed to strengthen educator capacity through robust coaching and professional development.

Regional coaching teams will support teachers in implementing evidence-based strategies that accelerate student academic growth. Non-evaluative instructional coaches will offer tailored, on-the-ground support to address specific classroom challenges, allowing teachers to receive personalized guidance without fear of evaluation.

Early literacy and math skills are the foundation of lifelong learning. This proposal prioritizes targeted support for these essential areas to help every student reach their full potential. Despite Maryland’s decline in national rankings from 2011 to 2022 in 4th and 8th grade reading and math, we are seeing promising progress. The 2024 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results show modest improvements in mathematics and continued progress in reading. Most notably, the focus on early literacy has led to significant gains, with Maryland’s 4th-grade reading performance improving from 40th to 20th in the nation. These gains demonstrate the effectiveness of prioritizing high-quality instruction and teacher training. While progress is evident, we must continue to build on this momentum to restore Maryland’s standing as one of the top states for public education.

Maryland School Leader Academy

Effective school leadership plays a pivotal role in teacher retention and student success. To strengthen leadership in our schools, we are launching the Maryland School Leader Academy, a

tuition-free, MSDE-led training program designed to develop the next generation of school administrators.

Participants in this program will commit to serving as an administrator in a community school for two years, ensuring that leadership development directly benefits the schools and students who need it most. By leveraging existing Blueprint Leadership Training funding streams, we will expand access to leadership development for both current and aspiring administrators across the state. This investment in strong, well-prepared school leaders will help create a more supportive and effective educational environment for Maryland's teachers and students.

These strategies – Collaborative Time Innovation, the Academic Excellence Program, and the Maryland School Leader Academy – demonstrate our commitment to addressing immediate challenges while fostering long-term innovation and excellence in education. Strengthening our teacher workforce requires more than just recruiting and training new educators; we must also invest in retaining and developing the talented teachers already in our schools. This will take time, but by providing the support, resources, and professional growth opportunities they need, we can ensure lasting improvements for both educators and students.

Strengthening Community Schools

Community schools are a cornerstone of our efforts to improve student outcomes and combat child poverty.

The Governor's budget includes a \$130 million increase for community schools – raising Maryland's commitment to nearly half a billion dollars in the coming school year. Over the next five years, we plan to invest \$2.9 billion in these vital communities, underscoring the central role community schools play in the Governor's education and poverty agendas.

Since the start of our administration in FY 2024, the number of community schools has grown by 60 percent from 447 schools to 715 schools and the overall funding provided to the community schools program has grown by nearly 117 percent from \$227 million to \$492 million.

To date, positive results are being seen in communities across the state and there are many bright spots in Maryland's community schools that we can replicate. At Morrell Park Elementary/Middle School in Baltimore City, their community school model features a weekly food market that has decreased food insecurity from 21 percent in 2020 to 8 percent in 2024. At Vanguard Collegiate Middle School in Baltimore, enhanced wraparound support and a coordinated health outreach program have led to a 100% immunization compliance rate and a 27% reduction in chronic absenteeism.

However, these outcomes are not consistent across the state. While some communities with extensive experience in the community school model are seeing promising results – especially those that had well-developed plans in place before the pandemic – **many districts continue to face challenges in achieving full and effective implementation.**

Schools have shared concerns about not knowing how to best utilize resources, highlighting the need for more training and support. A 2023 review of Maryland’s community schools conducted by the National Center for Community Schools found that school and district staff lacked sufficient knowledge of the community school model and the State’s vision for implementation. An audit by the Office of the Inspector General for Education, involving eight school districts, revealed that clear policies were not provided and that there was insufficient training on the management of Concentration of Poverty funds (CPG). This resulted in **\$12.3 million in unused funds** from FY 2020 to FY 2022, with LEAs facing challenges in determining allowable expenditures. Lastly, a 2024 Community Schools Legislative Report recommends additional support to establish school steering committees, target interventions for absenteeism, and leverage data collection tools for improved accountability and impact analysis starting in August 2025.

Research shows that community schools can reduce opportunity gaps, but implementation matters. To address these challenges, the Governor has proposed slowing the pace of funding increases over the next two years to allow for strategic investments in capacity-building. This approach will provide schools and districts with clearer policy guidelines, ensuring funds are allocated effectively in collaboration with parents, community members, and local leaders. These measures will help ensure that resources reach the students and families who need them most, while strengthening the long-term success of Maryland’s largest-ever investment in community schools. **Community schools are too important to get wrong.**

We look forward to working with our colleagues in the General Assembly, the AIB, MSDE, and the Children’s Cabinet to ensure our district, school, and community partners receive the training, information, and resources they need to leverage the community school model to provide robust academic and wraparound support to children living in concentrated poverty.

During the proposed pause, we are proposing a three-point plan to make Maryland’s community schools the best in the nation. The three pillars of this plan include:

1. **Building Capacity for Strong Implementation**
2. **Fostering Community and Government Partnerships**
3. **Prioritizing Academic and Whole-Child Interventions**

To address our district and schools **capacity** to implement the community school model, we will enable districts to reserve a portion of their Concentration of Poverty Grant funds to ensure strategic implementation district-wide. Currently, in most districts, CPG grants function as pass-through funding, placing the full responsibility of designing and implementing a community school strategy solely on individual schools. Schools need support and training to do this work.

We are also proposing resources at the state level for robust training and support to schools, leveraging partnerships with national nonprofit organizations and institutions of higher education. These activities will be supplemented with philanthropic funding.

Lastly, we have invested hundreds of millions of dollars in this strategy without a plan to evaluate our work. This bill proposes resources to conduct an evaluation of Maryland's community school strategy, which will enable us to learn more about what's working and areas for growth, laying the groundwork for long-term success.

To foster **community and government partnerships**, our proposal also seeks to establish nationally recognized best practices by fostering school-community partnership committees at every community school to drive a shared plan for success developed by educators, parents, community members and local leaders.

We will also leverage the Governor's Children's Cabinet to take an all-of-government approach to community school implementation. The Children's Cabinet agencies are already working to direct state agency resources into high-poverty schools and build Community School Coordinators' knowledge of available state-level benefits and programs, empowering them as critical connectors between families with services.

And finally, to prioritize **academic and whole-child interventions**, we propose to broaden the allowable uses of funding, empowering schools to invest in programs that improve academic outcomes and support the overall wellbeing of students and families. We must ensure that schools can leverage these resources to support strategies that have proven most effective in helping low-income students recover from pandemic-related learning loss. This includes high-dosage, high-impact tutoring, high-quality instructional materials, and comprehensive training and support for both teachers and families to effectively use these resources.

If we do this well, we can further cement our position as a national leader in community schools – leveraging community resources to provide a holistic approach to supporting our children's success.

Conclusion

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future is, and will remain, the central piece of our shared education strategy.

On behalf of the Governor, I want to acknowledge the work of the General Assembly to continue to prioritize investments in our students through your work on education issues and the Blueprint. We recognize that this has come at the expense of other priorities from the legislature and individual members but there can be no greater unifier than the betterment of our children and future workforce.

I hope today's testimony provides more clarity on the Governor's commitment to the full implementation of the Blueprint and our plans to improve on its promise. The decisions in front of you are difficult ones, particularly the proposal to freeze the increases to Community Schools for two years. We hear your concerns. We look forward to working with you in the coming weeks to address those concerns and strengthen this legislation on behalf of every child, teacher, and parent in our public schools. I thank the Committees and request a favorable report on SB 429 and HB 504.

Sincerely,
Fagan Harris, Chief of Staff
Office of the Governor Wes Moore

SB 429 FAV MICUA.pdf

Uploaded by: Matt Power

Position: FAV



Written Support

Senate Budget and Taxation and Education, Energy, and the Environment Committees *Senate Bill 429 Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act*

Matt Power, President

mpower@micua.org

February 19, 2025

On behalf of the eleven member institutions of the Maryland Independent College and University Association (MICUA) that offer teacher preparation programs, I thank you for the opportunity to provide this written testimony in support of [Senate Bill 429 Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act](#). This bill alters the funding amounts and the sources for some provisions of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future Fund; establishes the Collaborative Time Innovation Demonstration Grant, the Maryland Teacher Relocation Incentive Grant, the Academic Excellence Program, and the Academic Excellence Fund; alters some provisions of the Grow Your Own Educators Grant Program; enacts the Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact; establishes requirements for multistate licensure; and establishes the Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact Commission.

MICUA institutions are proud of our long-standing history of providing teacher education programs designed to develop a high-quality teacher workforce throughout the State of Maryland. Of MICUA's 13 members, 11 prepare highly qualified teachers for Maryland primary and secondary education classrooms through State-approved teacher preparation programs. Over the last five years, MICUA institutions have awarded over 12,000 Education degrees and certificates. In 2024, MICUA institutions awarded 56% of the Education degrees above the bachelor's level in the State.

SB 429 establishes the Academic Excellence Fund, which will provide grants to institutions of higher education to address critical academic need in schools, particularly those identified as low-performing. The bill also alters the purpose, eligibility criteria, distribution and use of Grow Your Own Educators Grant Program grants.

In response to the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, MICUA institutions have introduced various initiatives aligned with the Blueprint goals. These include:

- Development and launch of programs in Early Childhood Education;
- Development and launch of a strong National Board Certification (NBC) program model to assist and support service teachers to attain NBC;
- Development and launch of a new model of graduate professional development courses designed to provide support for in-service teachers that will also lead to career ladder advancement;

- Redesign of the Master of Science in Teaching program to provide a one-year accelerated model with a 180-day internship experience;
- Launch of teacher residency programs developed in collaboration with local education agencies (LEA's);
- Collaboration with LEA's around the Science of Learning focusing on supporting teacher candidates and new teachers in their knowledge and application of science of learning principles;
- Partnerships with LEA's to support conditionally certified teachers; and
- Development of two summer courses: (1) methods and strategies and (2) literacy designed specifically for conditionally certified art teachers.

SB 429 also enacts the Interstate Mobility Teacher Compact. Participation in the Compact would support teachers through new pathways to licensure and reduce barriers to teacher mobility.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact Angela Sherman, Vice President for Academic Affairs, asherman@micua.org.

For all of these reasons, MICUA requests a favorable Committee report for Senate Bill 429.

SB429 & HB504 WRITTEN TESTIMONY, SUBMITTED 2-17-25

Uploaded by: Michael Waal

Position: FAV

Written Testimony in Support of SB 429 / HB 504 Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act

Dear Committee Members,

Without a doubt all Marylanders are in favor of improving our education system to be globally competitive, albeit, within a fair and reasonable and fiscally sound budget.

Respect is expressed for the effort the Kirwan Commission members put into the study of, and their final recommendations for, the establishment of *The Blueprint for Maryland's Future*.

As we know, the Kirwan Commission "estimated" the funding cost to implement their recommendations, *The Blueprint*, to be \$32Billion over the 10 year implementation period. However, according to revised Department of Legislative Services estimates, the funding required to implement *The Blueprint* will be more, much more, than originally estimated, 3 – to – 6 times more! Therefore, *The Blueprint will require funding somewhere between approximately \$90Billion and \$180Billion.* An astounding amount of money, which is totally unaffordable and unsustainable at State and County levels.

To illustrate the consequence the new estimated funding expense will have on Marylanders, let's, just for example, take the cost of *The Blueprint* at the low-end ≈\$90Billion, spread it evenly over all Maryland households. (≈ is the symbol for approximately.)

Per Census, there are ≈2,200,000 Maryland households.
 $≈\$90,000,000,000.00 / ≈2,200,000 = ≈\$41,000.00 \text{ per household on average.}$

Concedingly, this is an eye-opening calculation; resulting in a genuinely shocking unaffordable and unsustainable amount of money on a per household basis.

We have a 10% poverty rate in Maryland, with many households living paycheck-to-paycheck. How in the world will Marylanders be able to shoulder the financial requirements of funding the implementation of *The Blueprint*? As we are finding out, it can't be done! Especially on top of ever increasing real estate assessment tax bills [20%], home energy bills [50-100%], home owner's insurance bills [20%], car insurance bills [20%], and for retired people, supplemental health insurance bills [20%].

The Blueprint is bankrupting Maryland, whether you want to outwardly admit it or not!

As we all know, any fee or tax imposed by the General Assembly to fund *The Blueprint* will trickle down to the cost of all goods and services in Maryland, making Maryland's cost-of-living even higher than it is now, which is ranked 7th highest in the nation. To which there is discussion for Legislation to raise the minimum wage from \$15.00/Hr to \$20.00/Hr because the cost of living in Maryland is so high! (DUH!)

A question for all of you:

Who among you would decide to fully upgrade your home with: a new roof and siding; new kitchen cabinets and countertops, sinks, faucets; all new appliances - refrig, dish washer, electric stove & oven; fresh coat of interior paint; all new light fixtures; or a new HVAC system without first and foremost, being financially prudent and practical people, establishing how much you can afford and how you are going to pay for it? NO ONE! And yet, that is exactly what is happening with *The Blueprint*.

Implementation of *The Blueprint* must be paused for review, and scale back, to a more financially affordable and sustainable program.

For this reason I support Governor Moore's SB429 / HB504 and urge a Favorable vote.

With kind regards and best wishes expressed for everyone's continued success,
Michael Waal
8640 Park Drive
Chestertown, MD 21620

Testimony in support of SB0429 - Joint Committees-

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

02/19/2025

Richard Keith Kaplowitz
Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON SB#/0429 – FAVORABLE

Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act

TO: Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe and members of the Budget and Taxation Committee; Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee; Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang and members of the Appropriations Committee; and Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins and members of the Ways and Means Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard K. Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#0429, Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act

The state’s education reform plan needs some reforms if it’s to survive a looming multibillion-dollar budget deficit and deliver on its promises, school leaders and local elected officials said ...

The comments at a Maryland Association of Counties conference panel came one day after the Public-School Superintendents’ Association of Maryland released a 30-point plan for policy and legislative changes to the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future, the sweeping school reform plan.

The main message from the panel titled “What We’ve Learned from Learning: The Blueprint in Year Three”: One size does not fit all. ¹

This bill is a response to the state’s current financial deficit conditions through altering the definitions of target per pupil foundation amount, collaborative time per pupil amount, and special education per pupil amount for certain fiscal years. It will alter the source of funds for the Blueprint for Maryland's Future Fund to include the interest earnings of the Academic Excellence Fund. Without funding availability it will affect the state budget by freezing certain increases in the Concentration of Poverty School Grant Program for certain fiscal years and will establish the Collaborative Time Innovation Demonstration Grant and the Academic Excellence Program and Fund.

This is an imperfect solution but a necessary one to respond to the budget conditions that currently exist in Maryland.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report and pass SB0429.

¹ <https://marylandmatters.org/2024/12/12/county-school-leaders-say-changes-needed-to-the-blueprint-education-reform-plan/>

MD READS Statement for Hearing - Final.pdf

Uploaded by: Trish Brennan-Gac

Position: FAV



Maryland READS

Reading Education Aligned to Data and Science

February 17, 2025

Chairman Guy Guzzone
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
Maryland General Assembly
3 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chairman Guzzone:

We applaud Governor Moore's leadership in prioritizing education and reading. This urgent action is required to address our state's reading crisis. The [Maryland Excellence in Public Schools Act](#) takes a critical step forward in rebuilding our state systems of support for education by formalizing training programs for state, district and school leaders that are grounded in the use of data, research based strategies, and collaborative learning. Investments in reading must be front and center on the state's agenda and a well-researched and designed approach to coaching is a necessary component.

Superintendent Wright and the team at the Maryland State Department of Education have laid a critical foundation for the improvement of reading instruction - the backbone of any state's effort to address its reading crisis. In addition to securing private funding to underwrite professional development in the Science of Reading for teachers and leaders, they collaborated with experts to develop a [research-based coaching model and professional learning series for literacy coaches](#). The education investments in this act are critical to ensure that teachers throughout our state are supported by highly qualified and professionally trained literacy coaches.

For too long, we have prioritized talking about college and career while overlooking the foundational importance of reading, neglecting the essential building blocks for success. Consider these facts. The [Kirwan Commission Final Report](#), the [Blueprint for Maryland's Future](#), and the [2022 AIB Annual Report](#) all emphasize college and career readiness, yet reading—crucial for both—is scarcely mentioned.

- The Kirwan Report mentions college 31 times and career 65 times, with just 4 references to reading.
- Similarly, the Blueprint for Maryland's Future highlights college 78 times and career 173 times, but reading is only mentioned 5 times.
- The AIB Annual Report similarly downplays reading, with a single bullet point making two references to it.

This stark imbalance suggests that without a solid foundation in literacy, efforts to prepare students for higher education and career success are fundamentally flawed. **Focusing on college and career without ensuring strong reading skills first is like giving a teenager the keys to a car without having them pass a driving test. Just because they take a driving course, does not mean they are safe and effective drivers. Reading is the foundation upon which all other learning is built. We cannot afford to overlook this essential area any longer.**

We commend Superintendent Carey Wright for moving swiftly to secure \$6.8 million in **private funding** from the Ibis Foundation to provide critical professional opportunities to our state's teachers and leaders. These programs provide education on the fundamentals of the Science of Reading as well as special focus courses on dyslexia, English learnings, literacy leadership, and the unique needs of adolescent learners. Consider these facts:

- Over 1,300 teachers and administrators have enrolled in the [AIM Pathways](#) professional learning opportunities and
- Over 4,300 educators (Pre-service and in-service) enrolled in the [SoR/SUNY New Paltz micro-credential](#)

While this is necessary progress, it's just the start of what is needed to transform instruction in order to make dramatic progress in addressing our reading crisis. This is a time of competing priorities, and the legislature will face tough choices. But if we do not prioritize reading, the impact of every other educational investment will be compromised.

Take community schools. While much criticism is being leveled against the Blueprint and the AIB, the investment in community schools was a good one. It resulted in the expansion of community schools from 69 to over 650 which is a positive step forward. These schools play a crucial role in **advancing thriving reading ecosystems** within our communities. However, it's critical that the teachers and leaders in those schools are trained in instructional strategies grounded in the Science of Reading and supported by coaches so they can apply that training to their daily instructional practices.

We saw in Mississippi that the key to transforming training into meaningful results lies in coaches who support teachers. Without teachers and leaders trained in evidence-based Science of Reading instruction, who are **supported by coaches to implement what they have learned**, the role of community schools as a part of the solution to our reading crisis is less impactful than it could be.

While funding for community schools has stalled, investing in coaches is an investment in community schools, teachers in all Maryland schools, and the future of our children. These coaches will empower educators to bridge the gap and turn science-backed strategies into real, measurable results in the classroom.

"We have been delighted to see how well the training programs provided by IBIS, specifically the SUNY microcredential, teach the Science of Reading, and provide concrete information and materials to support teachers in delivering aligned instruction. We also urge the Maryland Legislature to support Superintendent Wright in capitalizing on these programs by adequately investing in literacy coaches who can support teachers in delivering that aligned instruction with adequate support to each and every student."
Whitney Nyman, professor and member of Maryland READS Expert Advisory Delegation

As Superintendent Wright often says, "Reading is the gateway to every other subject." We must make that gateway accessible to every Maryland student. Let's make these investments now and ensure that reading becomes the pillar of success for every child in our state.

SB 429-HB 504-2025 Maryland HDT Flyer 5.pdf

Uploaded by: Andrea Mansfield

Position: FWA



High-Dosage Tutoring

In-Person Support for Maryland's Success

Boost Attendance, Build Confidence: High-Dosage Tutoring Makes Every School Day Count!



Accelerated Learning

Out of 14 types of educational interventions, High-Dosage Tutoring is most effective at improving student achievement (1,2). Students in HDT programs gain an additional year of learning in math and English Language Arts (ELA) (5).



Relationship Building

Consistent, in-person tutors create trusting, mentoring relationships, fostering confidence and engagement. The likelihood of attending school can increase by 11% on days students have a scheduled tutoring session (7).



Equity & Access

In-person tutoring is most effective when implemented during the school day (3,4). In-school programs eliminate barriers such as transportation and after-school conflicts.



Targeted Instruction

Aligned with student skill levels and classroom curriculum for seamless support. High-Dosage Tutoring is the most effective intervention for at-risk students from Kindergarten through 12th grade (6).

Program Features



- 1 **Frequency**
At least three sessions per week (30 minutes/session).
- 2 **Student Ratio**
Small groups (max 4:1 student-tutor ratio).
- 3 **Qualified Tutors**
Professionally trained, ensuring expertise in subject areas.

- 4 **Tailored Materials**
High-quality resources aligned with classroom learning.
- 5 **Data-Driven**
Focused on current skill gaps while reinforcing classroom content.
- 6 **Mentorship Focus**
Building long-term academic and social growth.

Supporting Research



1 Dietrichson, J., Bog, M., Filges, T., & Klint Jørgensen, A.M. (2017). Academic Interventions for Elementary and Middle School Students With Low Socioeconomic Status: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *Review of Educational Research*, 87(2), 243-282. 2 Dietrichson et al. (2017). Meta-analysis shows HDT outperforms other interventions. 2 Dietrichson, J., Bog, M., Filges, T., & Klint Jørgensen, A.M. (2017). *Academic Interventions for Elementary and Middle School Students With Low Socioeconomic Status: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. Review of Educational Research*, 87(2), 243-282. 3 Pellegrini et al. (2021). *In-person tutoring during school hours yields the highest achievement gains*. 3 Pellegrini, M., Neitzel, A., Lake, C., & Slavin, R. (2021). *Effective programs in elementary mathematics: A meta-analysis*. AERA Open, 7(1), 1-29. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2332858420986211> 4 Xie, G., Neitzel, A., Cheung, A., & Slavin, R. E. (2021). *The effects of summer programs on K-12 students' reading and mathematics achievement: A meta-analysis*. 5 Education Trust. & Education Reform Now (ERN). (2021). *State Guidance for High-Impact Tutoring*. In Education Trust. Education Trust. 6 Hashim, A., Davison, M., Postell, S. Isaacs, J. (2024, February). *High-Dosage tutoring for academically at-risk students*. NWEA Research 7 Belsha, Kalyn. "Intensive Tutoring Is Great for Academics. Now There's Evidence It Can Boost Attendance." *Chalkbeat*. 22 Mar. 2024. www.chalkbeat.org/2024/03/22/high-dosage-tutoring-boosts-student-attendance-stanford-research-dc-schools/.

SB 429-HB 504-School Survey Feedback Flyer.pdf

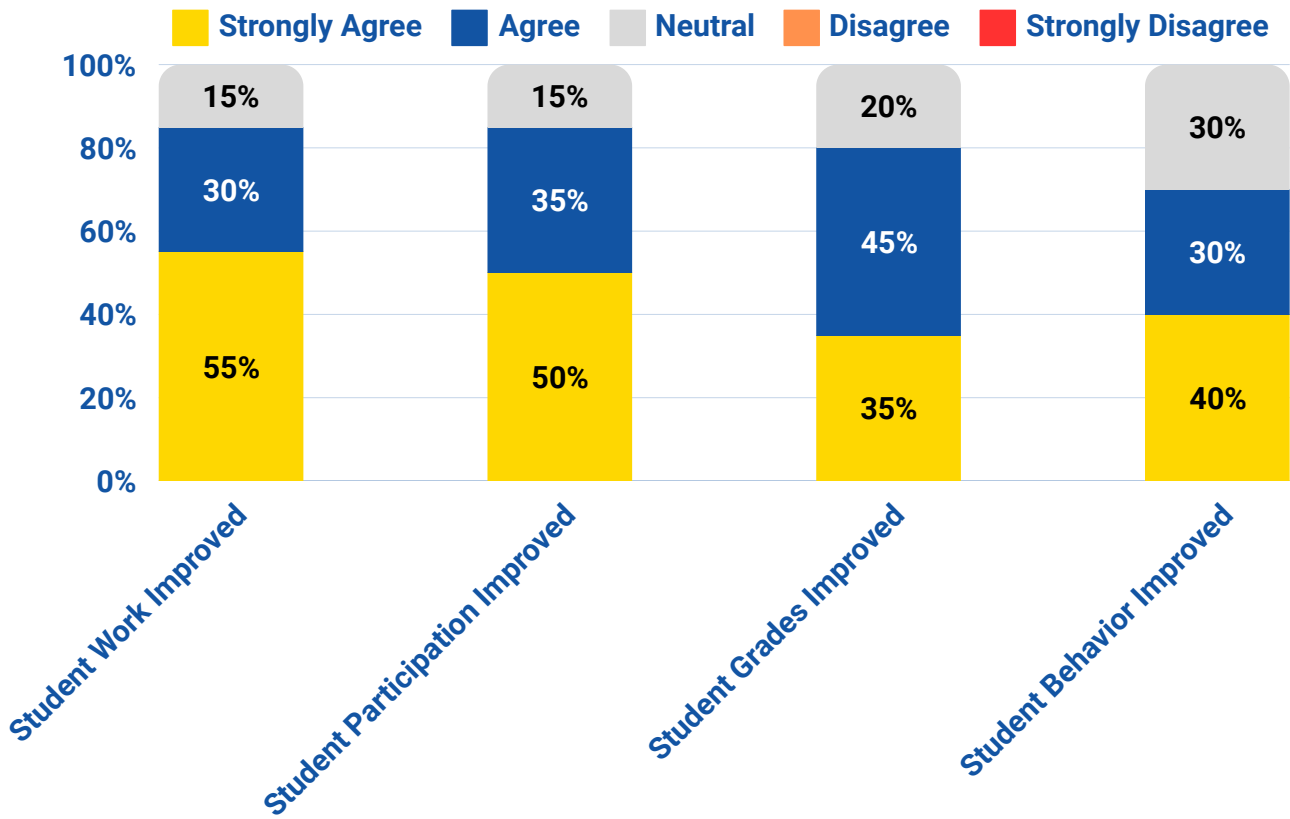
Uploaded by: Andrea Mansfield

Position: FWA

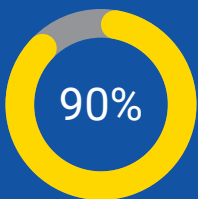


HIGH-DOSAGE TUTORING RESULTS THAT WORK

MARYLAND SCHOOL FEEDBACK



We surveyed our school partners from all across the state. The results speak for themselves.

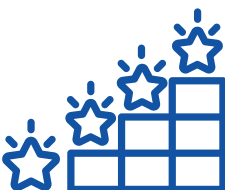


Improvement in Classwork and Homework



The additional support of **tutoring** is **crucial to support in closing the mathematical content gaps** that students experience.

— Classroom Teacher, Baltimore School for the Arts



50% of classroom teachers observed **improved attendance**. **High-dosage tutoring** contributes to **consistent learning** and **increased classroom participation**.

SB 429-HB 504-Solley_Elementary_Case_Studies.pdf

Uploaded by: Andrea Mansfield

Position: FWA



SmartStart
—EDUCATION—

CASE STUDY

SmartStart Education High-Dosage Math Tutoring partnership with Solley Elementary School in Burnie, Maryland.

BACKGROUND:

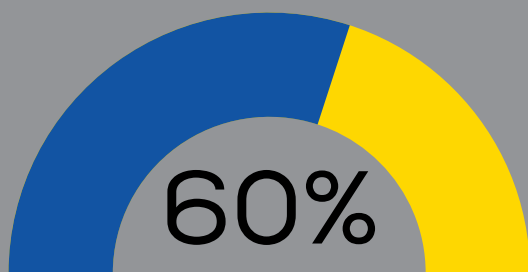
Solley Elementary School is a PreK-5 public school in Glen Burnie, MD. Over 38% of the student body is free and reduced lunch eligible. The school contracted with SmartStart to provide math tutoring to fourth and fifth grade students with our curriculum, Vmath, for a period of 3.5 months. Tutoring services were provided 5 days a week from February 27, 2024 – June 13, 2024.

PROGRAM:

- Intensive intervention tutoring of small groups with a maximum of four students each
- Curriculum aligned with the academic needs of the student
- Consistent, experienced tutor who understands and builds rapport with students
- Sessions provided during the school day, inside of the general education classroom

RESULTS:

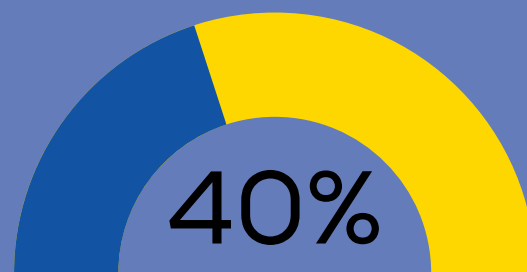
SMARTSTART 4TH GRADE RESULTS



Average **growth** between pre and post curriculum module assessments

- The average pre-module assessment score was 35%
- The average post-module assessment score was 95%

SMARTSTART 5TH GRADE RESULTS



Average **growth** between pre and post curriculum module assessments

- The average pre-module assessment score was 57.5%
- The average post-module assessment score was 97.5%

SB429-HB 504-Student Survey Feedback.pdf

Uploaded by: Andrea Mansfield

Position: FWA

HIGH-DOSAGE TUTORING

TRANSFORMING MARYLAND'S STUDENT SUCCESS



SmartStart
—EDUCATION—



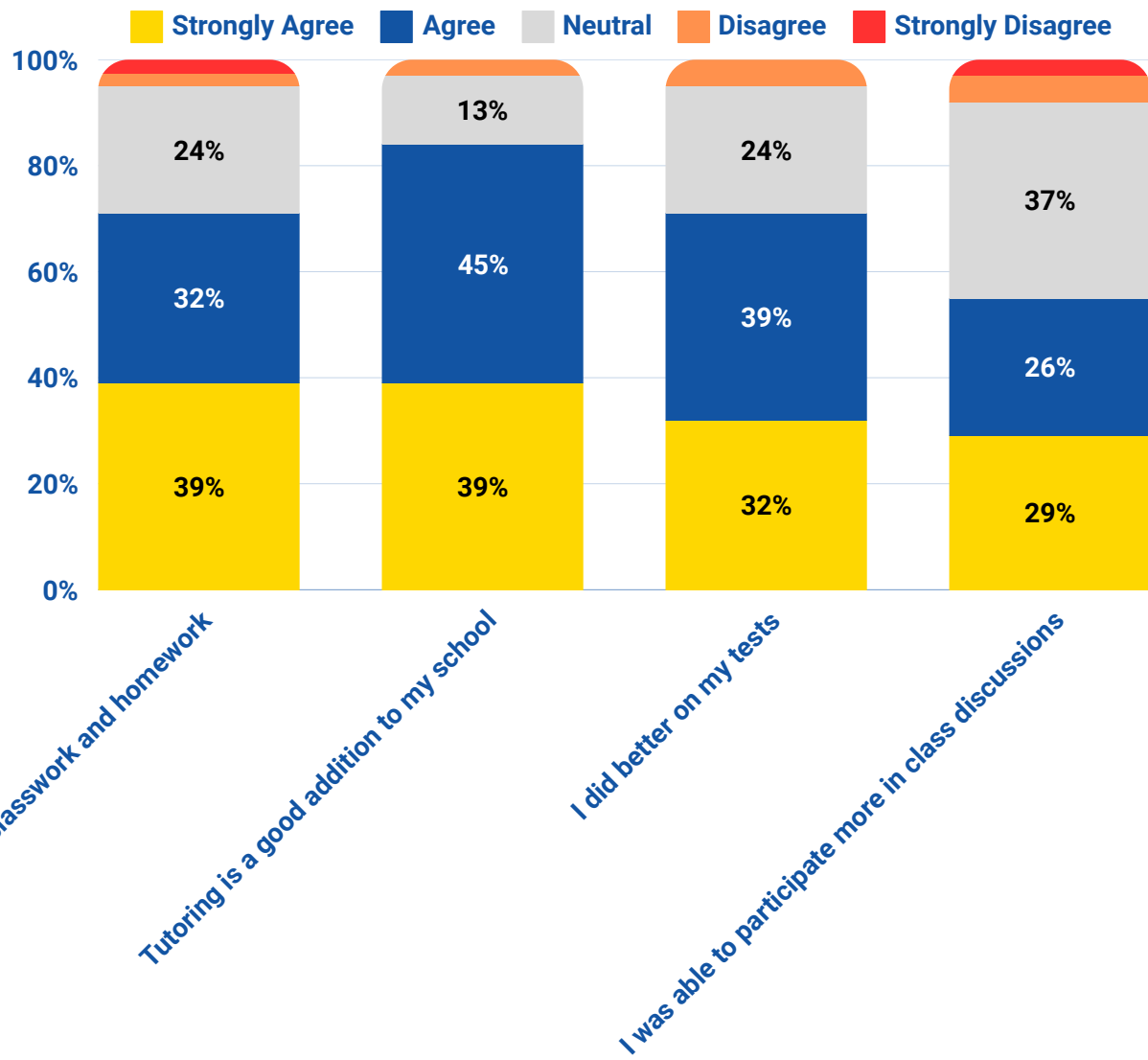
"I really liked this and I think it really helped me with my school work."



— Sudlersville Middle School Student



9/10 Students feel **increased confidence** in my ability to handle difficult class assignments.



"My tutor **always** cares about me."
- 96% of Students K-3



"I would **participate** in the program **again** if I could."
-82% of Students 4-12

Results
that Inspire



I try to **come to school early** so I can get extra help from my tutor in the mornings.

— 3rd Grade City Springs Student

JOIN THE MOVEMENT

High-dosage tutoring is reshaping education one session at a time. With **results this impactful**, it's clear: **High-dosage tutoring works for all ages.**

SmartStart Education-SB 429-HB 504- Excellence in

Uploaded by: Andrea Mansfield

Position: FWA



SmartStart Education
59 Elm Street, Suite 225
New Haven, CT 06510
888.262.1059

Dear Chairs Guzzone, Feldman, Barnes and Atterbeary, and Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation and Education, Energy, and the Environment Committees, and House Appropriations and Ways and Means Committees:

On behalf of SmartStart Education, we applaud the State of Maryland's continued dedication to advancing the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. This framework represents a critical step in ensuring equitable access to high-quality education and addressing persistent learning gaps.

I am writing to express our support for SB 429/HB 504, the Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act, and respectfully urge the inclusion of the proposed amendment: on page 26, in line 13, following "(1)" insert "EVIDENCED-BASED, DURING THE SCHOOL DAY IN-PERSON TUTORING;", which we believe will further strengthen its impact on Maryland's students.

As a trusted partner in Maryland's education systems, SmartStart Education has witnessed firsthand the transformative impact of evidence-based tutoring delivered in person during the school day, helping students overcome academic challenges and achieve measurable success. Research and our own program data demonstrate the effectiveness of this approach. For example, in one case study conducted at an elementary school in Glen Burnie, Maryland, students who received in-person, small-group tutoring achieved remarkable results. **Over a period of just 3.5 months, fourth-grade students demonstrated an average of 60% growth on pre- and post-curriculum assessments, while fifth-grade students achieved an average of 40% growth.** These academic gains highlight the potential of targeted, evidence-based interventions to significantly improve student outcomes.

The proposed amendment aligns with these proven strategies and offers an opportunity to provide Maryland's students with the tools they need to succeed. We respectfully request that the committee include this amendment, ensuring that evidence-based, during the school day, in-person tutoring remains a key component of the educational solutions supported by this legislation.

Thank you for your commitment to improving outcomes for our students. We welcome the opportunity to share additional insights or program data in support of this important effort.

Sincerely,

Isaak Aronson, PhD
CEO & Founder
SmartStart Education

FINAL FWA AACPS SB429.pdf

Uploaded by: Grace Wilson

Position: FWA



SB429 – EXCELLENCE IN MARYLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS ACT

February 19, 2025

BUDGET AND TAXATION

EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT

SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

Grace Wilson, Senior Legislative & Policy Specialist (410.440.1758)

Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) supports with amendments **SB429 – Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act**. This bill makes numerous changes to the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future law (Blueprint.) AACPS believes in the vision of the Blueprint to transform public education in the State by fully and equitably funding world class public education. AACPS is committed to implementing the Blueprint with fidelity, while also advocating for Blueprint reform as necessary to account for lessons learned during the first three years of implementation. While this bill proposes needed changes to improve the use of community school funding and improve teacher recruitment, this bill also proposes delays in funding that would be detrimental to community schools and public education. Accordingly, AACPS respectfully offers the following comments in support of SB429 with amendments.

Targeted Per Pupil Foundation

In 2016, the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education (Kirwan Commission) was established to review and assess current education funding formulas and accountability measures, and how each local school system is spending its funding, including the increased State funds provided through the Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act. The work of the Kirwan Commission confirmed what we already knew: Maryland public schools are in need of adequate funding. In 2021, the General Assembly overrode Governor’s veto of the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future which significantly changes State education policy based on the recommendations of the Kirwan Commission. The Blueprint law proposes a long-term phase in of mandated increases in State and local funding that represent the commitment Maryland must make to fully and equitably fund a world class public education for all of Maryland’s nearly 1 million students.

AACPS opposes the provisions of this bill that would reduce the targeted per pupil foundation amount beginning in FY2026, delaying the commitment of the Blueprint to adequately fund public education. The targeted per pupil foundation amount is currently insufficient to meet the needs of students given increased costs associated with providing special education services and transportation services. Enhanced foundation funding is necessary to ensure that districts can continue to provide world class public education to all of Maryland’s students. Furthermore, this reduction in the targeted per pupil foundation will result in a reduction in funding meant to support some of the State’s most vulnerable students, low-income and multilingual learners. Funding for these populations is a weight of the targeted per pupil foundation, any reduction to the foundation also results in reduced concentration of poverty grants and dedicated funding for multilingual learners. If there must be a targeted reduction in the per pupil funding, AACPS proposes that funding for concentration of poverty grants and multilingual learners be held harmless in addition to enhanced funding for students receiving special education services.

Collaborative Time Per Pupil Funding

AACPS opposes this delay in collaborative time per pupil funding. This proposed delay not only postpones necessary changes in the teaching profession to increase the amount of time teachers spend outside of the classroom collaborating with colleagues but will hinder AACPS from further expanding level four of our career ladder. Instead of funding collaborative time, this bill proposes to fund increased staff for the Maryland State Department of Education, teacher recruitment and retention programs, and professional development opportunities. The commitment to improving the teaching profession is a strong recruitment and retention tool for local school districts as we work to implement the Blueprint. This bill proposes to walk back on that commitment to teachers to elevate the teaching profession and allow them the opportunities to further develop their craft, one of the best recruitment and retention tools we have in Maryland.

Community Schools

AACPS has a growing community schools program and is starting to see the impact of the community school strategy on student engagement and achievement. Research is clear that when families and students have access to crucial wraparound services, students excel personally and academically. In fact, last year we had 12 AACPS schools that improved by at least one start on the Maryland Report Card. Of these 12 schools, nine were Blueprint Community Schools.

AACPS supports the provision of the bill to permit school systems to expend funding at the district level on behalf of community schools. Community school coordinators are overwhelmed with managing grants for the community schools program, including working on budget, payroll, and contracts. Allowing local school systems to use a limited amount of community schools funding to support schools in grant management will allow local school coordinators to focus on engaging families, supporting students, and working with community partners to grow the community school strategy to best meet the needs of their school community.

AACPS opposes the proposed pause in the number of and funding for community schools at FY2026 levels in FY2027 and 2028. As stated, the community schools strategy has been successful in Anne Arundel County. This bill proposes to deny future community schools the benefit of these wrap around services in order to address the State's structural deficit. This delay only exacerbates current funding challenges, leaving school systems without the resources to meet the needs of their most vulnerable learners and improve academic success.

Collaborative Time Innovation Grant

AACPS opposes the reduction in collaborative time per pupil funding to local school systems in order to establish the Collaborative Time Innovative Grant within the State Department of Education. School systems have been diligently working toward the goal of 40 percent collaborative time for teachers. In fact, we already have an approved plan from the Accountability and Implementation Board to begin this work. This change forces school districts to apply to receive funding we already expected to receive to implement increased collaborative time. If funding cannot be preserved to implement a change in career ladders statewide, AACPS recommends that career ladders approved by Accountability and Implementation Board be eligible to receive funding through this grant.

National Teacher Recruitment Campaign

AACPS opposes the creation of a state National Teacher Recruitment Campaign as implementation of the collaborative time provisions of the Blueprint would be a much more effective recruitment and retention tool for local school systems.

Maryland Teacher Relocation Incentive Grant

AACPS supports incentives for teachers to relocate from other states to Maryland. Moving expenses are frequently cited as reasons for declining a job with the school system. This is a resource for educators licensed in other states who may not otherwise be able to afford to move to Maryland to ease the current teacher shortage we face.

Academic Excellence Program and Fund

AACPS opposes the establishment of the Academic Excellence Program and associated fund. Once again, the bill proposes to use funding already anticipated by local school districts to implement collaborative time to create a professional development program at the State level. While we support the objective of the program to establish high-quality, job embedded professional development at the State level, local districts are already doing this work. This provision of the bill would duplicate those efforts unnecessarily at the State level.

Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** committee report on SB429.

2025 Sign On Letter for HB 504 and SB 429.pdf

Uploaded by: Holly Kleiderlein

Position: FWA



To: House Ways and Means Committee
 House Appropriations Committee
 Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee
 Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

Bill: House Bill 504/Senate Bill 429 – Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act

Date: February 19, 2025

Position: Favorable with Amendments

Our organizations are writing with concerns about the proposed revisions to wrap-around services in *House Bill 504/Senate Bill 429 – Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act*. We request that the Committees delete the following language on page 27 in lines 2-7:

(12) Improving the learning environment ~~AND NUMBER OF HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS~~ at the school; ~~and~~

(13) Any professional development for teachers and school staff to quickly identify students who are in need of these resources; ~~AND~~

~~(14) OTHER SERVICES AS DEFINED BY THE DEPARTMENT IN GUIDANCE OR REGULATION.~~

The proposed language would dilute necessary funding for wraparound health, social services, and educational support services at community schools. Wraparound services are absolutely essential to ensure educational success for students from communities with high rates of health and economic disparities.¹ The Blueprint already provides community schools with the flexibility to invest where the needs are highest – in school health and wellness personnel, educational supports, or school-based health centers. **Please preserve the integrity of the Blueprint by safeguarding wrap around services for community schools.** If we can provide any additional information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.

Maryland Assembly for School-Based Health Care
Maryland Association of School Health Nurses
Maryland School Counselors Association

Maryland Occupational Therapy Association
National Association of Social Workers – Maryland Chapter

ⁱ Cumming, T. M., Strnadová, I., Lee, H. M. & Lonergan, R. (2022). Education-centered formal Wraparound Services in support of school-aged students with complex support needs: A systematic review. *Australasian Journal of Special and Inclusive Education*, 46, 47-60

Stenersen, M. R., Kelly, A., Bracey, J., Marshall, T., Cummings, M. Clark, K., & Kaufman, J. (2021). Understanding racial-ethnic disparities in Wraparound care for youths with emotional and behavioral disorders. *Psychiatric Services*, 73, 526-532

Stenersen, M. R., Kelly, A., Bracey, J., Marshall, T., Cummings, M. Clark, K., & Kaufman, J. (2021). Understanding racial-ethnic disparities in Wraparound care for youths with emotional and behavioral disorders. *Psychiatric Services*, 73, 526-532

Stenersen, M. R., Kelly, A., Bracey, J., Marshall, T., Cummings, M. Clark, K., & Kaufman, J. (2021). Understanding racial-ethnic disparities in Wraparound care for youths with emotional and behavioral disorders. *Psychiatric Services*, 73, 526-532

SB0429-APP_MACo_SWA.pdf

Uploaded by: Kevin Kinnally

Position: FWA



Senate Bill 429

Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**
WITH AMENDMENTS

Date: February 19, 2025

To: Budget and Taxation and Education,
Energy, and the Environment Committees

From: Sarah Sample and Kevin Kinnally

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 429, **WITH AMENDMENTS**. This bill adjusts the State's visionary education plan, the Blueprint for Maryland's Future (Blueprint). The primary goals of the proposed legislation focus on bolstering efforts in recruitment and retention for certified teachers as well as pausing and scaling back certain elements to adjust strategies.

The proposal to pause collaborative time as well as flat-fund the community schools will allow state and local officials to focus first on some of the missing pieces that will enhance the strategy and framework for those programs long term. While those provisions of the bill do not have a significant immediate impact on county finances, they could allow for school systems to focus on the most pressing challenges immediately, and continue to work toward the broader goals of the Blueprint. Expending resources and mandating progress before the appropriate foundation is in place will only serve to undermine the long-term success of those programs by developing them on precarious footing. Significant reforms, as those prescribed by the Blueprint, hold great promise but must be built to last. Taking time to do it correctly rather than immediately, regardless of obstacles, will serve students, educators, and communities better in the long run.

These shifts have the potential to come at a time when the Blueprint plan faces an environment unlike anything envisioned during its initial forecasts. The pandemic, labor market, and cost drivers have altered the underpinning of this landmark effort. County governments have been funding partners, making record-setting financial commitments over three years of the roll-out, with the vast majority of jurisdictions funding well over their local share of Blueprint costs. Even with these historic investments, education experts from across the state have highlighted challenges both operational and financial that could compromise the shared outcomes of the plan.

While counties appreciate the Governor's willingness to bring the Blueprint into alignment with fiscal and implementation realities, the expense to taxpayers is still great. The investments in education must continue to comply with the strictest transparency and accountability standards, especially as progress

relates to the new investments SB 429 demands. To this end, counties respectfully request an amendment to the bill to require the Maryland State Department of Education to report annually on progress in recruitment and retention that are specific to the proposed adjustments.

SB 429 also presents an opportunity to address other obvious and demonstrated challenges of the Blueprint. There has been a substantial, and in some instances unnecessary, degree of burden that local school systems have endured due to the overly prescriptive nature of Blueprint funding. Superintendents have made clear that the funding formula and strategy is a one-size-fits-all approach that lacks an understanding and appreciation for the diversity of communities across Maryland.

School leaders across the jurisdictions have respectfully requested, and counties echo that request here, to give more flexibility on allocating and reporting funding in certain instances. Specifically, an amendment to SB 429 that allows financial reporting to be aggregated at the school level rather than by Blueprint category would ease compliance significantly, and maintain the integrity of the mandate that 75% of funding follow students to their schools. The second amendment request is to provide a waiver for small schools to exceed the 75/25 mandate if they have 350 or fewer students. This will help relieve some of the severe funding deficiencies that understandably persist in schools that fall outside the effective recognition of the current funding formula.

SB 429, with the reasonable changes outlined above, can ensure accountability for taxpayer dollars but also provide local school systems with the flexibility necessary to ensure the reform plan can, and will, actually work for all students. Accordingly, MACo urges a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report for **SB 429**.

SB 429 Testimony

Uploaded by: Mary Pat Fannon

Position: FWA



Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director
1217 S. Potomac Street
Baltimore, MD 21224
410-935-7281
marypat.fannon@pssam.org

BILL: SB 429/HB 504

TITLE: Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act

DATE: February 19, 2025

POSITION: Favorable with Amendments

COMMITTEE: Senate Budget and Taxation & Education, Energy, and the Environment Committees
House Appropriations and Ways and Means Committees

CONTACT: Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, PSSAM

The Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM), on behalf of all twenty-four local school superintendents, **supports SB 429/HB 504 with amendments.**

This omnibus bill makes significant changes to funding formulas enacted as part of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, creates new programs related to literacy initiatives and teacher recruitment, makes changes to the community schools program, and requires a study on special education funding.

We appreciate the Governor's interest in ensuring the long-term sustainability of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future and his desire to incorporate additional initiatives to enhance student success, but as the leaders on the front lines of Maryland's 10-year education reform we can only offer limited support for this legislation. Anticipating the Administration's desire for changes to the Blueprint due to the State's looming fiscal crisis, we asked the Governor last fall for a seat at the table to identify solutions that would not hinder the long-term success of the Blueprint, namely, solutions that would continue to support student growth and academic achievement.

Unfortunately, this legislation does not protect the progress we have made, and seriously jeopardizes the transformational vision of the Blueprint.

Despite our frustrations and criticisms of this legislation, we strongly request the opportunity to work with the Governor and the General Assembly to craft solutions and modifications that are achievable, ensure the highest return on Blueprint investments, maximize efficiencies, and maintain the promise and momentum of the early successes of the Blueprint.

Pausing Collaborative Time and Commensurate Funding Changes

This legislation makes significant funding changes by altering the target per pupil “foundation” funding starting in Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 through FY 2030 by delaying the “collaborative time” initiative by four years; provisions are made to hold special education funding harmless. The legislation creates new Collaborative Time Innovation Demonstration Grants over the same four year period to test innovative teacher collaboration models. Funding can be used for compensation for additional staff, planning of new master schedules, professional development, technical assistance, and other uses approved by MSDE. To be eligible, an application must be co-signed with a local employee organization.

PSSAM strongly opposes the delay in collaborative time and the commensurate funding reductions, as well as the development of the Demonstration Grants. The projected loss of State funding under this proposal is estimated to total \$1.557 billion, with an additional loss of \$1.167 billion of locally required spending, resulting in a four-year reduction of \$2.724 billion in direct funding to schools.

The Blueprint’s vision for collaborative time was ambitious, creating an eight-year phase-in to reach the ultimate goal of achieving 60% of a teacher’s time in front of students, and 40% of their time devoted to collaborative work. The Kirwan Commission’s consideration of “collaborative time” was always more expansive than just hiring new teachers. In fact, suitable activities for the 40% of time centered around deepening LEA leadership development and professional learning opportunities, as well as traditional individual “planning time” understood by most laypeople.

In fact, part of the 40% time envisioned small group support, including:

- Working with students struggling to meet college and career readiness;
- Interventions for families and students suffering from chronic absenteeism;
- High leverage tutoring opportunities;
- Co-teaching/modeling for special education and multilingual learners (MLL);
- Time for IEP and MLL-plan work and support;
- More special education and MLL classroom support staff, especially for newer or conditionally hired teachers;
- Peer observations to see model lessons;
- Behavioral supports for students (more adults in a classroom to allow for more small group rotations and other supports);

- Working with students and families needing social-emotional supports;
- Collaborative time with paras and teaching assistants to ensure that they are prepared for instructional support;
- Support for conditionally hired teachers and those teaching outside of their certification areas; and,
- Restorative practice interventions with staff who have specific training.

Clearly the Kirwan Commission’s intention was not just hiring more teachers.

It is very important to recognize that the best recruitment is retention of teachers. And the phased in funding is so important to retaining staff as you grow your workforce and change staffing configurations. The biggest issue here is that when LEAs strive to reach 60% of teaching time, they need the funding flexibility to grow into those structures. Schools are constantly reallocating staffing in grades and classes to account for discrepancies in teacher tenure, expertise, curriculum, etc. So at any given time, you have classes that are under the teacher-student ratio and some that are slightly over, but you need the funding to cover the transition - the phase-in - not requiring the hiring of a massive amount of new teachers at once. However, stopping the funding will delay the progress in reaching the expected teaching/planning ratios.

The early funding priorities of the Blueprint were to bolster the teaching profession, including the requirement to increase teacher salaries by 10% by July 1, 2024, compared to their salaries on June 30, 2019, as well as provide incentives for the attainment of National Board Certification, and reaching a minimum salary of \$60,000 by FY 2027. Teacher recruitment has always been a priority and year-round activity for LEAs, but the pandemic dealt a significant blow to these efforts.

Regardless, local school systems have been working hard to achieve these goals in the first three years of the implementation, while planning for the eight-year phase-in of collaborative time. In fact, for almost a year, LEAs and their staff have been requesting guidance and direction from the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and the Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB) on the expectations for the phase-in because local implementation plans of collaborative time are due July 1, 2025. LEA staff and superintendents have made it explicitly clear that these plans will take time to create, and need to be negotiated with their bargaining units; negotiations started in earnest in early fall 2025 for the FY 2026 budget.

Never once was there a formal or explicit indication or expectation that 15,000 teachers would need to be hired by the full phase-in of the plan, OR that significant hiring would be required in the early years of implementation.

Without clear direction or engagement from either entity, LEAs began conversations with their bargaining units and made assumptions of what would be expected in these early years. LEAs reasonably expected their July 1, 2025 plans would include laying the foundation for the implementation, including:

- Assessment of current teaching/collaborative time for each grade band;
- Master planning ideas to accomplish innovative ideas such as co-teaching, small group configurations for differentiated learning; alternative support staffing models; hybrid learning models across grade levels; the use of outside resources to allow for more flexibility for classroom teachers, such as tutoring programs;
- Short and long-term staff recruitment and retention, including creative partnerships with local teacher preparation programs and institutes of higher education to develop workforce pipelines for local shortages or priorities; and,
- Space considerations (facility needs).

In fact, the AIB currently has several consultants working directly with LEAs assessing the actual staffing needs. This work should more accurately estimate, with real time data, projected teacher needs. We suspect this exercise will yield a much more realistic number than 15,000 teachers needed.

The teacher shortage is not new - not in 2025 and not even in 2016 when the Kirwan Commission began its work. In fact, MSDE has been collecting data on the shortage since 1996. **The justification for pausing our collaborative time work because we need to hire 15,000 teachers is unfair and sets the stage for LEA failure.** The health of the Blueprint funding is in trouble, but to use this false narrative to undergird and justify the reductions that will be faced by local school systems is wholly unfair and unsupported without localized evidence and data.

The decision to “pause” collaborative time was made by the AIB at a single, quasi public meeting in January, 2025 without any opportunity for meaningful input by stakeholders.

The AIB leadership has criticized our organization for recommendations we published last December; but taken together, all thirty of our recommendations would not alter the vision or faithful implementation of the Blueprint compared to this single change that will irrevocably halt the success and momentum of the Blueprint. This policy decision to pause collaborative time has been the single biggest change made to the Blueprint to date. Again, made without serious or meaningful public discourse by educators, advocates, but most significantly without input from the superintendents who have been diligently requesting a seat at the table with the decision makers on ‘all-things Blueprint.’ We had no opportunity to make our case against the single most important change proposed and adopted by the AIB who are statutorily mandated to implement the Blueprint with fidelity.

We are not naive about the Blueprint's impact on the State's future fiscal health - and this proposal is not about a teacher shortage - this is about money and slowing down the cost of the Blueprint.

We are deeply frustrated at the Administration's financial solution being retroactively endorsed by the AIB through such a dramatic policy shift without any meaningful deliberation or even understanding the fiscal impact on the LEAs. This decision flies in the face of the Commission's comprehensive work and undermines the Blueprint's innovative approach that every Pillar is transformative; but, it is the coalescence of the five Pillars that creates dynamic outcomes and achievements. Removing the funding and pausing the collaborative time in Year 4 undercuts the foundation of transformation in every sense. We remain incredulous to the idea that such a diversion from the original Blueprint will go unchecked in the name of an expectation of hiring 15,000 teachers just "revealed" to the public in news stories less than three months ago.

We did not plan - or want - to have a conversation about the insufficiency of the existing Foundation funding this year. However, now faced with the losses proposed by the Governor's education bill - we are compelled to discuss the impacts on our budget on behalf of our staff and most importantly our students.

The truth is funding and student achievement go hand-in-hand and we are not going to be able to make the progress in student achievement without the Blueprint funding we have been counting on and fought for all those years ago.

Under this legislation funding is reduced resulting in a 3.11% increase in per pupil spending over FY '25. This is not an historic investment or an investment that will yield the outcomes our students deserve. To compound our distress, FY '25 was the lowest increase in per pupil funding over the 10 years of the Blueprint - a 1.7% increase in funding. Last year budgets were balanced through a variety of strategies including:

- Using reserve funds (if LEAs had any);
- Delaying the expansion of PreK;
- Increasing class sizes; and,
- Staff and teacher reductions.

But superintendents were optimistic knowing that FY '26 would return to more appropriate funding - an almost 5% increase in per pupil funding.

In Maryland, education is a shared funding obligation between state and local governments, so in addition to the scaffolding effect of reducing the Foundation funding on the compensatory education and multilingual learner formulas, there is the elimination of required local funding to schools.

For FY '26 school systems will lose \$234 million in direct education funding for next school year.....and none of this helps the State's FY '26 budget deficit. Reducing the Foundation as envisioned by this legislation will result in much deeper cuts this year.

- Districts will have to cut teachers;
- Districts will have to reopen bargaining agreements regarding increased salaries in keeping with the Blueprint mandates;
- Districts will increase class sizes; and,
- Districts will see stagnant growth in student achievement.

In addition to ensuring the academic success of Maryland's students, we must voraciously advocate for adequate funding of public schools. In fact, this critical responsibility is enshrined in COMAR 4-205(g)(5): *The County Superintendent shall try in every way to awaken public interest and improve educational conditions....* and in COMAR 4-205(k)(2): *The County Superintendent shall seek in every way to secure adequate funds from local authorities for the support and development of the public schools....* We take these responsibilities seriously and will continue to advocate for necessary resources to ensure student success.

Concentration of Poverty (CPG)/Community Schools

This legislation proposes a pause in the expansion of community schools that will “save” the State \$473 million over the original, promised Blueprint funding. This is done by freezing funding at FY '26 levels for two years; funding will resume in FY '29 based on the amount the eligible school would have received in FY '27. The bill allows for district-wide use of up to 50% of the funding for school systems with more than two community schools. It expands the definition of “wrap-around services” by community schools to include anything identified by MSDE in guidance or regulation, as well as specific expansions to include (1) increased behavioral and physical health services; (2) chronic absenteeism intervention programs; (3) increasing the number of highly qualified teachers; and, (4) community-based educational and workforce training for families. Lastly, the bill shifts regulatory oversight and compliance from the AIB to the MSDE, giving MSDE the authority to issue requirements for community schools' implementation plans to include measurable goals, and to review plans annually instead of every 3 years. The MSDE is authorized to withhold funding or take other compliance actions, and can hire additional employees to provide direct guidance to local school systems. The bill redirects \$8.2 million over four years to MSDE to support these increased responsibilities.

PSSAM is supportive of the operational and oversight changes to MSDE, as well as the expanded uses of the community schools funding, but opposes the pause in Community Schools funding for two years.

For the last two years, our organization has strongly requested flexibility in community schools funding. We have been very pleased with the exponential growth in community schools and the corresponding academic improvements and positive community impact. This bill very astutely recognizes that allowing districts to use some of this funding for district-wide activities will yield tremendous economies of scale and enhance best practices and cooperation in school systems. Further, we strongly support the bill's recognition that a limited amount of funding should be used for fiscal management and compliance. We understand the hesitancy of funders to allow for administrative spending, but its importance has been well-documented and supported. Federal Title programs have long acknowledged the need to set aside funding for administrative tasks, such as budgeting, contracts and grant writing, to support the hands-on work. Centralizing and supporting these tasks at the district office ensures that the totality of the CPG funds are used with fidelity with the appropriate staff managing these essential funding and procurement functions. Freeing up these management burdens allows school coordinators to concentrate on engaging families, supporting students, and collaborating with community partners.

However, we would prefer a formal triennial evaluation of each community school instead of the proposed annual evaluation; it is important to note that these schools also undergo periodic audits to ensure that funds are being spent appropriately and in accordance with their implementation plans. Community schools are also subject to annual local budget processes, which are available to the public, so there is continual oversight from the districts as well.

Lastly, we request that any new regulations promulgated or guidelines developed by MSDE be developed in deep consultation with the LEAs, and that any new reporting requirements are given to LEAs at least six months before they are required.

Teacher Recruitment and Grow Your Own Programs

The legislation establishes a *National Teacher Recruitment Campaign*, appropriating \$2.1 million over 4 years, as well as the *Maryland Teacher Relocation Incentive Grant* (\$4.3 million over 4 years) for out-of-state licensed teachers willing to teach in high-need schools. The bill modifies the *Grow Your Own Educators Grant Program* to focus on experiential learning pathways, minimum mentor teacher ratios and the designation of a program administrator from the local school system, funded with \$134 million of Blueprint funding over 4 years.

The legislation also implements the Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact that allows teachers licensed in member states to receive equivalent licensure in Maryland without redundant testing or coursework, and provides special provisions for active military members and their spouses to expedite licensure. ***PSSAM fully supports the Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact.***

As for the other teacher recruitment provisions, PSSAM appreciates the MSDE's interest in taking the lead on these teacher recruitment and training initiatives but we have serious concerns about the breadth of these new initiatives and the proposed structure of the programs. We do not believe a case has been made that the Department can more effectively manage a statewide recruitment campaign without meaningful input by the local school systems who have not been consulted at all on these new ideas. There has been no effort or outreach to determine what is already available and working in local districts that the MSDE could help support and grow. Several districts already have longstanding recruitment programs, some more generous than the proposed plan, and others that have been carefully negotiated with bargaining units. Before building a new statewide infrastructure for these efforts, it is important to understand the current efforts underway across the 24 school systems.

This is a huge amount of funding for initiatives we know nothing about and make changes to a Grow Your Own Program that was just spearheaded by MSEA, and well-deliberated and established by the General Assembly last legislative session. Without more specific information about these proposals, we cannot support them at this time. *If the General Assembly agrees that these new programs are most appropriately managed and run by the MSDE, we strongly request that General Funds are identified instead of diverting Blueprint funds to these new initiatives.*

The School Leadership Training Programs

The bill also alters the leadership training programs originally envisioned by the Blueprint and amended by the Maryland General Assembly last session. The program is split into two components - the existing program becomes The School System Leadership Training Program, with required participation by local superintendents and the chair and vice chairs of a county board, as well as the State Superintendent and the leadership of the State Board and the AIB. Currently there is \$5 million budgeted for this program. The new Maryland School Leadership Academy, costing approximately \$1,250,000 a year, would be optional for principals, assistant principals, other school-based or county board leaders, or others who may benefit. The leadership academy would last for 12 months, be job-embedded, and effective school leaders will be selected as mentors who may be paid a stipend.

PSSAM supports the leadership training programs but requests significant amendments to clarify the General Assembly's intention for these trainings. The original intent of this training was to embed the tenets of the Blueprint in State education leaders. Last year the General Assembly made changes to the program reflecting the fact that the training was almost two years behind and expanded the training's purposes to more broadly address leadership. We feel strongly that if the General Assembly wants to incur almost \$7 million a year in training, these programs are not achieving the original, or updated goals.

Currently, these trainings are not directly related to the work of the Blueprint and largely reflect work that is done in any master's program. In fact, the Department could require that Maryland higher education programs incorporate more Blueprint specific curriculum into their programs to truly embed the Blueprint culture into future educators. We appreciate the Department's attempts to make these trainings more salient and meaningful, but we are not there yet.

As for the new Maryland School Leadership Academy, we believe principals and school-based leaders are the key to the success of the Blueprint. We would like to work in partnership with the AIB and the MSDE to fully develop professional development modules that can be deployed uniformly across the State through existing professional learning communities and opportunities. In our experiences, some of the most successful professional development programs out of the MSDE use a train-the-trainer model that can be adapted and incorporated into local school system trainings throughout the year.

In addition, the statute needs to clarify the expectations for the School System Leadership Training regarding the number of times a superintendent and board member is required to complete the training. Lastly, much of this content could be incorporated into existing leadership training conducted by State associations. For example, our organization has a year-long Aspiring Superintendents Academy, as well as aspiring principal academies run by the two Principals' Associations in Maryland. Lastly, the Maryland Association of Boards (MABE) holds annual training sessions for new and existing Board members that would be ideal to incorporate curriculum developed by the MSDE and the AIB.

Academic Excellence Program and Fund

This legislation also creates the Academic Excellence Program and Fund. The Program's purpose is professional development to improve early literacy and numeracy through the use of "coordinators of professional learning" and "instructional coaches" managed by MSDE. Schools would be identified based on accountability data, and a statewide data collection initiative would be established to monitor fund usage and student outcomes. This is funded with \$228 million of Blueprint funds over four years.

PSSAM strongly opposes the creation of this new and expansive initiative. While literacy is certainly a key element of the Blueprint's goals, a state-led initiative such as this was never envisioned or discussed by the Kirwan Commission. This well-meaning initiative is a significant departure from the Blueprint legislation, siphoning off tremendous resources from the Blueprint Fund. We strongly oppose this funding proposal and suggest that if this is a priority of the State, it be funded with General Funds. Local superintendents cannot support redirecting promised funding to districts, in addition to what is likely to also siphon off LEA staff to move into statewide "coordinator" and "coach" positions.

Special Education Funding

In addition to holding special education per-pupil funding harmless from the proposed reductions, the legislation requires an independent study on special education funding on or before January 1, 2026. In consultation with the AIB, the MSDE shall contract with an independent public or private entity and, at a minimum, review and make recommendations on (i) the costs of special education in the State; (ii) the rising costs of special education for prekindergarten students and the appropriate funding formula for those students assumed to be covered in the prekindergarten per pupil funding allocation under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future; (iii) the implications of the design assumptions in the existing special education funding

structure related to long-term spending and costs; (iv) the establishment of a system of multiple weights for special education funding based on disability and level of services and support needed.

PSSAM strongly supports this study as it was one of our organization’s recommendations to the MSDE and AIB in the fall of 2024. Local school systems spend over \$1,038,848,168 in direct special education services that are *NOT* reimbursed by the state and federal governments ([see linked chart](#)). Special education funding is the untold story of education funding at the local level - how this massive underfunding crowds out our ability to implement the Blueprint and “reallocate resources.” Every school system would be able to fully implement the Blueprint and exceed goals and expectations, if they were able to use the Foundation as intended, without the need to cover these profound deficits in special education.

Special education costs are **the legitimate and necessary** costs of educating our most vulnerable students; these are services that students and families are entitled to and we are committed to providing them. However, there is no denying how extraordinary these costs are, and they will continue to grow. The connecting and relevant point here is that the Kirwan Commission never truly and openly examined these costs and pressures on local education budgets. The clock was running out and the work was set aside to be dealt with by a special education work group. Years later that group is struggling to get its recommendations the attention they deserve. In the meantime, local school systems continue to fund special education to ensure the services for the students

We appreciate the Maryland General Assembly’s careful considerations of our comments and concerns. We look forward to working collaboratively with the committees to craft more reasonable and equitable solutions to address the sustainability of the Blueprint. At its core, this legislation undercuts the building block of the Blueprint by reducing promised Foundation funding through reduced state and local funding for the life of the Blueprint, and diverts resources to new initiatives at the State level that were never contemplated by the Kirwan Commission or discussed with local school systems.

HB 504 SB 429 - FWA - Lemle, MSEA.pdf

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Position: FWA

FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS
House Bill 504
Senate Bill 429
Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act

House Ways and Means Committee
House Appropriations Committee
Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee
Senate Budget & Taxation Committee
February 19, 2025

Paul Lemle
President

The Maryland State Education Association offers this Favorable with Amendments testimony to the Governor's Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act, House Bill 504 and Senate Bill 429. This bill does a number of things to shore up the educator pipeline and address staffing shortages that MSEA supports and appreciates. But there are several significant proposals in this legislation with far-reaching yet avoidable negative ramifications that will disproportionately impact at-risk students—students from families with low incomes and students who are multilingual learners. MSEA urges amendments to those sections in order to prevent support for these students from falling behind.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA also represents over 40 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3 million-member National Education Association (NEA).

When considering this legislation, it's important to contextualize this bill in the greater discussion of the FY26 state operating budget and the Blueprint for Maryland's Future Fund. The actions taken within this bill have no bearing on the state's FY26 budget deficit, as all of the funding changes in this bill and the Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act (HB 352/SB 321) are contained to the Blueprint for Maryland's Future Fund and do not affect the General Fund. As has been stated regularly throughout session by DLS, legislators, and advocates, the Blueprint is fully funded through FY26 and nearly through FY27.

While this bill does a variety of things, we will focus our testimony on a handful of the proposals. Overall, we are pleased with the thoughtful focus on addressing the educator shortage. This has been a focus for MSEA coming out of the pandemic, and builds on the work of the Governor and General Assembly in 2023's Maryland Educator Shortage Reduction Act (HB 1219). This year's HB 504/SB 429 along with the BRFA stand up the state's Grow Your Own (GYO) program in earnest and allocate \$33 million per year for the next 3 years. GYO is a proven strategy to support education support professionals (support staff, such as paraeducators) who want to become teachers in order to expand the teacher workforce and narrow shortages. While we have



suggested amendments to the programmatic specifications, MSEA is excited to build on last year's work.

Additionally, the bill enters Maryland in the Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact and establishes \$2,000 relocation stipends for educators who relocate to Maryland. The Compact was developed with the input of a range of public education stakeholders, including the National Education Association, the National Association of State Boards of Education, the National School Boards Association, and the National Association of Elementary School Principals. Joining the Compact is an opportunity to make teaching more accessible for committed, certified educators who may be considering a move to Maryland and helps address the state's educator shortage. MSEA supports these measures that will result in better staffing and better services for students.

While MSEA appreciates the investments and policy proposals discussed above, we are concerned about some of the other proposals that make meaningful changes to the implementation of the Blueprint and will substantially impact students who need the most support. MSEA has been a leading voice on the importance of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. While we agree that we need to balance the Blueprint's future with implementation realities, we all need to understand both the policy and budget implications. And we need to be clear-eyed in recognizing that passing this bill as written would lead to deep and counter-productive budget cuts to expected funding levels for our most vulnerable students.

Collaborative Time

MSEA members believe collaborative time is worth the long-term investment and reflects one of the hallmarks of the Kirwan Commissions' deep study of high-ranking school systems. In fact, collaborative time is a key to the Blueprint's Pillar II, High Quality and Diverse Teachers and Leaders. Keeping a commitment to the goals of collaborative time is absolutely vital; but if any pause to the scheduled implementation occurs, it should be considered temporary and not disproportionately harm students receiving special education services, multilingual learners, and students in poverty. We must end the educator shortage and continue our progress and plans towards implementing collaborative time statewide.

Maryland teachers spend on average 80% of their workday in classroom instruction. The Kirwan Commission studied high performing schools around the world as it developed the Blueprint for Maryland's Future and found that these systems reserved more time for collaborative time for educators. The Blueprint therefore reflects this best practice and set a goal of making collaborative time up to 40% of a teacher's day. Collaborative time describes the part of the workday that teachers are not in front of a class; instead, they are enriching their pedagogy and support of students by broadening, updating, and building skills and working closely with students, families, and colleagues. The term 'collaborative time,' as currently defined under the law, includes all work activity beyond a teacher's classroom teaching responsibilities.

During collaborative time, teachers:

- Develop IEPs/504 plans, share data, and participate with colleagues and families in meetings

- Improve and plan lessons while individualizing instruction in response to specific student needs
- Post materials of instruction, lessons, and grades on student-facing web pages
- Provide constructive feedback and grades; meet with students
- Collaborate with peers to improve lesson design, student support and pedagogy
- Mentor and be mentored to improve their practice
- Develop student interventions for improved outcomes
- Communicate and consult with parents and guardians to support family engagement
- Respond to all communications from students, educators, school administrators, and families
- Write letters of recommendation for college admissions, scholarship consideration, jobs, and honor societies

In the Kirwan Commission's deliberations, they supported the goal of implementing collaborative time by adding funding to the foundation program, which is the per pupil funding a school district receives. HB 504/SB 429 pauses the goal of implementing collaborative time and the associated funding for four years.

However, we cannot responsibly just cut collaborative time from the foundation formula. Funding levels for students receiving special education services, multilingual learners, and students in poverty are determined by multiplying the foundation amount by certain weights to deliver increased funding for these students who benefit from additional support and services—importantly, services that are not at all related to the goal of collaborative time itself. Pausing collaborative time as this bill does would mean a cut to the expected increases to the foundation formula, which would disproportionately set back students in poverty, those receiving special education services, and multilingual learners. This is the opposite of the intent of the Blueprint. You can see in **Appendix 1** how this reduction in per pupil funding, as compared to current law, would affect funding in each county.

If a collaborative time delay moves forward, hold harmless grants would be a straightforward way to isolate the collaborative time pause from the rest of the formula and prevent it from negatively impacting these students. Indeed, this bill and the governor's budget holds special education students harmless from the impacts of the collaborative time pause. Yet it does not hold students in poverty (signified as compensatory education in the funding formula) or multilingual learners harmless. This amounts to a roughly \$80 million cut to expected funding levels in FY26 alone, and more in future years of a collaborative time pause.

There have been some arguments that suggest a delay in collaborative time reduces increases, but that the per pupil funding in all categories is still increasing. That is only partially true. The delay, without any hold harmless, means we spend less in the per pupil weight for multilingual learners next year than this year. It means by the fourth year of the delay in 2029, we would be funding the weight for comp ed students at a per pupil level more consistent with 2024. That is shocking. At a time when needs are growing, when 22% inflation since 2019 has handicapped the formula already, and our commitment was supposed to be increasing, we would be doing less per pupil for students in poverty.



Appendix 1 outlines the specifics associated with MSEA's analysis of the year by year, county by county impact to per pupil funding in the foundation, compensatory education, and multilingual categories with a split of both state and local money. Per pupil formulas are built as a total cost, with fiscal commitments from both state and local government partners. Therefore, these proposed cuts are a combination of state dollars and local dollars and any fair analysis must show the impact of both.

It is possible to find a balance on policy that has significant reinvestments of Blueprint funds without unnecessarily hurting students in poverty and without unnecessarily delaying supports for multilingual learners. Multilingual learners are the fastest growing segment of our student population and, as Superintendent Wright reported recently, have the largest gap in student achievement. There is no justification for reducing our efforts for these students.

The current reality is that some of our LEAs are already operationalizing collaborative time without the additional state funding promised by the Blueprint. If a delay moves forward and if the Collaborative Time Innovation Demonstration Grants proposed by this bill are retained, MSEA suggests an amendment to strike this language that would only allow the grants for new programs. School systems should be able to pay for staffing if they have already been hired to help the school system meet its collaborative time goals. Additionally, MSEA suggests stronger collective bargaining language for grant applications from LEAs.

Community Schools

Community schools are an essential strategy that provide comprehensive support and resources that are selected to meet their students' and families' needs and interests, which are rooted in the understanding and perspectives of the surrounding community. Since the design of the community school reflects the local needs, interests, assets, and priorities of that school, each model may look different. Maryland's community school expansion, one of the largest in the country, will make a huge difference for students and families in communities where poverty has erected barriers to learning and where families have few resources to supplement what schools provide. Per MSDE, in FY25 45% of schools in Maryland are identified as community schools, totaling 621 statewide.

At a recent briefing in the Joint Hearing Room, MSDE, MSEA, PSSAM, MABE, and other stakeholders identified the state's commitment to community schools as one of the Blueprint's biggest successes. So it defies both logic and best practices to delay community school supports (Concentration of Poverty grants in the language of the formula) at all, much less for two years, as proposed in this bill. This bill proposes pausing funding at FY26 levels for two years, so schools would not get FY27 funding levels until FY29. Delays would compound the harm to students in concentrated poverty, especially alongside the double cut to expected funding levels for these students due to the collaborative time delay discussed above, moving us further away from a stated goal to end childhood poverty.

This proposal is not only misguided; it would also create confusion and paralysis in a significant proportion of current community schools. When a school is designated as a community school, it receives a personnel grant for the first year. That grant allows a school to hire a community school



coordinator and a healthcare practitioner. The community school coordinator conducts a school needs assessment to determine the needs of the students and what services and programs to establish. In the second year, the school is supposed to get per-pupil concentration of poverty grant funding for programs associated with the needs assessment. A delay in the per-pupil programmatic funding will stymie the approximately 167 schools that are currently in their first year. Those schools will have the personnel grants with no programmatic funding; in other words they will be able to identify the needs of the community but then have no resources to actually address them as a community school is designed to. MSEA urges the General Assembly not to move forward with any delayed implementation of community schools as proposed in this bill.

While we strongly oppose this significant reduction in community school funding, MSEA supports the proposal of adding staff at MSDE to work on community school implementation. We also support the updated definition of wrap around services to include “highly qualified teachers.”

Academic Excellence Academy

While the Academy may have a laudable goals, we are concerned that it could be redundant to what local school systems are already doing. We are also concerned that this academy would hire away highly-qualified teachers from classrooms and exacerbate the current staffing shortage. But if the General Assembly wants to move forward with this costly proposal, we believe that these funds should come from the General Fund, and not the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future Fund.

Grow Your Own

Maryland continues to face educator shortages, high rates of teacher attrition, and a teaching workforce that is less racially and linguistically diverse than Maryland’s students. Shortages are especially pronounced in areas such as special education, early childhood and elementary education, and English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).

Grow Your Own programs, which help develop future teachers from within school communities, are proven to help reduce these shortages while improving teacher retention and diversity. The Accountability and Implementation Board has identified programs like these as an essential tool to achieving the Blueprint’s goal of a high-quality and diverse teacher workforce.

Last year, MSEA worked with the General Assembly to establish a Grow Your Own educators grant program that supports education support professionals who wish to become classroom teachers (SB 937/HB 1157 of 2024), but it was passed without funding in the FY25 budget.

Studies suggest that education support professionals who become teachers are more effective and more likely to remain in the classroom than teachers prepared through other pathways. Maryland’s education support professional workforce also better reflects the racial diversity of our students and communities than the current teaching workforce. All education support professionals are essential and deserve a living wage whether or not they wish to become teachers. But those who do should have the opportunity to do so without taking on debt or losing their job and benefits while they study.



We also recognize the value in investing in licensure pathways for conditionally certified teachers, who must meet licensure requirements to continue teaching after their provisional license expires. As of 2024, there were more than 5,000 conditionally certified teachers in Maryland schools.

Investing in education support professionals and conditionally certified teachers who are interested in a career in teaching will help Maryland meet our goals of diversifying the profession and improving teacher retention.

Education support professionals and conditionally certified teachers are already committed educators who work with students every day, and they are well positioned to continue that work as fully licensed classroom teachers if they choose to do so.

To that end, we propose several amendments that would:

1. Clarify that all teacher candidates participating in Grow Your Own programs will be employees of the county board with reasonable working pay, benefits, and working conditions that allow them to focus on learning.
2. Highlight the importance of prioritizing education support professionals and conditionally certified teachers as Grow Your Own teacher candidates, especially toward our state's goal of increasing retention and diversity in the teacher workforce.
3. Ensure that data on Grow Your Own grants are transparent and available to the General Assembly to monitor progress.

Closing

MSEA stands ready to be a partner in finding the right policy path that does not jeopardize the funding support for our at-risk students or stifle the progress and intent of the Blueprint. We hope to partner with the General Assembly, the governor, the State Board of Education, the Accountability and Implementation Board, and our partners in all 24 local school systems in finding a better path forward.

MSEA urges careful consideration and significant amendments to the Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act. Our students are counting on us to get this right.



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COUNTY	FY26 Collab Time Cut (\$163 pp)	FY26 Collab Time Local Share Cut	FY26 Collab Time State Share Cut	FY26 Comp Ed Cut (\$139 pp)	FY26 Comp Ed Local Share Cut	FY26 Comp Ed State Share Cut	FY26 MLL Cut (\$160 pp)	FY26 MLL Local Share Cut	FY26 MLL State Share Cut	FY26 Total Cuts w/o HH from CT Pause	FY26 Total Cuts Local Share	FY26 Total Cuts State Share
Allegany	\$ (1,254,367)	(\$346,157)	(\$908,209)	\$ (663,239)	(\$133,740)	(\$529,499)	\$ (6,070)	(\$850)	(\$5,220)	\$ (1,923,675)	(\$480,748)	(\$1,442,928)
Anne Arundel	\$ (13,325,046)	(\$7,907,904)	(\$5,417,142)	\$ (4,636,853)	(\$2,833,968)	(\$1,802,885)	\$ (1,362,902)	(\$817,819)	(\$545,083)	\$ (19,324,801)	(\$11,559,691)	(\$7,765,109)
Baltimore City	\$ (11,560,857)	(\$3,781,086)	(\$7,779,771)	\$ (8,585,666)	(\$2,802,163)	(\$5,783,504)	\$ (1,549,797)	(\$425,335)	(\$1,124,463)	\$ (21,696,320)	(\$7,008,584)	(\$14,687,737)
Baltimore	\$ (17,294,830)	(\$8,273,368)	(\$9,021,462)	\$ (7,974,661)	(\$4,321,475)	(\$3,653,186)	\$ (1,947,390)	(\$986,518)	(\$960,872)	\$ (27,216,881)	(\$13,581,361)	(\$13,635,520)
Calvert	\$ (2,420,632)	(\$1,399,484)	(\$1,021,148)	\$ (606,018)	(\$368,628)	(\$237,389)	\$ (38,018)	(\$22,504)	(\$15,514)	\$ (3,064,667)	(\$1,790,616)	(\$1,274,051)
Caroline	\$ (863,615)	(\$232,952)	(\$630,663)	\$ (511,720)	(\$94,278)	(\$417,442)	\$ (86,899)	(\$10,545)	(\$76,354)	\$ (1,462,233)	(\$337,775)	(\$1,124,459)
Carroll	\$ (4,175,816)	(\$1,914,708)	(\$2,261,108)	\$ (955,302)	(\$496,291)	(\$459,011)	\$ (79,710)	(\$38,458)	(\$41,252)	\$ (5,210,828)	(\$2,449,457)	(\$2,761,371)
Cecil	\$ (2,323,402)	(\$948,732)	(\$1,374,670)	\$ (1,090,943)	(\$502,334)	(\$588,609)	\$ (62,458)	(\$26,162)	(\$36,297)	\$ (3,476,803)	(\$1,477,227)	(\$1,999,576)
Charles	\$ (4,356,746)	(\$1,667,270)	(\$2,689,476)	\$ (1,943,579)	(\$824,650)	(\$1,118,929)	\$ (203,189)	(\$77,194)	(\$125,995)	\$ (6,503,514)	(\$2,569,114)	(\$3,934,401)
Dorchester	\$ (697,966)	(\$242,952)	(\$455,014)	\$ (464,004)	(\$170,321)	(\$293,683)	\$ (39,775)	(\$12,659)	(\$27,116)	\$ (1,201,745)	(\$425,933)	(\$775,812)
Frederick	\$ (7,501,668)	(\$3,254,373)	(\$4,247,294)	\$ (2,127,851)	(\$1,047,225)	(\$1,080,626)	\$ (593,754)	(\$268,970)	(\$324,783)	\$ (10,223,272)	(\$4,570,569)	(\$5,652,703)
Garrett	\$ (529,832)	(\$339,569)	(\$205,891)	\$ (248,697)	(\$154,952)	(\$93,746)	\$ (1,118)	(\$686)	(\$432)	\$ (779,647)	(\$495,207)	(\$300,069)
Harford	\$ (6,023,095)	(\$2,689,692)	(\$3,333,403)	\$ (2,077,280)	(\$1,052,440)	(\$1,024,840)	\$ (169,804)	(\$79,572)	(\$90,232)	\$ (8,270,178)	(\$3,821,703)	(\$4,448,475)
Howard	\$ (9,113,412)	(\$5,051,660)	(\$4,061,752)	\$ (2,269,033)	(\$1,364,038)	(\$904,995)	\$ (644,231)	(\$368,680)	(\$275,551)	\$ (12,026,676)	(\$6,784,378)	(\$5,242,299)
Kent	\$ (264,019)	(\$215,176)	(\$48,844)	\$ (150,742)	(\$97,666)	(\$53,077)	\$ (16,293)	(\$10,452)	(\$5,842)	\$ (431,055)	(\$323,293)	(\$107,762)
Montgomery	\$ (25,176,084)	(\$17,289,225)	(\$7,886,859)	\$ (9,257,495)	(\$5,828,446)	(\$3,429,049)	\$ (5,064,716)	(\$3,144,832)	(\$1,919,885)	\$ (39,498,295)	(\$26,262,503)	(\$13,235,792)
Prince George's	\$ (20,443,949)	(\$8,363,956)	(\$12,079,993)	\$ (11,800,858)	(\$5,445,934)	(\$6,354,924)	\$ (5,290,749)	(\$2,221,960)	(\$3,068,788)	\$ (37,535,555)	(\$16,031,851)	(\$21,503,704)
Queen Anne's	\$ (1,165,817)	(\$732,777)	(\$433,040)	\$ (384,476)	(\$237,938)	(\$146,539)	\$ (69,167)	(\$42,108)	(\$27,059)	\$ (1,619,460)	(\$1,012,823)	(\$606,638)
St. Mary's	\$ (2,721,937)	(\$1,144,639)	(\$1,577,298)	\$ (890,184)	(\$425,381)	(\$464,803)	\$ (71,084)	(\$31,107)	(\$39,978)	\$ (3,683,205)	(\$1,601,127)	(\$2,082,078)
Somerset	\$ (424,289)	(\$119,812)	(\$304,477)	\$ (282,781)	(\$62,156)	(\$220,625)	\$ (20,606)	(\$3,290)	(\$17,317)	\$ (727,676)	(\$185,258)	(\$542,418)
Talbot	\$ (689,286)	(\$657,523)	(\$103,393)	\$ (344,158)	(\$226,405)	(\$117,753)	\$ (105,269)	(\$68,694)	(\$36,574)	\$ (1,138,713)	(\$952,622)	(\$257,721)
Washington	\$ (3,484,492)	(\$1,187,516)	(\$2,296,976)	\$ (1,789,235)	(\$632,560)	(\$1,156,675)	\$ (165,491)	(\$50,259)	(\$115,231)	\$ (5,439,217)	(\$1,870,335)	(\$3,568,882)
Wicomico	\$ (2,349,034)	(\$639,018)	(\$1,710,016)	\$ (1,171,025)	(\$222,636)	(\$948,389)	\$ (290,248)	(\$37,060)	(\$253,187)	\$ (3,810,306)	(\$898,713)	(\$2,911,593)
Worcester	\$ (1,030,853)	(\$1,081,637)	(\$154,628)	\$ (465,944)	(\$309,449)	(\$156,495)	\$ (26,677)	(\$17,594)	(\$9,083)	\$ (1,523,473)	(\$1,408,680)	(\$320,205)
Total	\$ (139,191,038)	(\$69,481,185)	(\$70,002,525)	\$ (60,691,744)	(\$29,655,073)	(\$31,036,670)	\$ (17,905,416)	(\$8,763,309)	(\$9,142,107)	\$ (217,788,198)	(\$107,899,567)	(\$110,181,302)

Assumptions: Enrollment counts reflect flat from FY25; Local wealth determination for state v local share is same as FY25.

In addition to these cuts, there is a statewide formula impact to the Education Effort Adjustment (-\$10m), Comparable Wage Index (-\$5m) and Guaranteed Tax Base (+\$1.7m). **Total impact is \$234 million less than the combined state and local funds local school systems were using for their FY26 budgets.**

Note 1: The MLL per pupil amount in FY26 (\$8,882) is less than the MLL per pupil funding in FY25 (\$8,965).



FY27 Calculations

COUNTY	FY27 Collab Time Cut (\$334 pp)	FY27 Collab Time Local Share Cut	FY27 Collab Time State Share Cut	FY27 Comp Ed Cut (\$267 pp)	FY27 Comp Ed Local Share Cut	FY27 Comp Ed State Share Cut	FY27 MLL Cut (\$314 pp)	FY27 MLL Local Share Cut	FY27 MLL State Share Cut	FY27 Total Cuts w/o HH from CT Pause	FY27 Total Cuts Local Share	FY27 Total Cuts State Share
Allegany	\$ (2,570,297)	(\$709,304)	(\$1,860,993)	\$ (1,279,086)	(\$257,924)	(\$1,021,162)	\$ (11,930)	(\$1,671)	(\$10,259)	\$ (3,861,314)	(\$968,899)	(\$2,892,415)
Anne Arundel	\$ (27,304,083)	(\$16,203,926)	(\$11,100,156)	\$ (8,942,382)	(\$5,465,437)	(\$3,476,946)	\$ (2,678,707)	(\$1,607,378)	(\$1,071,329)	\$ (38,925,172)	(\$23,276,741)	(\$15,648,431)
Baltimore City	\$ (23,689,117)	(\$7,747,747)	(\$15,941,370)	\$ (16,557,850)	(\$5,404,099)	(\$11,153,751)	\$ (3,046,040)	(\$835,972)	(\$2,210,068)	\$ (43,293,007)	(\$13,987,817)	(\$29,305,189)
Baltimore	\$ (35,438,486)	(\$16,952,790)	(\$18,485,696)	\$ (15,379,498)	(\$8,334,162)	(\$7,045,336)	\$ (3,827,486)	(\$1,938,946)	(\$1,888,540)	\$ (54,645,469)	(\$27,225,898)	(\$27,419,571)
Calvert	\$ (4,960,067)	(\$2,867,654)	(\$2,092,413)	\$ (1,168,733)	(\$710,917)	(\$457,816)	\$ (74,722)	(\$44,230)	(\$30,492)	\$ (6,203,522)	(\$3,622,801)	(\$2,580,721)
Caroline	\$ (1,769,616)	(\$477,338)	(\$1,292,278)	\$ (986,875)	(\$181,819)	(\$805,057)	\$ (170,794)	(\$20,725)	(\$150,069)	\$ (2,927,285)	(\$679,882)	(\$2,247,403)
Carroll	\$ (8,556,579)	(\$3,923,389)	(\$4,633,190)	\$ (1,842,344)	(\$957,120)	(\$885,224)	\$ (156,666)	(\$75,587)	(\$81,079)	\$ (10,555,589)	(\$4,956,096)	(\$5,599,493)
Cecil	\$ (4,760,836)	(\$1,944,027)	(\$2,816,809)	\$ (2,103,933)	(\$968,774)	(\$1,135,158)	\$ (122,758)	(\$51,419)	(\$71,339)	\$ (6,987,527)	(\$2,964,220)	(\$4,023,307)
Charles	\$ (8,927,319)	(\$3,416,369)	(\$5,510,950)	\$ (3,748,282)	(\$1,590,375)	(\$2,157,907)	\$ (399,357)	(\$51,720)	(\$247,637)	\$ (13,074,958)	(\$5,158,464)	(\$7,916,494)
Dorchester	\$ (1,430,188)	(\$497,829)	(\$932,359)	\$ (894,853)	(\$328,472)	(\$566,380)	\$ (78,176)	(\$24,881)	(\$53,295)	\$ (2,403,217)	(\$851,182)	(\$1,552,034)
Frederick	\$ (15,371,515)	(\$6,668,471)	(\$8,703,044)	\$ (4,103,658)	(\$2,019,621)	(\$2,084,037)	\$ (1,166,989)	(\$528,646)	(\$638,343)	\$ (20,642,162)	(\$9,216,738)	(\$11,425,424)
Garrett	\$ (1,085,667)	(\$695,805)	(\$421,887)	\$ (479,624)	(\$298,831)	(\$180,793)	\$ (2,198)	(\$1,348)	(\$849)	\$ (1,567,489)	(\$995,984)	(\$603,529)
Harford	\$ (12,341,801)	(\$5,511,393)	(\$6,830,408)	\$ (4,006,130)	(\$2,029,679)	(\$1,976,451)	\$ (333,739)	(\$156,393)	(\$177,346)	\$ (16,681,670)	(\$7,697,465)	(\$8,984,205)
Howard	\$ (18,674,107)	(\$10,351,254)	(\$8,322,853)	\$ (4,375,934)	(\$2,630,609)	(\$1,745,325)	\$ (1,266,201)	(\$724,620)	(\$541,581)	\$ (24,316,242)	(\$13,706,483)	(\$10,609,759)
Kent	\$ (540,997)	(\$440,912)	(\$100,084)	\$ (290,714)	(\$188,352)	(\$102,361)	\$ (32,024)	(\$20,543)	(\$11,481)	\$ (863,734)	(\$649,807)	(\$213,927)
Montgomery	\$ (51,587,803)	(\$35,427,001)	(\$16,160,802)	\$ (17,853,502)	(\$11,240,425)	(\$6,613,078)	\$ (9,954,416)	(\$6,180,990)	(\$3,773,426)	\$ (79,395,721)	(\$52,848,415)	(\$26,547,306)
Prince George's	\$ (41,891,282)	(\$17,138,414)	(\$24,752,868)	\$ (22,758,493)	(\$10,502,733)	(\$12,255,760)	\$ (10,398,669)	(\$4,367,138)	(\$6,031,531)	\$ (75,048,444)	(\$32,008,285)	(\$43,040,159)
Queen Anne's	\$ (2,388,852)	(\$1,501,518)	(\$887,334)	\$ (741,480)	(\$458,874)	(\$282,606)	\$ (135,945)	(\$82,762)	(\$53,183)	\$ (3,266,276)	(\$2,043,153)	(\$1,223,123)
St. Mary's	\$ (5,577,466)	(\$2,345,456)	(\$3,232,010)	\$ (1,716,760)	(\$820,367)	(\$896,393)	\$ (139,712)	(\$61,139)	(\$78,574)	\$ (7,433,938)	(\$3,226,962)	(\$4,206,977)
Somerset	\$ (869,402)	(\$245,505)	(\$623,897)	\$ (545,355)	(\$119,871)	(\$425,485)	\$ (40,501)	(\$6,466)	(\$34,035)	\$ (1,455,258)	(\$371,842)	(\$1,083,416)
Talbot	\$ (1,412,403)	(\$1,347,317)	(\$211,860)	\$ (663,725)	(\$436,632)	(\$227,092)	\$ (206,900)	(\$135,015)	(\$71,885)	\$ (2,283,027)	(\$1,918,964)	(\$364,063)
Washington	\$ (7,140,002)	(\$2,433,315)	(\$4,706,687)	\$ (3,450,621)	(\$1,219,921)	(\$2,230,700)	\$ (325,263)	(\$98,782)	(\$226,481)	\$ (10,915,885)	(\$3,752,017)	(\$7,163,867)
Wicomico	\$ (4,813,358)	(\$1,309,398)	(\$3,503,960)	\$ (2,258,374)	(\$429,363)	(\$1,829,011)	\$ (570,465)	(\$72,840)	(\$497,626)	\$ (7,642,197)	(\$1,811,601)	(\$5,830,597)
Worcester	\$ (2,112,300)	(\$2,216,361)	(\$316,845)	\$ (898,594)	(\$596,787)	(\$301,807)	\$ (52,431)	(\$34,580)	(\$17,851)	\$ (3,063,324)	(\$2,847,728)	(\$215,596)
Total	\$ (285,213,539)	(\$142,372,489)	(\$143,440,756)	\$ (117,046,798)	(\$57,191,163)	(\$59,855,635)	\$ (35,192,090)	(\$17,223,792)	(\$17,968,298)	\$ (437,452,427)	(\$216,787,444)	(\$221,264,690)

Assumptions: Enrollment counts reflect flat from FY25; Local wealth determination for state v local share is same as FY25.

In addition to these cuts, there is a statewide formula impact to the Education Effort Adjustment (-\$13m), Comparable Wage Index (not calculated) and Guaranteed Tax Base (not calculated). **Total impact is at least \$450 million less than phase-in expectations for student support with the Blueprint for Maryland's Future in FY27.**

Note 1: These calculations do not reflect cuts associated with a proposed freeze in Community School funding at FY26 levels. Over two years, the Governor's Office estimates -\$473m in state aid for community schools associated with the freeze.

Note 2: The CompEd per pupil amount in FY27 (\$7,518) is almost equal to the CompEd per pupil funding in FY24 (\$7,519).

Note 3: The MLL per pupil amount in FY27 (\$8,834) is less than the MLL per pupil funding in FY25 (\$8,965).



FY28 Calculations

COUNTY	FY28 Collab Time Cut (\$512 pp)	FY28 Collab Time Local Share Cut	FY28 Collab Time State Share Cut	FY28 Comp Ed Cut (\$399 pp)	FY28 Comp Ed Local Share Cut	FY28 Comp Ed State Share Cut	FY28 MLL Cut (\$471 pp)	FY28 MLL Local Share Cut	FY28 MLL State Share Cut	FY28 Total Cuts w/o HH from CT Pause	FY28 Total Cuts Local Share	FY28 Total Cuts State Share
Allegany	\$ (3,940,096)	(\$1,087,316)	(\$2,852,780)	\$ (1,911,736)	(\$385,496)	(\$1,526,240)	\$ (17,900)	(\$2,508)	(\$15,392)	\$ (5,869,732)	(\$1,475,319)	(\$4,394,412)
Anne Arundel	\$ (41,855,360)	(\$24,839,552)	(\$17,015,808)	\$ (13,365,381)	(\$8,168,701)	(\$5,196,680)	\$ (4,018,913)	(\$2,411,578)	(\$1,607,335)	\$ (59,239,654)	(\$35,419,831)	(\$23,819,824)
Baltimore City	\$ (36,313,856)	(\$11,876,785)	(\$24,437,071)	\$ (24,747,540)	(\$8,077,024)	(\$16,670,516)	\$ (4,570,030)	(\$1,254,224)	(\$3,315,806)	\$ (65,631,427)	(\$21,208,033)	(\$44,423,393)
Baltimore	\$ (54,324,864)	(\$25,987,510)	(\$28,337,354)	\$ (22,986,363)	(\$12,456,328)	(\$10,530,035)	\$ (5,742,449)	(\$2,909,037)	(\$2,833,412)	\$ (83,053,676)	(\$41,352,875)	(\$41,700,800)
Calvert	\$ (7,603,456)	(\$4,395,924)	(\$3,207,532)	\$ (1,746,801)	(\$1,062,544)	(\$684,257)	\$ (112,108)	(\$66,360)	(\$45,748)	\$ (9,462,364)	(\$5,524,828)	(\$3,937,536)
Caroline	\$ (2,712,704)	(\$731,727)	(\$1,980,977)	\$ (1,474,994)	(\$271,748)	(\$1,203,246)	\$ (256,246)	(\$31,095)	(\$225,151)	\$ (4,443,944)	(\$1,034,570)	(\$3,409,374)
Carroll	\$ (13,116,672)	(\$6,014,297)	(\$7,102,375)	\$ (2,753,587)	(\$1,430,522)	(\$1,323,065)	\$ (235,049)	(\$113,404)	(\$121,645)	\$ (16,105,308)	(\$7,558,223)	(\$8,547,085)
Cecil	\$ (7,298,048)	(\$2,980,065)	(\$4,317,983)	\$ (3,144,561)	(\$1,447,941)	(\$1,696,620)	\$ (184,177)	(\$77,145)	(\$107,032)	\$ (10,626,785)	(\$4,505,151)	(\$6,121,634)
Charles	\$ (13,684,992)	(\$5,237,068)	(\$8,447,924)	\$ (5,602,222)	(\$2,376,992)	(\$3,225,230)	\$ (599,163)	(\$227,629)	(\$371,534)	\$ (19,886,377)	(\$7,841,689)	(\$12,044,688)
Dorchester	\$ (2,192,384)	(\$763,138)	(\$1,429,246)	\$ (1,337,457)	(\$490,938)	(\$846,518)	\$ (3,647,130)	(\$37,330)	(\$79,959)	\$ (3,647,130)	(\$1,291,407)	(\$2,355,723)
Frederick	\$ (23,563,520)	(\$10,222,326)	(\$13,341,194)	\$ (6,133,371)	(\$3,018,547)	(\$3,114,824)	\$ (1,750,856)	(\$793,138)	(\$957,718)	\$ (31,447,747)	(\$14,034,011)	(\$17,413,735)
Garrett	\$ (1,664,256)	(\$1,066,622)	(\$646,726)	\$ (716,851)	(\$446,637)	(\$270,215)	\$ (3,297)	(\$2,023)	(\$1,274)	\$ (2,384,404)	(\$1,515,282)	(\$918,214)
Harford	\$ (18,919,168)	(\$8,448,603)	(\$10,470,565)	\$ (5,987,604)	(\$3,033,580)	(\$2,954,025)	\$ (500,716)	(\$234,640)	(\$266,076)	\$ (25,407,488)	(\$11,716,822)	(\$13,690,666)
Howard	\$ (28,626,176)	(\$15,867,790)	(\$12,758,386)	\$ (6,540,319)	(\$3,931,737)	(\$2,608,581)	\$ (1,899,704)	(\$1,087,160)	(\$812,544)	\$ (37,066,199)	(\$20,886,688)	(\$16,179,511)
Kent	\$ (829,312)	(\$675,889)	(\$153,423)	\$ (434,504)	(\$281,514)	(\$152,990)	\$ (48,046)	(\$30,820)	(\$17,226)	\$ (1,311,862)	(\$988,223)	(\$323,638)
Montgomery	\$ (79,080,704)	(\$54,307,258)	(\$24,773,446)	\$ (26,684,037)	(\$16,800,060)	(\$9,883,977)	\$ (14,934,794)	(\$9,273,454)	(\$5,661,340)	\$ (120,699,535)	(\$80,380,772)	(\$40,318,763)
Prince George's	\$ (64,216,576)	(\$26,272,059)	(\$37,944,517)	\$ (34,015,089)	(\$15,697,497)	(\$18,317,591)	\$ (15,601,316)	(\$6,552,099)	(\$9,049,217)	\$ (113,832,980)	(\$48,521,655)	(\$65,311,325)
Queen Anne's	\$ (3,661,952)	(\$2,301,727)	(\$1,360,225)	\$ (1,108,224)	(\$685,838)	(\$422,386)	\$ (203,960)	(\$124,169)	(\$79,792)	\$ (4,974,136)	(\$3,111,734)	(\$1,862,402)
St. Mary's	\$ (8,549,888)	(\$3,595,430)	(\$4,954,458)	\$ (2,565,888)	(\$1,226,129)	(\$1,339,759)	\$ (209,613)	(\$91,727)	(\$117,885)	\$ (11,325,389)	(\$4,913,286)	(\$6,412,102)
Somerset	\$ (1,332,736)	(\$376,343)	(\$956,393)	\$ (815,094)	(\$179,160)	(\$635,934)	\$ (60,764)	(\$9,701)	(\$51,063)	\$ (2,208,594)	(\$565,204)	(\$1,643,390)
Talbot	\$ (2,165,120)	(\$2,065,348)	(\$324,768)	\$ (992,010)	(\$652,596)	(\$339,415)	\$ (310,415)	(\$202,565)	(\$107,850)	\$ (3,467,546)	(\$2,920,509)	(\$772,033)
Washington	\$ (10,945,152)	(\$3,730,111)	(\$7,215,041)	\$ (5,157,335)	(\$1,823,307)	(\$3,334,028)	\$ (487,997)	(\$148,204)	(\$339,793)	\$ (16,590,484)	(\$5,701,622)	(\$10,888,862)
Wicomico	\$ (7,378,560)	(\$2,007,221)	(\$5,371,339)	\$ (3,375,391)	(\$641,730)	(\$2,733,660)	\$ (855,880)	(\$109,283)	(\$746,597)	\$ (11,609,830)	(\$2,758,234)	(\$8,851,596)
Worcester	\$ (3,238,016)	(\$3,397,536)	(\$485,702)	\$ (1,343,048)	(\$891,964)	(\$451,084)	\$ (78,664)	(\$51,881)	(\$26,783)	\$ (4,659,727)	(\$4,341,380)	(\$963,569)
Total	\$ (437,213,568)	(\$218,247,648)	(\$219,885,231)	\$ (174,939,406)	(\$85,478,529)	(\$89,460,878)	\$ (52,799,345)	(\$25,841,174)	(\$26,958,171)	\$ (664,952,319)	(\$329,567,350)	(\$336,304,279)

Assumptions: Enrollment counts reflect flat from FY25; Local wealth determination for state v local share is same as FY25.

In addition to these cuts, there is a statewide formula impact to the Education Effort Adjustment (-\$16m), Comparable Wage Index (not calculated) and Guaranteed Tax Base (not calculated). **Total impact is at least \$680 million less than phase-in expectations for student support with the Blueprint for Maryland's Future in FY28.**

Note 1: These calculations do not reflect cuts associated with a proposed freeze in Community School funding at FY26 levels. Over two years, the Governor's Office estimates -\$473m in state aid for community schools associated with the freeze.

Note 2: The CompEd per pupil amount in FY28 (\$7,508) is less than the CompEd per pupil funding in FY24 (\$7,519).

Note 3: The MLL per pupil amount in FY28 (\$8,856) is less than the MLL per pupil funding in FY25 (\$8,965).



FY29 Calculations

COUNTY	FY29 Collab Time Cut (\$698 pp)	FY29 Collab Time Local Share Cut	FY29 Collab Time State Share Cut	FY29 Comp Ed Cut (\$530 pp)	FY29 Comp Ed Local Share Cut	FY29 Comp Ed State Share Cut	FY29 MLL Cut (\$635 pp)	FY29 MLL Local Share Cut	FY29 MLL State Share Cut	FY29 Total Cuts w/o HH from CT Pause	FY29 Total Cuts Local Share	FY29 Total Cuts State Share
Allegany	\$ (5,371,459)	(\$1,482,317)	(\$3,889,142)	\$ (2,539,408)	(\$512,064)	(\$2,027,344)	\$ (24,137)	(\$3,382)	(\$20,755)	\$ (7,935,004)	(\$1,997,763)	(\$5,937,241)
Anne Arundel	\$ (57,060,628)	(\$33,863,295)	(\$23,197,333)	\$ (17,753,574)	(\$10,850,692)	(\$6,902,882)	\$ (5,419,356)	(\$3,251,924)	(\$2,167,432)	\$ (80,233,557)	(\$4,796,591)	(\$32,267,646)
Baltimore City	\$ (49,505,999)	(\$16,191,399)	(\$33,314,600)	\$ (32,872,785)	(\$10,728,916)	(\$22,143,869)	\$ (6,162,516)	(\$1,691,275)	(\$4,471,242)	\$ (88,541,300)	(\$28,611,589)	(\$59,929,711)
Baltimore	\$ (74,060,069)	(\$35,428,286)	(\$38,631,783)	\$ (30,533,368)	(\$16,546,056)	(\$13,987,312)	\$ (7,743,479)	(\$3,922,728)	(\$3,820,751)	\$ (112,336,916)	(\$55,897,070)	(\$56,439,846)
Calvert	\$ (10,365,649)	(\$5,992,881)	(\$4,372,768)	\$ (2,320,320)	(\$1,411,404)	(\$908,916)	\$ (151,173)	(\$89,484)	(\$61,689)	\$ (12,837,141)	(\$7,493,769)	(\$5,343,373)
Caroline	\$ (3,698,179)	(\$997,550)	(\$2,700,629)	\$ (1,959,272)	(\$360,970)	(\$1,598,302)	\$ (345,538)	(\$41,930)	(\$303,608)	\$ (6,002,988)	(\$1,400,450)	(\$4,602,539)
Carroll	\$ (17,881,713)	(\$8,199,178)	(\$9,682,535)	\$ (3,657,660)	(\$1,900,199)	(\$1,757,461)	\$ (316,955)	(\$152,921)	(\$164,034)	\$ (21,856,327)	(\$10,252,298)	(\$11,604,029)
Cecil	\$ (9,949,292)	(\$4,062,667)	(\$5,886,625)	\$ (4,177,000)	(\$1,923,336)	(\$2,253,663)	\$ (248,355)	(\$104,027)	(\$144,328)	\$ (14,374,647)	(\$6,090,030)	(\$8,284,616)
Charles	\$ (18,656,493)	(\$7,139,597)	(\$11,516,896)	\$ (7,441,573)	(\$3,157,418)	(\$4,284,155)	\$ (807,949)	(\$306,949)	(\$501,000)	\$ (26,906,015)	(\$10,603,964)	(\$16,302,051)
Dorchester	\$ (2,988,836)	(\$1,040,372)	(\$1,948,464)	\$ (1,776,578)	(\$652,126)	(\$1,124,452)	\$ (158,160)	(\$50,338)	(\$107,822)	\$ (4,923,573)	(\$1,742,836)	(\$3,180,737)
Frederick	\$ (32,123,705)	(\$13,935,906)	(\$18,187,799)	\$ (8,147,112)	(\$4,009,613)	(\$4,137,499)	\$ (2,360,964)	(\$1,069,517)	(\$1,291,447)	\$ (42,631,781)	(\$19,015,036)	(\$23,616,745)
Garrett	\$ (2,268,849)	(\$1,454,106)	(\$881,669)	\$ (952,212)	(\$593,279)	(\$358,933)	\$ (4,446)	(\$2,728)	(\$1,718)	\$ (3,225,507)	(\$2,050,113)	(\$1,242,320)
Harford	\$ (25,792,147)	(\$11,517,822)	(\$14,274,325)	\$ (7,953,487)	(\$4,029,581)	(\$3,923,906)	\$ (675,196)	(\$316,403)	(\$358,793)	\$ (34,420,830)	(\$15,863,805)	(\$18,557,025)
Howard	\$ (39,025,529)	(\$21,632,261)	(\$17,393,268)	\$ (8,687,671)	(\$5,222,626)	(\$3,465,045)	\$ (2,561,681)	(\$1,465,996)	(\$1,095,685)	\$ (50,274,881)	(\$28,320,882)	(\$21,953,999)
Kent	\$ (1,130,586)	(\$921,427)	(\$209,158)	\$ (577,162)	(\$373,942)	(\$203,221)	\$ (64,788)	(\$41,560)	(\$23,228)	\$ (1,772,536)	(\$1,336,929)	(\$435,607)
Montgomery	\$ (107,809,241)	(\$74,036,067)	(\$33,773,174)	\$ (35,445,082)	(\$22,315,945)	(\$13,129,137)	\$ (20,139,017)	(\$12,504,909)	(\$7,634,108)	\$ (163,393,340)	(\$108,856,921)	(\$54,536,419)
Prince George's	\$ (87,545,254)	(\$35,816,206)	(\$51,729,048)	\$ (45,183,104)	(\$20,851,383)	(\$24,331,720)	\$ (21,037,797)	(\$8,835,262)	(\$12,202,535)	\$ (153,766,154)	(\$65,502,851)	(\$88,263,303)
Queen Anne's	\$ (4,992,271)	(\$3,137,902)	(\$1,854,369)	\$ (1,472,082)	(\$911,015)	(\$561,067)	\$ (275,033)	(\$167,437)	(\$107,596)	\$ (6,739,385)	(\$4,216,354)	(\$2,523,031)
St. Mary's	\$ (11,655,902)	(\$4,901,582)	(\$6,754,320)	\$ (3,408,334)	(\$1,628,698)	(\$1,779,636)	\$ (282,655)	(\$123,691)	(\$158,964)	\$ (15,346,891)	(\$6,653,971)	(\$8,692,920)
Somerset	\$ (1,816,894)	(\$513,061)	(\$1,303,833)	\$ (1,082,710)	(\$237,983)	(\$844,727)	\$ (81,938)	(\$13,082)	(\$68,856)	\$ (2,981,542)	(\$764,126)	(\$2,217,416)
Talbot	\$ (2,951,668)	(\$2,815,651)	(\$442,750)	\$ (1,317,712)	(\$866,859)	(\$450,853)	\$ (418,584)	(\$273,151)	(\$145,432)	\$ (4,687,963)	(\$3,955,661)	(\$1,039,036)
Washington	\$ (14,921,321)	(\$5,085,190)	(\$9,836,130)	\$ (6,850,619)	(\$2,421,945)	(\$4,428,674)	\$ (658,046)	(\$199,848)	(\$458,198)	\$ (22,429,986)	(\$7,706,983)	(\$14,723,003)
Wicomico	\$ (10,059,053)	(\$2,736,407)	(\$7,322,646)	\$ (4,483,617)	(\$852,427)	(\$3,631,190)	\$ (1,154,122)	(\$147,364)	(\$1,006,758)	\$ (15,696,792)	(\$3,736,197)	(\$11,960,594)
Worcester	\$ (4,414,327)	(\$4,631,797)	(\$662,149)	\$ (1,784,004)	(\$1,184,818)	(\$599,186)	\$ (106,075)	(\$69,959)	(\$36,116)	\$ (6,304,406)	(\$5,886,574)	(\$1,297,451)
Total	\$ (596,045,060)	(\$297,532,926)	(\$299,765,413)	\$ (232,376,443)	(\$113,543,294)	(\$118,833,149)	\$ (71,197,961)	(\$34,845,866)	(\$36,352,095)	\$ (899,619,464)	(\$445,922,086)	(\$454,950,657)

Assumptions: Enrollment counts reflect flat from FY25; Local wealth determination for state v local share is same as FY25.

In addition to these cuts, there is a statewide formula impact to the Education Effort Adjustment (-\$20m), Comparable Wage Index (not calculated) and Guaranteed Tax Base (not calculated). **Total impact is at least \$920 million less than phase-in expectations for student support with the Blueprint for Maryland's Future in FY29.**

Note 1: These calculations do not reflect cuts associated with a proposed freeze in Community School funding at FY26 levels. Over two years, the Governor's Office estimates -\$473m in state aid for community schools associated with the freeze.

Note 2: The CompEd per pupil amount in FY29 (\$7,498) is less than the CompEd per pupil funding in FY24 (\$7,519).

Note 3: The MLL per pupil amount in FY29 (\$8,978) is on par with the MLL per pupil funding in FY25 (\$8,965).



TOTAL Four-Year Cuts (FY26-FY29)

COUNTY	FY26-29 Collab Time Cut	FY26-29 Collab Time Local Share Cut	FY26-29 Collab Time State Share Cut	FY26-29 Comp Ed Cut	FY26-29 Comp Ed Local Share Cut	FY26-29 Comp Ed State Share Cut	FY26-29 MLL Cut	FY26-29 MLL Local Share Cut	FY26-29 MLL State Share Cut	FY26-29 Total Cuts w/o HH from CT Pause	FY26-29 Total Cuts Local Share	FY26-29 Total Cuts State Share
Allegany	\$ (13,136,219)	\$ (3,625,094)	\$ (9,511,125)	\$ (6,393,469)	\$ (1,289,224)	\$ (5,104,245)	\$ (60,037)	\$ (8,411)	\$ (51,626)	\$ (19,589,725)	\$ (4,922,729)	\$ (14,666,996)
Anne Arundel	\$ (139,545,116)	\$ (82,814,677)	\$ (56,730,440)	\$ (44,698,191)	\$ (27,318,797)	\$ (17,379,393)	\$ (13,479,877)	\$ (8,088,699)	\$ (5,391,178)	\$ (197,723,184)	\$ (118,222,173)	\$ (79,501,011)
Baltimore City	\$ (121,069,829)	\$ (39,597,016)	\$ (81,472,812)	\$ (82,763,841)	\$ (27,012,201)	\$ (55,751,640)	\$ (15,328,384)	\$ (4,206,806)	\$ (11,121,578)	\$ (219,162,053)	\$ (70,816,023)	\$ (148,346,030)
Baltimore	\$ (181,118,248)	\$ (86,641,953)	\$ (94,476,294)	\$ (76,873,889)	\$ (41,658,021)	\$ (35,215,868)	\$ (19,260,805)	\$ (9,757,230)	\$ (9,503,575)	\$ (277,252,942)	\$ (138,057,204)	\$ (139,195,737)
Calvert	\$ (25,349,804)	\$ (14,655,943)	\$ (10,693,860)	\$ (5,841,871)	\$ (3,553,492)	\$ (2,288,379)	\$ (376,021)	\$ (222,578)	\$ (153,443)	\$ (31,567,695)	\$ (18,432,013)	\$ (13,135,682)
Caroline	\$ (9,044,113)	\$ (2,439,567)	\$ (6,604,546)	\$ (4,932,861)	\$ (908,814)	\$ (4,024,047)	\$ (859,476)	\$ (104,295)	\$ (755,181)	\$ (14,836,450)	\$ (3,452,676)	\$ (11,383,775)
Carroll	\$ (43,730,780)	\$ (20,051,571)	\$ (23,679,208)	\$ (9,208,893)	\$ (4,784,133)	\$ (4,424,760)	\$ (788,380)	\$ (380,370)	\$ (408,010)	\$ (53,728,053)	\$ (25,216,074)	\$ (28,511,979)
Cecil	\$ (24,331,578)	\$ (9,935,491)	\$ (14,396,087)	\$ (10,516,436)	\$ (4,842,386)	\$ (5,674,050)	\$ (617,749)	\$ (258,753)	\$ (358,996)	\$ (35,465,762)	\$ (15,036,629)	\$ (20,429,133)
Charles	\$ (45,625,550)	\$ (17,460,303)	\$ (28,165,246)	\$ (18,735,657)	\$ (7,949,435)	\$ (10,786,222)	\$ (2,009,658)	\$ (763,493)	\$ (1,246,165)	\$ (66,370,864)	\$ (26,173,231)	\$ (40,197,633)
Dorchester	\$ (7,309,374)	\$ (2,544,292)	\$ (4,765,082)	\$ (4,472,891)	\$ (1,641,858)	\$ (2,831,033)	\$ (393,400)	\$ (125,209)	\$ (268,191)	\$ (12,175,665)	\$ (4,311,359)	\$ (7,864,306)
Frederick	\$ (78,560,408)	\$ (34,081,077)	\$ (44,479,331)	\$ (20,511,991)	\$ (10,095,006)	\$ (10,416,986)	\$ (5,872,563)	\$ (2,660,271)	\$ (3,212,291)	\$ (104,944,961)	\$ (46,836,354)	\$ (58,108,608)
Garrett	\$ (5,548,604)	\$ (3,556,103)	\$ (2,156,173)	\$ (2,397,384)	\$ (1,493,699)	\$ (903,685)	\$ (11,059)	\$ (6,785)	\$ (4,274)	\$ (7,957,047)	\$ (5,056,587)	\$ (3,064,133)
Harford	\$ (63,076,211)	\$ (28,167,510)	\$ (34,908,701)	\$ (20,024,501)	\$ (10,145,279)	\$ (9,879,222)	\$ (1,679,455)	\$ (787,008)	\$ (892,447)	\$ (84,780,166)	\$ (39,099,796)	\$ (45,680,370)
Howard	\$ (95,439,224)	\$ (52,902,964)	\$ (42,536,260)	\$ (21,872,957)	\$ (13,149,011)	\$ (8,723,947)	\$ (6,371,817)	\$ (3,646,456)	\$ (2,725,362)	\$ (123,683,998)	\$ (69,698,430)	\$ (53,985,568)
Kent	\$ (2,764,913)	\$ (2,253,405)	\$ (511,508)	\$ (1,453,122)	\$ (941,473)	\$ (511,649)	\$ (161,152)	\$ (103,375)	\$ (57,777)	\$ (4,379,187)	\$ (3,298,253)	\$ (1,080,934)
Montgomery	\$ (263,653,832)	\$ (181,059,551)	\$ (82,594,280)	\$ (89,240,117)	\$ (56,184,876)	\$ (33,055,241)	\$ (50,092,944)	\$ (31,104,185)	\$ (18,988,758)	\$ (402,986,892)	\$ (268,348,612)	\$ (134,638,280)
Prince George's	\$ (214,097,061)	\$ (87,590,635)	\$ (126,506,426)	\$ (113,757,543)	\$ (52,497,547)	\$ (61,259,995)	\$ (52,328,530)	\$ (21,976,460)	\$ (30,352,071)	\$ (380,183,134)	\$ (162,064,642)	\$ (218,118,492)
Queen Anne's	\$ (12,208,891)	\$ (7,673,924)	\$ (4,534,967)	\$ (3,706,262)	\$ (1,412,598)	\$ (684,105)	\$ (416,476)	\$ (267,629)	\$ (16,599,258)	\$ (10,384,064)	\$ (6,215,195)	
St. Mary's	\$ (28,505,193)	\$ (11,987,107)	\$ (16,518,086)	\$ (8,581,166)	\$ (4,100,576)	\$ (4,480,590)	\$ (703,064)	\$ (307,664)	\$ (395,400)	\$ (37,789,423)	\$ (16,395,346)	\$ (21,394,077)
Somerset	\$ (4,443,321)	\$ (1,254,721)	\$ (3,188,600)	\$ (2,725,939)	\$ (599,169)	\$ (2,126,770)	\$ (203,810)	\$ (32,539)	\$ (171,270)	\$ (7,373,070)	\$ (1,886,430)	\$ (5,486,640)
Talbot	\$ (7,218,476)	\$ (6,885,839)	\$ (1,082,771)	\$ (3,317,606)	\$ (2,182,492)	\$ (1,135,113)	\$ (1,041,167)	\$ (679,425)	\$ (361,742)	\$ (11,577,249)	\$ (9,747,757)	\$ (2,579,627)
Washington	\$ (36,490,966)	\$ (12,436,132)	\$ (24,054,834)	\$ (17,247,809)	\$ (6,097,733)	\$ (11,150,077)	\$ (1,636,797)	\$ (497,094)	\$ (1,139,703)	\$ (55,375,572)	\$ (19,030,958)	\$ (36,344,614)
Wicomico	\$ (24,600,004)	\$ (6,692,043)	\$ (17,907,961)	\$ (11,288,407)	\$ (2,146,156)	\$ (9,142,251)	\$ (2,870,715)	\$ (366,546)	\$ (2,504,168)	\$ (38,759,125)	\$ (9,204,745)	\$ (29,554,380)
Worcester	\$ (10,795,495)	\$ (11,327,331)	\$ (1,619,324)	\$ (4,491,589)	\$ (2,983,018)	\$ (1,508,571)	\$ (263,847)	\$ (174,014)	\$ (89,833)	\$ (15,550,931)	\$ (14,484,363)	\$ (3,217,728)
Total	\$ (1,457,663,204)	\$ (727,634,247)	\$ (733,093,925)	\$ (585,054,391)	\$ (285,868,059)	\$ (299,186,333)	\$ (177,094,813)	\$ (86,674,142)	\$ (90,420,671)	\$ (2,219,812,408)	\$ (1,100,176,447)	\$ (1,122,700,928)

Assumptions: Enrollment counts reflect flat from FY25; Local wealth determination for state v local share is same as FY25.

In addition to these cuts, there is a statewide formula impact to the Education Effort Adjustment (-\$59m), Comparable Wage Index (not calculated) and Guaranteed Tax Base (not calculated). **Total impact is at least \$2.28 billion less than expectations for student support with the Blueprint for Maryland's Future throughout the four-years of the proposed delay in collaborative time.**

Note 1: These calculations do not reflect cuts associated with a proposed freeze in Community School funding at FY26 levels. Over two years, the Governor's Office estimates -\$473m in state aid for community schools associated with the freeze.

Note 2: Because of how the weights interact with the Foundation amount, per pupil spending for both CompEd and MLL in FY29 are more in line with FY24 and FY25 per pupil spending levels.

Support with Amendment_SB429.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: PGCPS Board of Education

Position: FWA



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

14201 School Lane | Upper Marlboro, MD 20772 | 301-952-6115 | www.pgcps.org/offices/board-of-education

February 19, 2025

Board Chairman

Brannndon Jackson
District 6

Chairman Guy Guzzone
Budget and Taxation Committee

Board Vice Chair

Jonathan Briggs, M.Ed. MLS
District 2

Chairman Brian Feldman
Education, Energy, and Environment Committee

Board Members

Dr. Tiffini Andorful
District 1

Re: SB429 - Excellence in Education

Pamela Boozer-Strother, MBA, CAE
District 3

Position: Support with Amendments

Vacant
District 4

Contact: Dr. Phelton Moss, Chair, Policy and Governance Committee
Phelton.Moss@pgcps.org | Johntel Greene, Government Relations Johntel@laperez.org

Robin Brown
District 5

Dear Chair Guzzone, Chair Feldman, and esteemed members of the Budget and Tax and Education, Energy, and Environment Committees,

Dr. Phelton C. Moss
District 7

Thank you for the work you all do on behalf of our students, educators, and staff across the state and in the Prince George's County Public Schools community. On behalf of the Prince George's County Board of Education, representing over 131,000 scholars, we express our general support for SB 429, while strongly advocating for necessary amendments to ensure the bill strengthens, rather than hinders, educational outcomes.

Zakyia Goins-McCants
District 8

Lolita E. Walker, MBA, PCC
District 9

Student Member

Jamal J. Jongo

There are many provisions that the Prince George's County Board of Education supports including the Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact, which will help with our recruitment of high-quality teachers and teacher leaders, additional flexibility in the Concentration of Poverty per pupil grant fund administration, and additional supports for alternative pathways to teacher certification.

Secretary/Treasurer

Millard L. House II
Superintendent

This is an economically tough year for the state of Maryland. **We strongly urge the following amendments** to protect the Blueprint's commitments and sustain equitable educational opportunities. **Our four recommendations are made to safeguard the needs of our scholars, educators, and school communities.**

1. Restore Per Pupil Funding & Maintain Collaborative Time Implementation

Provisions delaying the collaborative time from FY26 to FY33 and altering the target per pupil funding amount are particularly detrimental for PGcps, the largest school system in the state and most significantly impacted by these provisions. The delays to per-pupil funding increases will lead to a cumulative **loss of over \$1 billion** for Prince George's County Public Schools. FY2026 alone sees a **decrease of \$22 million** from the original



promised Blueprint funding. The postponement of collaborative time funding reduces essential resources for compensatory education and multilingual learners, disproportionately impacting the most vulnerable students.

Recommendation: Maintain the original timeline for per-pupil funding and collaborative time implementation to ensure equity in resource allocation.

2. Preserve Community Schools Funding

Starting in FY 2026, PGCPs will have 19 new Community Schools, 11 of which will be eligible for the per-pupil grant in 2027. Community schools rely on these grants to provide mental health support, academic interventions, and family engagement services. The bill freezes per-pupil grant increases for new community schools in FY 2027 and FY 2028, which would deny the 11 newly eligible PGCPs schools access to critical funds.

Recommendation: Remove the funding freeze and continue per-pupil grant increases as originally planned.

3. Ensure Local Control and Reduce Administrative Barriers

Shifting oversight from local school systems to the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) adds unnecessary bureaucracy, restricting district-level decision-making. Implementation of statewide initiatives could duplicate or compete with local efforts, such as recruitment of teachers and the proposed School Leadership Training Program.

Recommendation: Retain local authority over school leadership training and integrate Blueprint-specific professional development into current district-led programs.

4. Simplify Access to Collaborative Time Demonstration Grant

The \$48.42 million allocated over four years does not compensate for the significant per-pupil funding reductions. Additional administrative hurdles make it difficult for districts to access these funds.

Recommendation: Streamline grant access and provide direct funding to districts without excessive application burdens.

In conclusion, the financial impacts of these provisions as written would severely compromise Prince George's County Public School's ability to implement the 5 Pillars of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future effectively. As dedicated stewards of Maryland's public education system, the Prince George's County Board of Education stands ready to collaborate with you in a way that best serves Maryland's scholars. Your leadership in strengthening SB 429 is essential to securing the future of education in our state.

For these reasons, the Prince George's County Board of Education urges your consideration on the above amendments for SB429.

Sincerely,

Prince George's County Board of Education

2025 Sign On Letter for HB 504 and SB 429.pdf

Uploaded by: Robyn Elliott

Position: FWA



To: House Ways and Means Committee
 House Appropriations Committee
 Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee
 Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

Bill: House Bill 504/Senate Bill 429 – Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act

Date: February 19, 2025

Position: Favorable with Amendments

Our organizations are writing with concerns about the proposed revisions to wrap-around services in *House Bill 504/Senate Bill 429 – Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act*. We request that the Committees delete the following language on page 27 in lines 2-7:

(12) Improving the learning environment ~~AND NUMBER OF HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS~~ at the school; ~~and~~

(13) Any professional development for teachers and school staff to quickly identify students who are in need of these resources; ~~AND~~

~~(14) OTHER SERVICES AS DEFINED BY THE DEPARTMENT IN GUIDANCE OR REGULATION.~~

The proposed language would dilute necessary funding for wraparound health, social services, and educational support services at community schools. Wraparound services are absolutely essential to ensure educational success for students from communities with high rates of health and economic disparities.¹ The Blueprint already provides community schools with the flexibility to invest where the needs are highest – in school health and wellness personnel, educational supports, or school-based health centers. **Please preserve the integrity of the Blueprint by safeguarding wrap around services for community schools.** If we can provide any additional information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.

Maryland Assembly for School-Based Health Care
Maryland Association of School Health Nurses
Maryland School Counselors Association

Maryland Occupational Therapy Association
National Association of Social Workers – Maryland Chapter

ⁱ Cumming, T. M., Strnadová, I., Lee, H. M. & Lonergan, R. (2022). Education-centered formal Wraparound Services in support of school-aged students with complex support needs: A systematic review. *Australasian Journal of Special and Inclusive Education*, 46, 47-60

Stenersen, M. R., Kelly, A., Bracey, J., Marshall, T., Cummings, M. Clark, K., & Kaufman, J. (2021). Understanding racial-ethnic disparities in Wraparound care for youths with emotional and behavioral disorders. *Psychiatric Services*, 73, 526-532

Stenersen, M. R., Kelly, A., Bracey, J., Marshall, T., Cummings, M. Clark, K., & Kaufman, J. (2021). Understanding racial-ethnic disparities in Wraparound care for youths with emotional and behavioral disorders. *Psychiatric Services*, 73, 526-532

Stenersen, M. R., Kelly, A., Bracey, J., Marshall, T., Cummings, M. Clark, K., & Kaufman, J. (2021). Understanding racial-ethnic disparities in Wraparound care for youths with emotional and behavioral disorders. *Psychiatric Services*, 73, 526-532

HB 0504 SB 0429 Excellence in MD PublicSchoolsAct.

Uploaded by: SHARON CARRICK

Position: FWA



Ella Ennis, Legislative Chairman
Maryland Federation of Republican Women
PO Box 6040, Annapolis MD 21401
Email: eee437@comcast.net

Chairman and Members of the
Senate Budget & Taxation Committee
House Appropriations Committee
House Ways & Means Committee
General Assembly of Maryland

RE: **HB0504 / SB0429** – Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act
Partial SUPPORT – Amendments recommended to address specific questions and concerns

Dear Chairmen and Committee Members,

The 1,154 members of the Maryland Federation of Republican Women support the proposed modification of the target per pupil amounts to slightly lower amounts to help both the State and counties to balance their budgets over the next several years.

We **SUPPORT** (1) a **delay in funding the “collaborative time per pupil amount” to 2030**, and (2) **pausing increases in Concentration of Poverty Grants for three years**.

However, the section of the bill on Community Schools (pages 25-31) is of concern and needs amending. The bill defines “Community school” as *“a public school that establishes a set of strategic partnerships between the school and other community resources that leverage shared accountability, collaborative leadership capacity building, and authentic family and community engagement, using a student-centered framework to promote inclusive student achievement, positive learning conditions, and the well-being of students, families, educators, and the community through a variety of engaging practices including the provisions of wraparound services”*.

The wraparound services and programs are extensive, and appear designed to take over many functions of the family. Page 26 describes wraparound services to include: *“Enhancing behavioral health services, including access to mental health practitioners and providing professional development to school staff to provide trauma-informed interventions”*. It assumes that all children from low-income families have suffered a trauma that requires counseling and special services. This is an oversimplification applied too broadly, and ensures a growth industry for counselors and social-emotional learning specialists. These issues are thoroughly researched and discussed in the book *Bad Therapy – Why the Kids Aren’t Growing Up* by Abigail Shrier. That research does not support these presumptions.

Other proposed legislation (e.g. HB0161) seeks to indoctrinate children, from pre-K through high school, regarding sex, sexual identity, sex transition and body modification, and sex practices. There is substantial disagreement between parents, educators, and legislators as to the appropriate age and source for this information.



Ella Ennis, Legislative Chairman
Maryland Federation of Republican Women
PO Box 6040, Annapolis MD 21401
Email: eee437@comcast.net

We must respect the role of parents. In the end, it is the parents who are responsible for the health and well-being of their children. When something goes wrong, it is the parents (not the school, not the teacher, not the counselor) who will pick up the pieces and do what is needed to help their child recover.

We **encourage AMENDMENTS** that address these questions and concerns:

1. Will every county Board of Education be required to create a Community School program and hire a Community School Coordinator?
2. Who is the employer of the Community School Coordinators? Is it the county or the State Board of Education?
3. Does a Community School Coordinator answer to the local Board of Education?
4. Every school has a principal who is charged with managing the programs and activities of that school. The Community School Coordinator is charged with implementing all requirements of the community school. Will these potentially overlapping responsibilities create leadership challenges?
5. What is "*authentic family and community engagement*"?
6. Will parents have an opportunity to "opt-out" their child from program elements that conflict with the family's religious or moral beliefs?
7. If a parent authorizes use of the school-based health center by their child, can the parent limit services (mental health counseling, vaccinations, abortion referral, gender dysphoria treatments)? Can the parent require notification and consent before services are provided?

The Community Schools Program as proposed is ripe for chaos, confusion, and legal challenges.

Without amendments addressing the enumerated concerns above, we encourage an **UNFAVORABLE** report for **HB0504** and **SB0429**.

Sincerely, Ella Ennis
Legislative Chairman
Maryland Federation of Republican Women

SB429 & HB504 Testimony - City Schools - SWA 2.19.

Uploaded by: Sonja Santelises

Position: FWA

**Testimony in Support with Amendments of Senate Bill 429 / House Bill 504:
Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act**

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
House Appropriations Committee
House Ways and Means Committee
February 19, 2025

The Baltimore City Public School System (City Schools) supports with amendments Senate Bill 429 / House Bill 504, and appreciates the opportunity to share examples of critical district progress before decisions are potentially made to alter the state's education funding formula as previously set forth in the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

City Schools' strategic budgeting of concentration of poverty funds not only creates well-rounded experiences in our community schools, but has directly contributed to the following:

- As released last month, City Schools' 4th graders saw the third largest growth among school districts in large cities on The Nation's Report Card (NAEP).
 - City Schools' fourth-graders approximately doubled the growth of their peers in large-city school districts and quadrupled the growth of national public students.
 - Fourth-grade economically-disadvantaged students increased their math performance by 10 points.
 - Fourth-grade African-American students increased their math performance by 8 points.

- As released last week on February 11, City Schools showed greater improvement than Maryland and the country on the latest Education Recovery Scorecard:
 - City Schools students have the second largest growth in reading nationally since 2022 among large urban school districts.
 - City Schools is one of five large urban school districts that are performing better in reading than before the pandemic.
 - We are among the nation's leaders in math recovery. Since 2022, City Schools is in the top 25 percent of large urban school districts nationwide.
 - City Schools has the second largest growth in reading in Maryland. We are one of two Maryland school districts that are performing better than before the pandemic, even with the highest rate of economically disadvantaged students.

- City Schools’ chronic absence rate decreased by 5.4 percentage points last year while every other large Maryland school district experienced an increase.
- City Schools continued a three-year run of improvement in ELA and math scores on the MCAP during the 2023-24 school year, outpacing statewide growth in both categories.
 - Economically disadvantaged students more than doubled their proficiency growth versus their peers in Maryland in 2024.
 - As reported in the Baltimore Banner, the district’s year-to-year percentage increases in both ELA and Math were the highest in the state.
 - City Schools’ math scores represented a 15.91% percentage increase – the highest in the state – versus a 3.4% percentage increase statewide.
 - Baltimore City’s literacy scores represented a 6.54% percentage increase over 2023, versus a 1.04% percentage increase statewide.
- City Schools’ overall rate of kindergarten readiness is its highest in nine years. 53.4% of City Schools students who attended City Schools PreK demonstrated readiness on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) in the 2024-25 school year. In the 2023-24 school year, the comparable percentage for Maryland overall was 44%.
 - In addition to City Schools outperforming Maryland in absolute performance for KRA, City Schools also outpaced Maryland in terms of growth in kindergarten readiness. Between the 2021-22 and 2023-24 school years, City Schools kindergarten readiness improved by 16 percent, four times greater than the state during that same period.
- The number of fine arts teachers in City Schools increased from 174 in SY17/18 to 309 in SY24/25
- Every school in Baltimore City has been a Gifted and Advanced Learning (GAL) site since SY20/21.
- The total number of unique students enrolled in AP classes in SY23/24 was 4,014 — up from 3,074 in SY20/21.
 - In 2024, 3,379 students of color enrolled in an AP course – more than have ever been enrolled in the past.
 - The number of Black/African American students enrolled in an AP class that sat for the AP exam increased from 62% in 2021 to 90% in 2023
 - The number of Hispanic/Latino students enrolled in AP class that sat for the AP exam increased from 57% in 2021 to 91% in 2023
- City Schools’ PreK-12 enrollment for SY24/25 is 76,842 — an increase of 1,031 students over last year. This trend is extremely positive at a time when Baltimore City is losing population.

Given the ongoing work of our district as demonstrated above, we certainly support the provisions of SB429/HB504 aimed at increasing teacher recruitment, namely Maryland's entrance into the Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact. The purpose of this Compact is to facilitate the mobility of teachers across the member states, with the goal of enhancing the exchange of licensure by removing barriers to re-licensure in a new state. We believe Maryland's entrance into the Compact will assist in our ability to hire qualified, competent out-of-state teachers.

Our concerns with the legislation lie with proposed changes to the Blueprint funding formula, which if left unaddressed, will not only result in reduced supports for the state's most vulnerable learners but will stand in stark contrast to the most basic premise of the Kirwan Commission – that concentrations of poverty matter in school funding.

It is critical for policymakers to understand that pausing collaborative time, as proposed under SB429, has a direct effect on overall Blueprint funding, reducing the amount schools receive for students living in poverty and students learning English. When combined with the proposed freeze to Concentrations of Poverty per pupil grants, City Schools estimates \$396M in reduced aid over the next four years, until FY30.

Given that any proposal to rollback Blueprint poverty funding will have direct consequences for Baltimore City's students, we respectfully request consideration of the following amendment concepts:

1. If the legislature decides collaborative time must be paused, rather than limit the current hold harmless to only one of three at-risk student categories (special education), expand the provision to ensure both compensatory education and supports for multilingual learners are also held harmless.
2. Strike the proposed two-year pause in Concentrations of Poverty per pupil grants.

As City Schools continues to see important growth and progress across a wide swath of metrics, it is undeniable that Blueprint investments are making a difference in outcomes for students. Adoption of the amendments above will restore approximately \$275M of \$396M in anticipated funding reductions to the district over the next four years.

The Blueprint was intentionally designed to phase in over the course of a decade, in an effort to begin to remedy the well-documented and historic underfunding of Baltimore City Public Schools. Unstable and inconsistent funding is a persistent trait of the systemic structures that have undermined high poverty districts like Baltimore City for years and that the Blueprint was designed to disrupt. We are deep in the work of implementation, and we are seeing results. It is imperative that policymakers act with urgency and take seriously the responsibility to ensure the fidelity of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. Now is not the time to reverse course on our most vulnerable students. For these reasons, City Schools respectfully urges a **favorable with amendments** committee report of SB429/HB504.

SB429_Hooper Testimony-2.pdf

Uploaded by: Alison Hooper

Position: UNF

**Testimony in OPPOSITION of
Senate 429: Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act**

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

Position: Oppose

February 12, 2025

My name is Alison Hooper, and I am the mother of a 2 year old with Down Syndrome, former Anne Arundel Co science teacher and current active duty military spouse living in California but voting in 21401 Annapolis and also building a home in 21811 Berlin, Maryland. I am submitting this testimony **in strong opposition to Senate Bill 429**, which would significantly cut promised education funding under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. This bill undermines the investments our state has committed to making in our students, our teachers, and the future of our communities. We chose to build in Maryland and raise our three children there because of the strong history of resources in Special Education and the great experience I had in the classroom when teaching in Glen Burnie.

One of the things Maryland often gets right and is an easy decision for military families when discussing where to house hunt, are the reliability of the schools. Cuts to per-pupil foundation funding will mean fewer resources for classrooms, including teacher salaries, instructional materials, and critical student services. Schools already struggling to meet the needs of students will be forced to make tough choices, like increasing class sizes. Without adequate funding, many teachers will leave the profession, making teacher shortages worse. One of the biggest stressors as an educator is working 40+ hours in the building and then having to work several more hours after taking care of our family in the evening, just to be adequately prepared for our most deserving students. Cutting funding will add more responsibilities to an already overburdened staff who can easily take their talents elsewhere or decide it's not worth their valuable time.

At a time when Maryland is experiencing a teacher shortage, delaying collaborative time grants will prevent teachers from receiving necessary professional development and planning time. These grants help educators collaborate, improve instruction, and better support students. Without them, schools will struggle to retain talented teachers. As a former middle school teacher we relied heavily on our team meetings and collaborative time together to ensure all students were being seen as a whole child and what areas we could assist each other to make sure they were exceeding standards in all core classes- collaborating with special education professionals me with the tools necessary to cover down when schedule changes or teacher absence occurred. There is no business in the United States that doesn't offer time for their team delivering a product to work together to ensure each of their success, no CEO would cut proven methods that assist in their company's success. Education isn't a competition, it is created around collaboration and Maryland made a commitment to improving education through the Blueprint, but SB429 weakens these efforts when schools need support the most. Rather than cutting funding, the legislature should uphold its promise to students, educators, and families by maintaining the investments that were pledged.

I urge you to reject Senate Bill 429 and prioritize the future of Maryland's students - prioritize generating progressive revenue through the passage of Fair Share Maryland. Cutting funding now will have long-term consequences that harm not just our schools, but our communities as a whole. Please vote no on SB429 and stand with those who believe in fully funding the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Alison McGorry Hooper

Constituent, special needs parent, former AACO middle school science teacher

410-320-2466

amcgorry@gmail.com

SB429_Hooper Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Alison Hooper

Position: UNF

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Senate 429: Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act**

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

Position: Oppose

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CHOOSE ONE OR TWO OF THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

One of the things Maryland often gets right and is an easy decision for military families when discussing where to house hunt, are the reliability of the schools. Cuts to per-pupil foundation funding will mean fewer resources for classrooms, including teacher salaries, instructional materials, and critical student services. Schools already struggling to meet the needs of students will be forced to make tough choices, like increasing class sizes. Without adequate funding, many teachers will leave the profession, making teacher shortages worse. One of the biggest stressors as an educator is working 40+ hours in the building and then having to work several more hours after taking care of our family in the evening, just to be adequately prepared for our most deserving students. Cutting funding will add more responsibilities to an already overburdened staff who can easily take their talents elsewhere or decide it's not worth their valuable time.

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Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Alison McGorry Hooper

Constituent, special needs parent, former AACO middle school science teacher

410-320-2466

amcgorry@gmail.com

Testimony in OPPOSITION of Senate Bill 429 - Jozko

Uploaded by: Amanda Jozkowski

Position: UNF

Testimony in OPPOSITION of Senate Bill 429: Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act

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

February 19, 2025

My name is Dr. Amanda Jozkowski, and I am a parent, a full-time educator, and the PTA Advocacy Chair at Freedom Elementary (Carroll County's most overcrowded public school). I am submitting this testimony in strong opposition to Senate Bill 429, which proposes significant cuts to the promised education funding under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. This bill threatens the investments our state has committed to making in our students, our teachers, and the future of our communities.

Since the economic downturn in 2008, Carroll County Public Schools has balanced its budget by cutting over 375 staff members and reducing spending across the board. These measures have already compromised our school system's ability to deliver quality education, and further cuts as proposed in SB429 would exacerbate these issues dramatically in the following ways:

1. The proposed cuts to per-pupil foundation funding will lead to fewer resources for classrooms - including support staff, instructional materials, and student services. Due to the overly stringent fiscal compliance guidelines in the Blueprint, our county is already forced to cut a large number of employee positions and shift many others, which we anticipate will increase class sizes up to 44 students in Carroll. Beyond the immediate safety concerns this poses, cuts to per-pupil funding will further diminish the quality of education for many students.
2. Carroll County, like many others, receives additional funding for special education students and multilingual learners. There is ample evidence that these groups have a wide achievement gap in relation to their peers. The proposed bill will limit resources for the students who need them most, directly harming those who rely on specialized support to thrive academically and socially.
3. Delaying funding for collaborative time grants under SB429 will hinder our teachers' professional development and their ability to plan effectively. Not only can collaborative grants help enhance teaching strategies and support student success, but at a time when Maryland is experiencing a teacher shortage the proposed delay will make it even more difficult for Carroll and other counties to retain talented teachers.

I urge you to reject SB429 and uphold the commitments made in the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, which is already underfunded. Our community depends on the foundation funds, and our children deserve no less. We must not compromise on the quality of education and the future of our students. I ask you to stand with me and other concerned parents to invest in public education and the development of our future leaders. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amanda Jozkowski". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A'.

Amanda Jozkowski, PhD, OTR/L

amandacforan@gmail.com

443-892-1252

SB 429 Testimony UMB.pdf

Uploaded by: Aneuri Castro

Position: UNF

Testimony in **OPPOSITION of
Senate 429: Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act**

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

Position: **Oppose**

February 12, 2025

As a former Community School Coordinator, I have seen firsthand how critical it is for schools to have the necessary resources to meet the unique needs of their students and families, particularly in high-poverty areas. Freezing the increases in the Concentration of Poverty Per Pupil Funding as proposed in SB429 will undermine the progress we've made in supporting vulnerable students and families academically, socially and economically. I am submitting this testimony **in strong opposition to Senate Bill 429**, which would significantly cut promised education funding under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. Community schools play a vital role in providing wraparound services that address academic, social, and emotional needs, while also serving as a community hub. These funds are essential for community schools to engage with local resources, build strong partnerships, and provide targeted support to students who face significant barriers to success. Without this funding, we risk compromising the opportunities for our most underserved students to thrive.

The importance of community schools was particularly evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, when they became lifelines for students, families and their local communities navigating an unprecedented crisis. In times of uncertainty, like the current landscape, structures like community schools are more important than ever. They provide a foundation of support, offering children, families and communities the resources, stability, and care they need to navigate challenging times. Freezing these funds now would create an even greater challenge for Maryland's most vulnerable communities, stripping away the crucial support systems that have proven essential in times of local and national uncertainty. We must stay the course with community schools, ensuring that they continue to provide the structure, resources, and holistic supports that our students and families need to succeed.

At the University of Maryland School of Social Work/The Center for Restorative Change, we work in partnership with 11 Baltimore City Public Schools in supporting the community schools strategy with the Positive Schools Center. The PSC creates positive, supportive, and mindful learning communities where students and school staff connect, develop, and grow. We partner with schools and districts to address punitive discipline and dysfunctional school climates. The foundation of our work is built on a strong racial justice understanding and equity focus. Together, we approach school change through embedding restorative approaches, trauma-responsive strategies, social-emotional learning, and community voice into their routines, policies, and culture. Our schools are environments where students, adults, and community members feel safe and can flourish. School teams have the expertise and training to build strong, dynamic relationships and sustain high student and staff attendance, continually decrease suspension rates and office referrals, and boost academic achievement.

Here are key testimonials from Community School Coordinators that assess strengths and risks in each of our community schools:

George Washington Elementary #22

My name is Latoria Jones, and I am a Community School Coordinator at George Washington Elementary in Southwest Baltimore. At George Washington Elementary School, we are proud to serve a diverse and vibrant community where every child's success matters. The Concentration of Poverty Grant funding plays a crucial role in making sure we meet the needs of our students and their families, offering them opportunities that would otherwise be unavailable. If we lose this funding, we risk undermining the

very programs that help our students thrive academically, socially, and personally. Thanks to the Concentration of Poverty Grant, our school can provide essential programming such as after-school sports, enrichment activities, and educational field trips. The grant allows us to offer additional academic support, including tutoring, after-school programs, and theater opportunities, all designed to enhance learning and foster creativity. These activities promote not only academic excellence but also emotional and social development. Students who participate in out of school time activities are proven to have higher academic achievement, better behavior, and improved social skills.

We will lose a key part of our approach to educating the whole child if we lose funding for these programs and services. The community school initiative relies on wraparound services to address the diverse needs of our students. The funding helps us provide these comprehensive services and ensures that no child is left behind. The Concentration of Poverty Grant is more than just a source of funding, it is an investment in the future of our children and our community. Without this critical funding, we would be unable to provide the services that are essential to our students' academic success and personal growth.

Joseph C. Briscoe Academy #345

My name is La'Nia Latimer, and I am a Community School Coordinator at Joseph C. Briscoe Academy located in West Baltimore. I am submitting this testimony **in strong opposition to Senate Bill 429**, which would significantly cut promised education funding under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. This bill undermines the investments our state has committed to making in our students, our teachers, and the future of our communities. Delays in funding for community schools will widen the achievement gap and leave vulnerable students without essential support systems. Schools that were promised additional resources through Concentration of Poverty grants will not receive the funds when they need them most. These grants provide critical services such as mental health care, and extracurricular programming and activities.

As an alternative school, we already operate with limited resources. We rely on this funding to provide students with opportunities for cultural field trips, weekly snowboarding trips, and other experiential learning activities that support both academic growth and behavioral improvement. These trips serve as incentives, encouraging positive behavior and engagement in school. If this funding is delayed for two years, it will effectively eliminate these programs, depriving our students of valuable experiences that enhance their education and development. This will have a direct and lasting impact on their motivation, well-being, and overall success.

Elmer A. Henderson: A Johns Hopkins Partnership School #368

My name is Annie Weber, and I am a Community School Coordinator at Elmer A. Henderson in East Baltimore. The Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act presents a significant threat to the mental health and well-being of students, especially in community schools that rely on targeted resources to support their diverse needs. By decreasing funding for mental health services, the state is neglecting the rising mental health challenges students face, especially those from underfunded and high-poverty schools. Mental health counselors and school-based therapists are essential in helping students cope with trauma, stress, and the emotional challenges they face daily.

Reducing funding for these services compromises students' ability to succeed academically and socially, as their mental health needs go unmet. Moreover, the lack of adequate mental health support will likely contribute to higher absenteeism, behavioral issues, and a decline in overall school performance. At Henderson Hopkins, our once part-time mental health staff had such overwhelming demand that a full-time Mental Health Therapist was necessary to meet even part of those needs. Even with a full-time Therapist and our full-time Social Worker and School Psychologist, over 50 students in need of grief and loss support went unserved due to insufficient staffing. As of now, our mental health staff must focus on

only the most severe mental health, grief, and behavioral cases while hundreds of other students who need mental health support continue to go unserved. Our Climate & Culture Team support staff (behavioral support team) have been significantly overworked in their efforts to assist teachers by managing students in crisis throughout the school day. Their dedication has been invaluable, contributing to the safety of both students and staff, enabling teachers to perform their duties more effectively, and fostering notable improvements in the behavior of students who are struggling.

In addition to cuts in mental health funding, the proposed freezing of parts of the Concentration of Poverty School Grant Program will disproportionately harm schools in lower-income areas that depend on this support to provide equitable educational opportunities. These schools often face additional challenges, including higher dropout rates, overcrowded classrooms, and a lack of resources, all exacerbated by limited funding. The community school model has proven effective in reducing all these factors, leading to improved opportunities for students, families, and communities. This not only offers benefits to student well-being but improves the future of Baltimore City.

We do know that at Henderson-Hopkins, our after-school budget will decrease by nearly \$20,000+ next year. Reducing funding for afterschool programs, crucial in keeping students engaged and supported outside of traditional school hours, will leave many children without positive outlets for learning and growth. After-school programs offer safe spaces from 4-6 PM, relieving stress on working parents, and inspiring children's passions to motivate them to achieve in and out of school. These cuts will only deepen the divide between schools in affluent areas and those in marginalized communities, undermining the state's commitment to educational equity and leaving struggling schools without the resources they need to improve student outcomes. The state would see an increase in youth at risk, lowered student achievement, and a weaker workforce. These factors will ultimately result in higher long-term costs for the city, while also sending a message to our student body that their well-being is not a priority. Out of 190 responses to Henderson-Hopkins' annual budget survey this year, we saw that families' top 2 priorities were maintaining the quality and number of offerings of our after-school programming as well as the need for mental health support in schools. If the state makes the decision to cut funding for schools and community schools, it will be going against the expressed needs of our children and families.

Renaissance Academy #433

My name is Felicia Moore, and I am a Community School Coordinator at Renaissance Academy in West Baltimore. Renaissance Academy represents hundreds of Maryland high schools that are in a state of urgency with setting up our youth for post-secondary success. We heavily rely on the concentration of poverty funds to help mitigate barriers that impact educational experiences. Funding community schools is crucial for high schools because it ensures that all students, regardless of their socio-economic background, have access to quality education. Well-funded schools can provide better resources, such as college & career readiness, advanced technology, extracurricular programs, and specialized teachers. Moreover, concentration of poverty funds help minimize communal issues such as crime and homelessness by reducing barriers that hinder our youth's flow of knowledge. These resources are essential for fostering an environment that promotes academic success, and personal development. Additionally, community school funding allows for smaller class sizes, which can lead to more individualized attention for students, enhancing learning outcomes. Overall, investing in community schools also helps create access to opportunities, bridging the gap between underfunded areas and wealthier districts, thus contributing to stronger, more prosperous communities in the long term.

Westport Academy #225

Westport Academy is a Pre-K-8 community school in Baltimore City. Within the Westport community, there are 2 convenience shops with no access to grocery stores located within 4 miles. The school has been able to provide weekend backpacks with food and snacks for students and families. Delays in funding for community schools will widen the achievement gap and leave vulnerable students without the necessary support systems and basic needs. These grants provide essential services such as food from partnerships, mental health care, after-school programs, special education services, and multilingual support for students. Freezing these funds now would create an even greater challenge for Maryland's most vulnerable communities.

Creative City Public Charter School #384

Creative City Public Charter School is a progressive charter elementary school in Northwest Baltimore City. With small classes and a focus on the arts, students connect with nature and their community through hands-on projects and exploration. This unique approach to education has established Creative City as an anchor institution in the Park Heights community. Creative City is home to several resources, partnerships, and opportunities aimed at providing expansive opportunities to our students and their families - opportunities that simply cannot exist without the continuation of the Blueprint funding. Reducing our already tight budget would be detrimental to the wellbeing of not only our students, but the Park Heights community, leaving countless families searching for accessible resources. We urge you to please consider the historic disinvestment that not only our community, but so many of our neighboring communities, have faced and make the decision to continue full funding so that we can continue the irreplaceable work that is being done.

Augusta Fells Institute of Visual Arts #430

At Augusta Fells Savage Institute of Visual Arts (AFSIVA), we strive to enrich each student's academic life with a blend of comprehensive art skills and STEM education. Research shows that this approach of blending art and science increases student's ability to think critically and creatively, which in turn better prepares them for life post-high school graduation. With opportunities from sports teams to a student art gallery, and access to dozens of community partners, AFSIVA truly serves as a hub for the needs of our students and their families. As a community school, we support the entire family, not just the student. This holistic approach allows families to be fully engaged while having their needs met. Cutting funding to schools such as ours would be detrimental to the well-being of the hundreds of students that we serve, as well as their families, and thus our communities at large. We urge you to please oppose these budget cuts and consider the wellbeing of our student's, their families, and our collective future.

The Historic Samuel Coleridge-Taylor Elementary School #122

At The Historic Samuel Coleridge Taylor Elementary School (HSCT), our mission is to guarantee that every student attains college or career readiness through grade-level or above achievement. We achieve this through differentiated instruction, strategic interventions, and a collaborative and supportive environment that fosters rigor and engagement. Our vision is to be a united community of teachers, families, and students dedicated to nurturing the holistic development of each child—mind, body, and

spirit. Family members have stressed the need for more youth programs and diverse recreational activities for their children. This resonates with a holistic approach to education, recognizing the importance of extracurricular activities in fostering personal development and overall well-being. Freezing per pupil funding will significantly impact how schools can ultimately meet their goals in providing well-rounded educational opportunities for our students.

Glenmount Elementary/Middle School #235

The proposed adjustments to educational funding in Maryland will have a significant impact on schools like Glenmount Elementary/Middle School in Baltimore City. These changes would directly affect our ability to provide essential resources and support for our students, families, and community. As a community school, we rely on funding to ensure that every student has access to high-quality education, enrichment programs, and critical services that help address barriers to learning. Our students benefit greatly from initiatives such as academic interventions, mental health support, and family engagement programs—all of which would be at risk if these changes are implemented, reducing opportunities for student success. Additionally, modifying revenue sources for the Blueprint for Maryland's Future Fund could shift financial priorities away from the schools that need support the most, further widening educational inequities.

At Glenmount, we serve a diverse and hardworking community, and we recognize how crucial adequate funding is for the success of our students and families. Investing in community schools means investing in the future of our children by ensuring they have the necessary resources to thrive academically and personally. We urge you to reconsider these proposed funding changes and continue prioritizing the needs of students in Baltimore City and beyond.

Matthew A. Henson Elementary School #29

Matthew A. Henson Elementary School is a resilient staple in its historic West Baltimore community. The school currently serves Pre-k through 5th grade students and provides eight after-school programs which include coding, STEM, extended literacy support, male mentoring, girl mentoring, choir, and entrepreneurship. The caregivers and students appreciate these programs as they are robust and support the community school strategy in enhanced academics and enrichment. Parents have reflected on their scholar's academic improvement while attending Matthew A. Henson's afterschool programs through surveys and community needs assessments. Concentration of Poverty Per Pupil funding allows our students to receive the necessary academic support and enrichment.

Booker T. Washington Middle School #130

My name is Shakira Hopper, and I am a Community School Coordinator at Booker T. Washington Middle School in West Baltimore. Taking away funds from community schools such as Booker T. Washington Middle School for the Arts can have a detrimental impact on the quality of resources available to students, their families and staff. Here at Booker T. Washington Middle School for the Arts, we primarily support and service those in low-income or underserved areas, who also rely heavily on government funding to maintain essential services like teacher salaries, extracurricular programs, and learning materials. A reduction in these funds can result in attendance barriers, limited access to technology, and a decrease in the availability of academic support services. Students in our school may face challenges in receiving the individual attention and resources they need to succeed, ultimately widening the achievement gap between wealthier and less privileged communities.

Furthermore, cutting funding to our community school can also lead to the loss of vital support systems that help foster a positive learning environment through our community school strategy via college and career readiness, community support such as our monthly food distribution and partnering organization. Our school uses this budget to provide mental health services, after-school programs, and community outreach initiatives that benefit both students and their families. When these services are scaled back, students may lack the emotional and social support needed to thrive academically and personally. Additionally, the loss of community school coordinator's due to budget cuts can cause a decline in morale, negatively affecting the school climate and the overall educational experience as we serve as a trusted and reliable contact throughout the school. In the long run, the disinvestment in community schools can perpetuate cycles of inequality, leaving disadvantaged students at a significant disadvantage in terms of educational outcomes and future opportunities.

In summary, Maryland made a commitment to improving education through the Blueprint, but SB429 weakens these efforts when schools need support the most. Rather than cutting funding, the legislature should uphold its promise to students, educators, and families by maintaining the investments that were pledged. I urge you to reject Senate Bill 429 and prioritize the future of Maryland's students - prioritize generating progressive revenue through the passage of Fair Share Maryland. Cutting funding now will have long-term consequences that harm not just our schools, but our communities as a whole. Please vote no on SB429 and stand with those who believe in fully funding the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Aneuri Castro, LMSW
University of Maryland School of Social Work
The Center for Restorative Change
Positive Schools Center

SB429_Oppose! AMW BCPS.pdf

Uploaded by: Anna Weisberg

Position: UNF

**Testimony in OPPOSITION of
Senate 429: Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act**

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

Position: Oppose

February 19, 2025

My name is Anna Weisberg, and I am an educator from Baltimore, Maryland. I am submitting this testimony in **strong opposition to Senate Bill 429**, which would significantly cut promised education funding under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. This bill undermines the investments our state has committed to making in our students, our teachers, and the future of our communities.

Cuts to per-pupil foundation funding will mean fewer resources for classrooms, including teacher salaries, instructional materials, and critical student services. Schools already struggling to meet the needs of students will be forced to make tough choices, like increasing class sizes. Without adequate funding, many teachers will leave the profession, making teacher shortages worse. I started teaching in Maryland in 2015. Now, ten years in, not a week goes by that I don't consider a career change. This is an improvement. A year ago, I was considering a career change almost daily. This year's improvements to strategic collaborative planning have made my work feel more strategic and effective. I've had the opportunity to co-plan with the other grades 3-5 ELA teachers in my building a couple times this year. We've shared techniques for improving student writing and looked at student work samples together to build a common set of expectations from our young writers. **This bill stands to take this essential collaborative time away from educators across the state.**

More, not less, is needed to adequately support the learning of the almost fifty third graders each day with no additional adult support. 75 percent of one of my classes scored below the 21st percentile on their state tests last spring. Let me repeat that: 75 percent of one of my classes scored below the 21st percentile on their state tests last spring. A large number of them need reading intervention, but last year's budget cuts led to a reduction in reading specialists. This year we have only 1.5 reading specialists to serve over 630 students. Due to our limited staffing, it took all of the first quarter for us to finish identifying which students needed which intervention and to figure out how we could allocate staff to provide it. At first, it was determined that I would provide intervention to two of the groups. So I would try to deliver the intervention while the rest of the class worked independently. It's just me and twenty-four 8- and 9-year-olds. It turns out that I am not sufficiently magical to manage 19 mostly below-level readers doing independent work while delivering a research-based, scripted reading intervention to the other four students. We made a new plan, but **more precious time to close learning gaps was lost as we figured this out, trying to accommodate our grossly inadequate staffing.**

We already are insufficiently staffed. I have a student who is making loud, random noises in an effort to avoid instruction and get attention. We are working on identifying what additional support and services he might need, but in the meantime, he is making increasingly loud noises almost daily. Roughly 25% of the time, no one can come help. Administrations and support staff are stretched too thinly. So the other students and I try, as we've been instructed, to ignore the noises, but it is difficult for us to focus. Sometimes when we ignore the noises, the child starts knocking over classroom furniture, or he walks out and then I must stand with one foot in the class and one in the hall, telling the class to proceed with some practice work I'm improvising on the fly, while I call for help on the walkie and hope someone can come soon. This is stressful. This is unjust. The learning of my entire class is held hostage by our staffing limitations. And mine is just one classroom in one school. I am exhausted from trying to fill multiple roles every day.

I am told I must have a class library, but am given no budget. I am told my students must do their online fluency intervention daily, but that the district cannot provide extra charging cables, headphones, or backup student devices. If I want the resources students need to be successful, I must acquire the needed tools. The state is exploiting my good will and care- robbing me of all it can. There is nothing left in me.

We urgently need more resources, not fewer.

Maryland made a commitment to improving education through the Blueprint, but SB429 weakens these efforts when schools need support the most. Rather than cutting funding, the legislature should uphold its promise to students, educators, and families by maintaining the investments that were pledged.

I urge you to reject Senate Bill 429 and prioritize the future of Maryland's students - prioritize generating progressive revenue through the passage of Fair Share Maryland. Cutting funding now will have long-term consequences that harm not just our schools, but our communities as a whole. Please vote no on SB429 and stand with those who believe in fully funding the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Anna

Anna Weisberg
Educator, Baltimore County Public Schools
Villa Cresta Elementary School
Parkville, MD 21234

Voter
7045 Heathfield Road
Baltimore, MD 21212

Testimony HB 504 - SB0429.pdf

Uploaded by: Bryna Schaum

Position: UNF

TO: Maryland General Assembly, Budget and Taxation Committee
FROM: Bryna and Jason Schaum
SUBJECT: SB 429 / HB 504 - Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act
POSITION: UNFAVORABLE (OPPOSE)

Dear Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee,
Our names are Bryna and Jason Schaum, and we are submitting this testimony as concerned parents in Carroll County. We urge you to **oppose SB 429 / HB 504 in its current form** and revise the Blueprint to give more local control of the budget that can ensure **adequate and sustainable funding** for all Maryland school districts.

Necessary Adjustments to the Blueprint Formula

While the Blueprint for Maryland's Future aims to improve education, its **current funding structure is not making sense in Carroll County**. In fact, it is delivering devastating consequences to most of the schools in our county that are already severely underfunded. Schools with higher populations of students are **losing desperately needed resources, neglecting laws** like the Maryland Ready to Read act, and have **safety concerns** about classroom sizes. **Carroll County schools need more flexibility in Blueprint funding to help keep it a successful school district**. We are very confused how the Blueprint Expert Review teams came to Carroll County and approved these changes that are wreaking havoc for our overall successful schools.

We agree wholeheartedly with raising teacher salaries. We love the idea of giving additional funding to the students who need it. However, giving 75% of the budget to those students is severely disabling the rest of the students who also need help. Many students struggle in schools with anxiety, reading/math difficulties, and have IEPs and 504s. But they don't qualify as Special Education, and now they will have no supports in their schools, and class sizes at an unsafe level.

The following **adjustments** are necessary to help districts meet their obligations without sacrificing the quality of education:

1. **Increase Per-Pupil Foundation Funding** – Raising the **base foundation amount** will give districts more **discretionary spending** to prevent devastating staff cuts and preserve essential programs. This benefits **all students** and ensures that districts have flexibility to meet their unique needs. You can achieve this by **lowering the 75% Compensatory Education, Multi-Language Learners, and Special Education requirement to 50%**. Moving these funds into Foundation will give districts more flexibility to retain critical support staff that are needed in our schools. This would help Carroll County schools immensely. Current mandates would prompt Carroll County to **cut almost 100 educators and reassign up to 90 educators**, further increasing class sizes and disrupting school communities.
2. **Extend the Blueprint Spending Implementation Timeline** – The current timeline requiring **50% compliance by 2025 and 100% by 2026** places an overwhelming financial burden on local districts that are already struggling to balance their budgets. Extending the implementation over a **four-year span by 25% increments** would allow districts more time to

adjust, secure funding, and implement these changes effectively **without sacrificing essential staff and programs.**

Rather than lowering the per-pupil foundation amount, we urge you to consider these adjustments to **provide school districts with the flexibility they need to meet Blueprint goals without harming students and educators.**

Maryland's students deserve a **fully funded, stable, and effective education system, not one built on staffing crises, and overcrowded classrooms.** Carroll County had excellent public schools, but the Blueprint rigidity will devastate them. We respectfully ask you to stand with educators, parents, and students by ensuring that districts have the resources they need to succeed.

Sincerely,
Bryna and Jason Schaum
Eldersburg, MD 21784

SB429_MDCEP_UNF.pdf

Uploaded by: Christopher Meyer

Position: UNF

Stand by Maryland's Promise to our Children

Position Statement in Opposition to Senate Bill 429

Given before the Budget and Taxation Committee and the Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future is a promise made by the Maryland General Assembly to our state's children. It is the result of four years of diligent research by the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education. It is also a system of mutually reinforcing strategies, no one of which is sufficient on its own. When lawmakers passed the Blueprint in 2020, then resoundingly overrode Republican Governor Larry Hogan's veto in 2021, they sent a clear message: the state of Maryland values public education. Senate Bill 429 would undermine this promise by decoupling the Blueprint's component strategies and slashing public school funding for more than a decade.

For these reasons, the Maryland Center on Economic Policy opposes Senate Bill 429.

Lawmakers designed the Blueprint for Maryland's Future around a unified strategy developed by the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education over several years of research and deliberation. As the commission's final report states:¹

While the Commission's recommendations are grouped by policy area, a fundamental premise of the Commission's work is that the recommendations are interrelated, and Maryland will only see the intended results if they are implemented in tandem. The Commission crafted an implementation strategy that weaves the recommendations together so that over time the entire education system is strengthened, resulting in improved student performance.

Increased collaborative planning time for teachers is a core component of the Blueprint strategy. It increases teachers' capacity to meet students' diverse needs, enables greater cross-pollination of effective strategies, and contributes to strong recruitment and retention. By rolling back collaborative planning time, Senate Bill 429 both sacrifices those direct benefits and renders all other components of the Blueprint strategy less effective.

Impacts of Senate Bill 429 on collaborative planning time:

- The bill eliminates funding for FY 2026 (\$163 per pupil cut) to FY 2029 (\$698 per pupil cut).
- Delayed phase-in cuts \$728 per pupil in FY 2030, increasing to \$829 per pupil cut in FY 2033.
- The bill does not adjust the delayed phase-in for inflation, resulting in a *permanent* cut, likely exceeding 8%.

Moreover, because of the way Maryland's school funding formula is built, cutting per-pupil foundation funding automatically reduces targeted funding to support students who face barriers in the classroom:ⁱⁱ

- Senate Bill 429 cuts compensatory education funding for students with low family income by \$139 per eligible pupil in FY 2026, increasing to \$605 cut per eligible pupil in FY 2033.
- Senate Bill 429 cuts funding for English learners by \$160 per eligible pupil in FY 2026, increasing to \$705 cut per eligible pupil in FY 2033.

These cuts are not driven by any of the bill's stated policy goals. They are a simply mathematical ripple effect – collateral damage to the students with the greatest needs.

The bill prevents similar cuts to targeted special education funding for students with disabilities by replacing the percentage weights in current law with per-eligible-pupil dollar amounts based on the current-law foundation amount. This provision is positive, insofar as it limits the damage the bill would otherwise do. However, it raises two issues:

- Students with disabilities are still harmed by reduced foundation funding, just like every other student. Furthermore, Maryland's thousands of students with disabilities who also have low family incomes or are English learners are harmed by cuts to these programs. Make no mistake: **Senate Bill 429 does not spare students with disabilities.**
- There is no reason why lawmakers could not use a similar approach to limit harm to students with low family incomes and English learners. Senate Bill 429 is fundamentally flawed; at the same time, shielding *all* targeted funding from the ripple effects of foundation cuts would limit the damage.

Senate Bill 429 does further, *targeted* harm to students in high-poverty, often racially segregated neighborhoods, by cutting concentration of poverty funding for FY 2027 to FY 2031. For a school that has long served such a neighborhood, the cut in FY 2028 would be 34% of concentration of poverty per-pupil funding.ⁱⁱⁱ

Enacting Senate Bill 429 would repeat policymakers' mistakes in the aftermath of the Great Recession. At the height of Thornton funding formula implementation in FY 2008, 23 of the state's 24 local school systems were at least 95% funded according to contemporary standards. By FY 2015, only six districts met that standard, and more than half of all Black students in Maryland went to school in a district that was underfunded by at least 15%. Senate Bill 429 is the first step toward a similar fate.

Senate Bill 429 is a counterproductive response to two legitimate challenges:

- Maryland schools continue to face severe teacher staffing shortages, hindering implementation of the Blueprint's collaborative planning time goals. **Senate Bill 429 takes resources away from schools because they are facing serious challenges, a backward approach.**
- The state faces severe and growing budget shortfalls. However, Senate Bill 429 will likely reduce long-term revenue growth by fostering a less well-educated population. Gov. Moore's revenue package is a strong step in the right direction. **Lawmakers should build on this progress and protect public**

schools by adopting more ambitious provisions from the Fair Share for Maryland Act (Senate Bill 859).

For these reasons, the Maryland Center on Economic Policy respectfully requests that the Budget and Taxation Committee and the Committee on Energy, Education, and the Environment make an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 429.

Equity Impact Analysis: Senate Bill 429

Bill summary

Senate Bill 429 reduces public school funding through multiple changes to the Blueprint for Maryland's Future school funding formula, in addition to other provisions.

Background

The Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education was established in 2016 to complete the review of Maryland's education funding policies as required under the 2002 Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act. The General Assembly passed the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, based on the Kirwan Commission recommendations, in 2020 and overrode then-Gov. Hogan's veto in 2021.

As of 2017, only six of the state's 24 school districts were at or near the state's contemporary funding standards.

Equity Implications

Maryland's pre-Blueprint education policies poses significant equity concerns:

- As of 2017, only six of the state's 24 school districts were funded at or above 95 percent of the Bridge to Excellence standard, despite higher academic expectations that render that standard inadequate.
- More than half of Black students in Maryland went to school in a district that was funded at least 15 percent below the Bridge to Excellence standard in 2017, as did 37 percent of Latinx students and 13 percent of white students.
- Maryland public schools are among the most racially segregated in the United States.^{iv} Segregation is intrinsically harmful and must ultimately be solved by meaningful integration; furthermore, inequitable school funding creates greater racial imbalances in a segregated school system.
- Multiple independent analyses have found that the wealthiest schools in Maryland were better funded than the least wealthy schools.
- Inequitable access to high-quality pre-K-12 education contributes to inequitable opportunities later in life—to pursue higher education, to build a fulfilling and well-paying career, or to have a safe home in a thriving community.

The Blueprint put us on a path to mitigate—though not eliminate—these inequities:

- Strengthening overall state investments in public schools improves all students' access to a great education, and this improvement is most meaningful for students who today face barriers that prevent them from getting the education they deserve.
- The new concentrated poverty program will enable schools that face many of the greatest challenges to deliver the specific services their students need, such as on-site physical and mental health care. Both

racial income inequality and residential segregation increase the likelihood that students of color will live in a high-poverty neighborhood.

Because of the way Maryland's school funding formula is built, cutting per-pupil foundation funding automatically reduces targeted funding to support students who face barriers in the classroom:

- Senate Bill 429 cuts compensatory education funding for students with low family income by \$139 per eligible pupil in FY 2026, increasing to \$605 cut per eligible pupil in FY 2033.
- Senate Bill 429 cuts funding for English learners by \$160 per eligible pupil in FY 2026, increasing to \$705 cut per eligible pupil in FY 2033.

These cuts are not driven by any of the bill's stated policy goals. They are a simple mathematical ripple effect – collateral damage to the students with the greatest needs.

The bill prevents similar cuts to targeted special education funding for students with disabilities by replacing the percentage weights in current law with per-eligible-pupil dollar amounts based on the current-law foundation amount. This provision is positive, insofar as it limits the damage the bill would otherwise do. However, it raises two issues:

- Students with disabilities are still harmed by reduced foundation funding, just like every other student. Furthermore, Maryland's thousands of students with disabilities who also have low family incomes or are English learners are harmed by cuts to these programs. Make no mistake: **Senate Bill 429 does not spare students with disabilities.**
- There is no reason why lawmakers could not use a similar approach to limit harm to students with low family incomes and English learners. Senate Bill 429 is fundamentally flawed; at the same time, shielding *all* targeted funding from the ripple effects of foundation cuts would limit the damage.

Senate Bill 429 does further, *targeted* harm to students in high-poverty, often racially segregated neighborhoods, by cutting concentration of poverty funding for FY 2027 to FY 2031. For a school that has long served such a neighborhood, the cut in FY 2028 would be 34% of concentration of poverty per-pupil funding.^v

Impact

Senate Bill 429 would likely **worsen racial and economic inequity** in Maryland.

ⁱ <https://dls.maryland.gov/pubs/prod/NoPblTabMtg/CmsnInnovEduc/2020-Final-Report-of-the-Commission.pdf>

ⁱⁱ MDCEP calculations

ⁱⁱⁱ MDCEP calculations.

^{iv} Gary Orfield, Jongyeun Ee, Erica Frankenberg, and Genevieve Siegel-Hawley, "Brown at 62: School Segregation by Race, Poverty and State," Civil Rights Project / *Proyecto Derechos Civiles*, UCLA, 2016, <https://www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/k-12-education/integration-and-diversity/brown-at-62-school-segregation-by-race-poverty-and-state/Brown-at-62-final-corrected-2.pdf>

^v MDCEP calculations.

Appendix: Suggested Targeted Program Per-Pupil Amounts

FY	Compensatory Education	English Learners
2026	7,842	9,041
2027	7,786	9,148
2028	7,908	9,327
2029	8,029	9,613
2030	8,363	9,794
2031	8,582	10,069
2032	8,448	10,232
2033	9,026	10,510

Copy of SB429_Oppose_Template.pdf

Uploaded by: Claire Broido Johnson

Position: UNF

**Testimony in OPPOSITION of
Senate 429: Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act**

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

Position: Oppose

February 12, 2025

My name is Claire Broido Johnson, and I am a parent from Baltimore City with a son at Baltimore Polytechnic. I am submitting this testimony **in strong opposition to Senate Bill 429**, which would significantly cut promised education funding under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. This bill undermines the investments our state has committed to making in our students, our teachers, and the future of our communities.

CHOOSE ONE OR TWO OF THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

Cuts to per-pupil foundation funding will mean fewer resources for classrooms, including teacher salaries, instructional materials, and critical student services. Schools already struggling to meet the needs of students will be forced to make tough choices, like increasing class sizes. Without adequate funding, many teachers will leave the profession, making teacher shortages worse. Across inner city Baltimore, teachers are burnt out, retiring early, and feeling deflated and underappreciated while their work continues to increase.

At a time when Maryland is experiencing a teacher shortage, delaying collaborative time grants will prevent teachers from receiving necessary professional development and planning time. These grants help educators collaborate, improve instruction, and better support students. Without them, schools will struggle to retain talented teachers.

Delays in funding for community schools will widen the achievement gap and leave vulnerable students without the necessary support systems. Schools that were promised additional resources through Concentration of Poverty grants will not see the funds when they need them most. These grants provide essential services such as mental health care, after-school programs, and multilingual support for students. So many children at all of our inner city schools need after-school programs and special services so that they can become happy, functional members of society.

Maryland made a commitment to improving education through the Blueprint, but SB429 weakens these efforts when schools need support the most. Rather than cutting funding, the legislature should uphold its promise to students, educators, and families by maintaining the investments that were pledged.

I urge you to reject Senate Bill 429 and prioritize the future of Maryland's students - prioritize generating progressive revenue through the passage of Fair Share Maryland. Cutting funding now will have long-term consequences that harm not just our schools, but our communities as a whole. Please vote no on SB429 and stand with those who believe in fully funding the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Claire Broido Johnson
East Montgomery St, Baltimore, MD 21230
clairebjohnson@gmail.com

Testimony HB 504 - SB0429 Excellence in Maryland P

Uploaded by: Codi Cover

Position: UNF

TO: Maryland General Assembly, Budget and Taxation Committee

FROM: Carl and Codi Cover

SUBJECT: SB 429 / HB 504 - Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act

POSITION: UNFAVORABLE (OPPOSE)

Dear Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee,

Our names are Carl and Codi Cover, and we are submitting this testimony as concerned parents in Carroll County. I urge you to **oppose SB 429 / HB 504 in its current form** and instead focus on solutions that ensure **adequate and sustainable funding** for all Maryland school districts. Local constituents have asked for more funding for our schools, but the amount of funding needed to avoid major school cuts will likely not be obtained.

Our district is planning severe cuts to staff and programs to meet Blueprint mandates. This only applies to some schools and my children attend those schools. My second grader was recently diagnosed with dyslexia and without specialists at his school, I am very concerned his needs will not be met on a basic level. I believe the intent of Blueprint was to improve educational outcomes, not cripple some schools while others pool resources. We have been told our reading and math specialists will be cut along with support staff, interventionists, and many others.

Necessary Adjustments to the Blueprint Formula

While the Blueprint for Maryland's Future aims to improve education, its **current funding structure creates significant unintended consequences**. The following **adjustments** are necessary to help districts meet their obligations without sacrificing the quality of education:

1. **Increase Per-Pupil Foundation Funding** – Raising the **base foundation amount** will give districts more **discretionary spending** to prevent devastating staff cuts and preserve essential programs. This benefits **all students** and ensures that districts have flexibility to meet their unique needs.
2. **Examine the Funding Weights** – for Compensatory Education, Multi-Language Learners, and Special Education and reallocating a portion to **Foundation funding** will allow districts to **retain critical support staff** in the immediate. We need to retain reading/math specialists and media center specialists and preserve current essential

programs. Current mandates would prompt Carroll County to **cut almost 100 educators and reassign up to 90 educators**, further increasing class sizes and disrupting school communities.

4. **Extend the Blueprint Spending Implementation Timeline** – The current timeline requiring **50% compliance by 2025 and 100% by 2026** places an overwhelming financial burden on local districts that are already struggling to balance their budgets. Extending the implementation over a **four-year span** by **25% increments** would allow districts more time to adjust, secure funding, and implement these changes effectively **without sacrificing essential staff and programs**.

I urge you to consider **these adjustments** to provide school districts with the flexibility they need to meet Blueprint goals without harming students and educators.

Maryland's students deserve a **fully funded, stable, and effective education system, not one built on budget gaps, staffing crises, and overcrowded classrooms**. I respectfully ask you to stand with educators, parents, and students by ensuring that districts have the resources they need to succeed from our state.

Sincerely,

Carl and Codi Cover
Sykesville, MD 21784

BTU Testimony Senate Bill 429.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Cristina E Duncan Evans

Position: UNF



AFT 340 AFL-CIO
Seton Business Park
5800 Metro Drive, 2nd Floor
Baltimore, MD 21215-3209

Senate Bill 429 – Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act
Budget and Taxation Committee/Education, Energy and the Environment
February 19, 2025

UNFAVORABLE

Good afternoon, Chairs Guzzone and Feldman, Vice Chairs Kagan and Rosapepe, and members of the committees. The Baltimore Teachers Union stands in strong opposition to Senate Bill 429, which proposes significant cuts to the education funding promised under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

The Blueprint represents a historic, bipartisan commitment to investing in our students, our teachers, and the future of our communities. By delaying and reducing this critical funding, SB 429 undermines the very foundation of that promise and puts our most vulnerable students at further risk. Our schools cannot afford broken commitments—especially not when these investments are designed to close achievement gaps, address generational inequities, and provide essential services to children who need them most.

One of the most concerning aspects of this bill is the delay in funding for Community Schools and the Concentration of Poverty grants, which are lifelines for many of Baltimore's students. These grants fund essential services such as mental health care, after-school programming, and multilingual support—services that directly impact student success and well-being.

Across Baltimore City, funding through Concentration of Poverty grant allows schools to establish school-based mental health programs. These programs have provided critical support to students coping with trauma and helped improve both attendance and academic engagement. If SB 429 passes, the expansion of this program to serve additional students will be indefinitely delayed, leaving vulnerable children without the help they need.

At dozens of schools in our district, after-school tutoring and enrichment programs, funded through these grants, have led to measurable improvements in literacy and math proficiency for multilingual learners. With funding cuts, these programs will either be drastically reduced or eliminated, robbing students of the personalized support that has helped them thrive.

Furthermore, the decision to cut these funds disproportionately affects communities that have experienced decades of disinvestment due to racially discriminatory policies and practices. The Blueprint was crafted, in part, to address these historic inequities and provide a pathway toward educational justice. Rolling back this funding perpetuates the systemic barriers that have long denied Black and Brown students access to the resources necessary for academic and personal success.

SB 429 is more than a budgetary adjustment; it is a retreat from Maryland's commitment to educational equity. We urge you to reject this bill and reaffirm your dedication to providing all Maryland students—regardless of zip code, race, or income level—the resources they need to succeed. Our children's futures depend on the investments we make today.

The Baltimore Teachers Union respectfully requests an unfavorable report on SB 429.

SB429 Opposition Template.pdf

Uploaded by: Crosby Blair

Position: UNF

**Testimony in OPPOSITION of
Senate 429/House Bill 504: Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act**

**Senate Budget and Taxation Committee/Education, Energy, and the Environment
Committees**

House Appropriations/Ways and Means Committees

Position: Oppose

February 19, 2025

My name is Crosby Blair, and I am an educator from Frederick. I am submitting this testimony **in strong opposition to Senate Bill 429**, which would significantly cut promised education funding under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. This bill undermines the investments our state has committed to making in our students, our teachers, and the future of our communities.

Delays in funding for community schools will widen the achievement gap and leave vulnerable students without the necessary support systems. Schools that were promised additional resources through Concentration of Poverty (COP) grants will not see the funds when they need them most. These grants provide essential services such as mental health care, after-school programs, and multilingual support for students. As the CommUNITY School Coordinator for my local elementary school, I have witnessed the empowerment, support and aid that COP provides to my students and their families. A spending freeze will have a direct negative impact on my community at a time in which they need hope and help the most.

Maryland made a commitment to improving education through the Blueprint, but SB429 weakens these efforts when schools need support the most. Rather than cutting funding, the legislature should uphold its promise to students, educators, and families by maintaining the investments that were pledged.

I urge you to reject Senate Bill 429 and prioritize the future of Maryland's students - prioritize generating progressive revenue through the passage of Fair Share Maryland. Cutting funding now will have long-term consequences that harm not just our schools, but our communities as a whole. Please vote no on SB429 and stand with those who believe in fully funding the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Crosby Blair

Lincoln Elementary, Frederick County Public Schools

CrosbyFB@gmail.com

Levine SB0429 Oppose Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Daniel Levine

Position: UNF

**Testimony in OPPOSITION of
Senate 429/House Bill 504: Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act**

**Senate Budget and Taxation Committee/Education, Energy, and the Environment Committees
House Appropriations/Ways and Means Committees**

**Position: Oppose
February 19, 2025**

My name is Daniel Levine, and I am a parent and former teacher from Baltimore City. I am submitting this testimony **in strong opposition to Senate Bill 429**, which would significantly cut promised education funding under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. This bill undermines the investments our state has committed to making in our students, our teachers, and the future of our communities.

At a time when Maryland is experiencing a teacher shortage, delaying collaborative time grants will prevent teachers from receiving necessary professional development and planning time. These grants help educators collaborate, improve instruction, and better support students. Without them, schools will struggle to retain talented teachers. I left teaching at the end of the 2023-24 school year after five years in the classroom, in significant part due to severe burnout that had affected my physical and mental health. One contributor to that burnout was the fact that limited in-school planning time meant that my duties to the school felt relentless - even working evenings and weekends to stay on top of the many needs of my students, I constantly felt behind. Conversely, some of the best experiences I was able to provide students in my classroom came from collaboration with my colleagues - for instance, a fellow history teacher and I, along with collaboration from one of the literature teachers, designed an extended unit diving into a book about resistance to the Nazis, written by a local Baltimore author. Thanks to our ability to plan together - though often done outside of our normal work hours (over lunch, via evening emails, etc.) because we were all slammed during our actual planning periods - we were able to provide a deeper engagement for students and even bring the author in to speak with students at the end of the semester.

Maryland made a commitment to improving education through the Blueprint, but SB429 weakens these efforts when schools need support the most. Rather than cutting funding, the legislature should uphold its promise to students, educators, and families by maintaining the investments that were pledged.

I urge you to reject Senate Bill 429 and prioritize the future of Maryland's students - prioritize generating progressive revenue through the passage of Fair Share Maryland. Cutting funding now will have long-term consequences that harm not just our schools, but our communities as a whole. Please vote no on SB429 and stand with those who believe in fully funding the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Daniel Levine

2723 Guilford Ave.
Baltimore, MD 21218

SB 429 - Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act

Uploaded by: Donna Edwards

Position: UNF



MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

AFFILIATED WITH NATIONAL AFL-CIO

7 School Street • Annapolis, Maryland 21401-2096

Balto. (410) 269-1940 • Fax (410) 280-2956

President

Donna S. Edwards

Secretary-Treasurer

Gerald W. Jackson

SB 429 - Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act
Senate Budget and Taxation/Education, Energy and the Environment Committees
February 19, 2025

OPPOSE

Donna S. Edwards
President

Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO

Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to SB 429. My name is Donna S. Edwards, and I am the President of the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO. On behalf of Maryland's 300,000 union members, I offer the following comments.

SB 429 represents a regressive step in Maryland's commitment to our students, teachers, school support staff, and communities by undermining the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, a historic, bipartisan investment in education. The Blueprint was designed to mitigate inequities that disproportionately affect minority communities and ensure that students receive the support they need to succeed. This legislation threatens these goals by reducing and delaying critical funding meant to uplift our most vulnerable students.

Notably, SB 429 significantly delays funding for grants such as the Concentration of Poverty grants for community schools which provide essential wraparound services such as mental health care, after-school programming, and multilingual support. Additionally, these grants help create and sustain after-school tutoring and enrichment programs, which have proven to be effective in improving literacy and math proficiency. Many students in our state rely on these services to be successful—without them, we risk robbing students of personalized support that helps them thrive, widening achievement gaps and perpetuating inequities we set out to eliminate.

The effects of this bill will disproportionately impact communities that have experienced decades of disinvestment due to discriminatory policies and practices. By cutting and delaying critical funding, we reinforce systemic barriers that limit access to necessary resources. Instead of scaling back our efforts, we should live up to our commitment to education and fostering equitable opportunities.

For these reasons, we strongly urge an unfavorable vote on SB 429.

_MD4CS_MOST_FSPTA_SB429_HB504_UNFAVORABLE.pdf

Uploaded by: Ellie Mitchell

Position: UNF



**Senate Bill 429/House Bill 504 - Excellence in Maryland Public Schools
Joint Hearing:
Senate Budget & Tax/Education, Energy, and the Environment Committees
House Appropriations/Ways & Means Committees
February 19, 2025
Position: UNFAVORABLE**

The Maryland Out of School Time Network (MOST) is a statewide organization dedicated to closing opportunity gaps by expanding both the quantity and quality of after-school and summer learning programs for school-aged young people. MOST serves as the backbone organization for the Maryland Coalition for Community Schools. The Maryland Coalition for Community Schools, founded in 2016, advocates for student and family success by leading the charge to expand the Community School Model in Maryland. Free State PTA is a state-level branch of the National PTA, representing parents, teachers, students, and community members. Free State PTA promotes the welfare of children and youth, fostering collaboration between parents, educators, and stakeholders to enhance education and well-being.

The Maryland Out of School Time Network (MOST), the Maryland Coalition for Community Schools, and Free State PTA strongly **oppose SB429/HB504**. This bill threatens critical Blueprint funding for **Collaborative Time, Concentration of Poverty Per Pupil, and the Consortium for Coordinated Supports**, undermining Maryland's commitment to educational equity.

Maryland's **Blueprint for the Future** was a carefully crafted investment to close achievement gaps and support student success. The proposed funding freeze would slash over **\$6.5 billion** from education in just four years, stalling progress and devastating schools—especially Community Schools, where only **half** currently offer afterschool programs despite high demand. Health services, mental health support, and family engagement are all at risk.

This bill also **redirects funds without proper stakeholder engagement** or research, contradicting the rigorous process that made the Blueprint a national model. We support the Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact and flexibility for LEAs to coordinate some of their Concentration of Poverty funds. However, 20% would be a more reasonable cap, in line with Title I standards, to ensure that the maximum funds reach students directly.

Education spending is not causing this year's fiscal shortfalls. The Blueprint is fully funded through 2027. There is no need for hasty changes. Instead, let's commit to a **thorough, evidence-based** evaluation, key stakeholder input, and a comprehensive adequacy study before making irreversible cuts. We can also begin addressing revenue by supporting the full breadth of the Fair Share for Maryland recommendations.

We urge an **Unfavorable Report** on SB429/HB504. **Keep the promise of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.**

**Ellie Mitchell,
Director, MOST/MD4CS**

1500 Union Ave / Suite 2300 Baltimore MD 21211 / 410 374-7692 www.mostnetwork.org

A Plea for the Blueprint for Maryland.pdf

Uploaded by: Emily Kerns

Position: UNF

A Plea for the Blueprint for Maryland

Maryland Y Youth & Government

This document is written not from the voice of a politician, public financier, or activist, but the earnest conviction of the students of the State of Maryland. In the midst of the current fiscal panic that has swept over the capital, we set forth a case that not only is the Blueprint for Maryland a prudent investment, but also one that must be championed as a defining accomplishment of this legislature.

It has always been the firstmost objection of those skeptical of the Blueprint to critique the immense fiscal burden it entails. Indeed, this programme is not an inexpensive one, but the magnitude of its cost corresponds to the sublimity of its effects, both civil and economical. The greatest fallacy lies in the presumption that education is some ethereal public good that primarily may enhance the private lives of its benefactors but does not take account of any social or economic transformation. Indeed, just the contrary may be proven with regard to each major focus;

1) On the Universalization of Pre-Kindergarten

Numerous states have enacted Universal Pre-Kindergarten initiatives over the past three decades with remarkable empirical success. Reports of widespread ‘gains in cognitive development’ of which ‘racial and ethnic groups and children from all socioeconomic brackets benefit’ have begun to surface, raising important points concerning human capital development.^[1] Setting aside the numerous benefits from, ‘school readiness and child development to employability, to women’s equality, balancing work and family, reducing poverty, alleviating at-risk status and social integration,’ the economic consensus is clear.^[2] From neuroscientists to economists, the consensus is that ‘returns on investment in the early child development period exceed investment in any other period of human development.’^[2] The issue of course is that the realization of this investment takes two forms, where only the first is easily visible. Immediately there is an economic improvement, particularly for low-income families, in the alleviation of certain child care expenditures, but the real investment, which is in the children themselves, takes decades for the effects to be visible.

2) On the Qualification of Teachers

One of the great ambitions of the Blueprint is the competitive salary offered to teachers. Indeed, the same remarkable effects attributed to Universal Pre-Kindergarten have empirically been found to correlate also to high teacher salaries and high-quality academic credentials.^[1] Where diminishing teacher salaries have been found to increase urban-suburban divides as teachers flock from worse parent and administration systems, poor salaries have led to disastrous teacher turnovers, shortages, and under qualifications.^{[3][4]} The effect

of sustaining high teacher salaries is profound in economic implication. As higher quality teachers are hired, students become, ‘more likely to attend college, earn higher salaries, and are less likely to have children as teenagers.’^[5] Once more the loss from not investing in the Blueprint is long-term economic development, which in turn diminishes the economic position of the state more than any temporary deficit.

3) On the Creation of Career Pathways for Students

Yet again the shifting of the educational consensus toward career pathway programmes and Career and Technical Education creates an indispensable obligation of the State toward the Blueprint. The direct workforce contribution of these programs constitute thousands of well-paying, middle-skill jobs.^[6] Whereas the standard college-centred curricula of the orthodox educational pathway only appeals to about a third of the student population, extraordinary empirical success have been found in career-centred pathways, particularly in highly competitive fields in technology sectors.^[7]

The Blueprint for Maryland, contrary to the wary sentiment of its discontents, is not a reckless exercise in unchecked spending, but a deliberate and radical motion toward social advancement—backed by the foremost developments in economic, educational, scientific, and sociological literature. Its defence is not the unrepentant avarice of an expanding government, but the just deliverance of the populace from austerity. Shall we deviate from the grandeur envisioned half a decade ago in our paralyzing terror of deficit spending? Shall we be guided by the false prophet of political myopia? Or instead shall we confront it, look directly at the generations of our future, and remark with paramount certainty that we shall not abandon the prospects of social mobility—that we shall not commit our education to oblivion—and that we will never fall by the sword of economic stagnation? To balance the state budget is undoubtedly glorious, but it will never justify the evacuation of our educational promises to the engines of ruination.

[1] The Universal Pre-K Bandwagon, *The Phi Delta Kappan*, Vol. 87, No. 3, 2005.

[2] Susan Prentice, High Stakes: The “Investable” Child and the Economic Reframing of Childcare, *Signs*, Vol. 34, No. 3, 2009.

[3] Eric A. Hanushek and Steven G. Rivkin, Pay, Working Conditions, and Teacher Quality, *The Future of Children*, Vol. 17, No. 1, 2007.

[4] Barnett Berry and Patrick M. Shields, Solving the Teacher Shortage: Revisiting the Lessons We've Learned, *The Phi Delta Kappan*, Vol. 98, No. 8, 2017.

[5] Raj Chetty, John N. Friedman, and Jonah E. Rockoff, Measuring the Impacts of Teachers II: Teacher Value-Added and Student Outcomes in Adulthood, *The American Economic Review*, Vol. 104, No. 9, 2014.

[6] Bruno V. Manno, An Opportunity Framework for Career Pathway Programs, *The Phi Delta Kappan*, Vol. 102, No. 5, 2021.

[7] Victor M. Hernandez-Gantes and Edward C. Fletcher, The High School Career Academy as a Model for Promoting Technological Preparation: Promising Practices and Challenges in the United States, *Vocational Education and Training in the Age of Digitization: Challenges and Opportunities*, 2020.

Massie Oppose.pdf

Uploaded by: Emma Massie

Position: UNF

**Testimony in OPPOSITION of
Senate 429: Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act**

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

Position: Oppose

February 17, 2025

My name is Emma Massie, and I am a parent and educator from Baltimore County. I am submitting this testimony **in strong opposition to Senate Bill 429**, which would significantly cut promised education funding under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. This bill undermines the investments our state has committed to making in our students, our teachers, and the future of our communities.

POINTS:

Cuts to per-pupil foundation funding will mean fewer resources for classrooms, including teacher salaries, instructional materials, and critical student services. Schools already struggling to meet the needs of students will be forced to make tough choices, like increasing class sizes. Without adequate funding, many teachers will leave the profession, making teacher shortages worse. At the high school where my 11th grader attends, class sizes have gotten too big. There are some classes with 40 students per period! This is too large for any teacher to give the attention each student deserves and needs to grow in their subject.

Delays in funding for community schools will widen the achievement gap and leave vulnerable students without the necessary support systems. Schools that were promised additional resources through Concentration of Poverty grants will not see the funds when they need them most. These grants provide essential services such as mental health care, after-school programs, and multilingual support for students. To educate all students, we need funding to close the achievement gap, not make it larger.

Maryland made a commitment to improving education through the Blueprint, but SB429 weakens these efforts when schools need support the most. Rather than cutting funding, the legislature should uphold its promise to students, educators, and families by maintaining the investments that were pledged.

I urge you to reject Senate Bill 429 and prioritize the future of Maryland's students - prioritize generating progressive revenue through the passage of Fair Share Maryland. Cutting funding now will have long-term consequences that harm not just our schools, but our communities as a whole. Please vote no on SB429 and stand with those who believe in fully funding the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Emma Massie

Mother of 2 Baltimore County Public School students and former teacher

emma.massie@gmail.com

513.218.0832

2-19_SB429:HB504_Excellence in Maryland Public Sch

Uploaded by: Gail Sunderman

Position: UNF



TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE BUDGET & TAXATION AND EDUCATION, ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEES; THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS AND WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEES

SB429/HB504 Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act

Position: Unfavorable

By: Linda T. Kohn, President

Date: February 19, 2025

The League of Women Voters of Maryland (LWVMD) is a nonpartisan organization that supports policies that provide an equitable, adequate, and quality education for all children. LWVMD recognizes that the primary responsibility for funding public elementary and secondary education lies with the state. It supports a foundation program based on a weighted per pupil formula that is supported from general state revenues at a level high enough to eliminate inequities. LWVMD requests an **unfavorable report on SB429/HB504, Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act**, because this bill makes cuts to public education that will hurt our most vulnerable students. It also breaks the promise of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future (Blueprint).

Significant Cuts to Foundation Per Pupil Funding

Senate Bill 429/House Bill 405 reduces the per pupil foundation amount over seven fiscal years. For example, in FY2026 the \$9,226 per pupil amount allocation will be cut to \$9,063. By FY2033, instead of reaching \$12,365, per pupil funding will be reduced to \$11,536. **By cutting the foundation per pupil funding, the bill lowers total education spending over time and undermines the state's commitment to the Blueprint.** Cuts to per-pupil foundation funding will mean fewer resources for classrooms, including teacher salaries, instructional materials, and critical student services.

Negative Trickle Down Effects on the Most Vulnerable Students

Since funding for compensatory education students (low-income students) and multilingual learners is calculated as a percentage of the per-pupil foundation amount, cuts to per-pupil funding means cuts to funding for these vulnerable groups of students.

- Cuts to compensatory education funding means less money for intervention programs, tutoring, support and wraparound services that help students from historically underfunded communities.
- Multilingual learners will lose funding for language programs and other services.
- While the funding for special education services may be "held harmless" in the bill, students with disabilities will be harmed by other cuts. Since many of these students also qualify for compensatory education and multilingual services, cuts to these programs will negatively impact them. Special education students are also negatively impacted by cuts to the per-pupil foundation funding.



SB429/HB504 pauses funding for teacher collaborative time, a program proven to improve teaching and student achievement. At a time when Maryland is experiencing a teacher shortage, delaying collaborative time grants will prevent teachers from receiving necessary professional development and sufficient time for planning. These grants help educators collaborate, improve instruction, and better support students. Given the state's teacher shortage, collaborative time policies also serve as an effective teacher recruitment and retention tool.

Concentration of Poverty Grants Paused; Community Schools Impacted

The bill pauses increases in the Concentration of Poverty per pupil grants for FY2027 and FY2028 thereby stalling the expansion of Community Schools. Any school that receives a Concentration of Poverty Grant is a Community School. This cut disproportionately harms students who need the most support and investment and undermines an evidence-based intervention. The community school model has been shown to improve student and school outcomes and contribute to meeting the educational needs of low-achieving students in high poverty schools.¹

The bill also proposes providing a flexibility allowance for Local Education Agencies (LEA) to withhold up to 50% of the Concentration of Poverty grants. Instead of going directly to schools, resources could be used for central office administrative costs or services. This negatively impacts the services a community schools can provide. While some flexibility may be needed to cover district level administrative costs, 50% is too high. The purpose of Community Schools is to direct resources to schools, not to administrative agencies. Instead, we suggest the amount LEAs may use to provide central office support to manage program funds and other administrative cases be reduced to 10%.

Cuts to Behavioral Health Services

Further, the bill would permanently reduce the mandate for Coordinated Community Supports, which provides resources for behavioral health services. Maryland schools already suffer from a shortage of school counselors and behavioral health providers. The state currently has only one school social worker for every 2,324 students compared to the recommended ratio of 250:1, one school counselor for every 362 students compared to the recommended ratio of 250:1, and one school psychologist for every 1,198 students compared to the recommended ratio of 500:1.² These funding cuts will further restrict behavioral health staff from providing the support services that students need.

Other Initiatives Divert Resources from the Schools

¹ Bill, K., Rodriguez, S., Blazer, D., & Carson, N. (2024). *Community school expansion in Maryland: Promise and precarity*. College Park, MD: University of Maryland College of Education, Maryland Equity Project. Retrieved from <https://education.umd.edu/sites/default/files/uploads/inline-files/Community%20schools%20brief.pdf>

Maier, A., Daniel, J., Oakes, J., & Lam, L. (2017). *Community schools as an effective school improvement strategy: A review of the evidence*. Learning Policy Institute & National Education Policy Center. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED606765.pdf>

² Carson, N., Bill, K. & Rodriguez, S. (2024). *Navigating the crisis: School district approaches to alleviating behavioral health staff shortages*. College Park, MD: University of Maryland College of Education, Maryland Equity Project. Retrieved from https://education.umd.edu/sites/default/files/uploads/inline-files/MBH%20staff%20shortages%20brief_in%20template%20-%20Google%20Docs_0.pdf



SB429/HB504 creates an unnecessary Academic Excellence Fund that proposes grants to county boards, higher education institutions, nonprofit organizations, or other entities to provide professional development and other services, including program evaluation and administrative services. It is unclear why this Fund is being proposed since the goal of the Blueprint is to provide an equitable and excellent education to all students, including those in schools identified as underperforming. Money budgeted for this could be better used to restore the foundation per pupil funding and thus the weighted formulas that would provide resources directly to schools with highest needs.

The bill also redirects resources to other initiatives, such as the Maryland School Leadership Academy, and the Interstate Mobility Compact that are not specifically targeted on vulnerable students. The Interstate Mobility Compact already exists outside the Blueprint, and the Leadership Academy fails to prioritize school level leadership. These provisions and others in the bill also redirect resources from schools to MSDE and to outside, private providers. LWVMD supports the Grow Your Own Educators Grant Program, which can help to address teacher shortage and diversify the workforce, which is being successfully implemented in Maryland.³ Schools need the resources, not MSDE or private companies.

LWVMD opposes the Maryland Teacher Relocation Incentive Grant. This grant would provide up to \$2,000 in reimbursement to out-of-state licensed teachers as an incentive to move to Maryland to address the State's teacher shortage. Instead of sending money to out-of-state residents, these resources would be better used by helping the 6,598 conditionally licensed teachers employed in LEAs receive full certification.⁴

Not a Long-Term Solution

LWVMD is fully aware of the budget crisis facing Maryland. But cutting support for education aimed at our most vulnerable students is not the way to address it. A long-term solution that would help education is the Fair Share for Maryland Act of 2025 (HB 1014/SB 859), which proposes a number of reforms to the state's tax code. HB1014/SB859 would make the state's income taxes more progressive and close a number of corporate and LLC tax loopholes, among other provisions. The Fair Share Act would raise \$1.6 billion to address the deficit compared to the \$1 billion of new revenues raised by the Governor's bill.⁵

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future was designed to boost achievement for all students, but in particular, it concentrated resources at schools with the largest numbers of poor students and the lowest achievement. SB429/HB 504 undermines that promise.

LWVMD recommends an unfavorable report on SB429/HB504.

³ Blazer, D., Gao, W., Gershenson, S., Goings, R. & Lagos, F. (2024). "Grow-your-own" programs can help expand and diversify the teacher workforce. College Park, MD: University of Maryland College of Education, Maryland Equity Project. Retrieved from https://education.umd.edu/sites/default/files/uploads/inline-files/MEP%20Brief_Grow%20Your%20Own%20Programs.pdf

⁴ Maryland State Department of Education (2024). *Maryland's Teacher Workforce: Supply, Demand, and Diversity*. Retrieved from <https://marylandpublicschools.org/stateboard/Documents/2024/0521/Maryland-Teacher-Workforce-Supply-Demand-and-Diversity-A.pdf>

⁵ Fair Share Maryland (2025). <https://fairsharemaryland.org/fair-share-maryland-revenue-legislation-to-be-introduced/>

SB429_Oppose_Massey.pdf

Uploaded by: Genie Massey

Position: UNF

Genie O. Massey
19208 Betty's Avenue, Boonsboro, MD 21713
Washington County, District 2A

Testimony in OPPOSITION of SB 429: Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act
Budget and Taxation Committee/Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Position: Oppose
February 12, 2025

My name is Genie Massey, and I am a parent and educator from Washington County. I am submitting this testimony **in strong opposition to Senate Bill 429**, which would significantly cut promised education funding under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. This bill undermines the investments our state has committed to making in our students, our teachers, and the future of our communities.

Cuts to per-pupil foundation funding will mean fewer resources for classrooms, including teacher salaries, instructional materials, and critical student services. Schools already struggling to meet the needs of students will be forced to make tough choices, like increasing class sizes.

Without adequate funding, many teachers will leave the profession, making teacher shortages worse.

Delays in funding for community schools will widen the achievement gap and leave vulnerable students without the necessary support systems. Schools that were promised additional resources through Concentration of Poverty grants will not see the funds when they need them most. These grants provide essential services such as mental health care, after-school programs, and multilingual support for students.

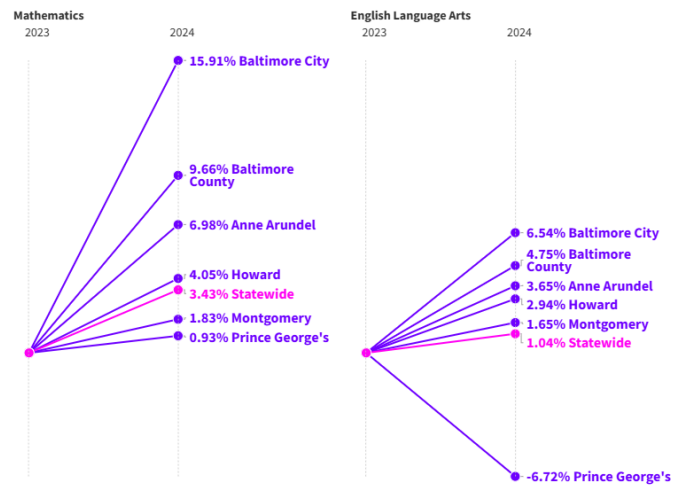
Students who are doubly-disadvantaged, benefit the most from the Concentration of Poverty grants.

Maryland made a commitment to improving education through the Blueprint, but SB429 weakens these efforts when schools need support the most. Rather than cutting funding, the legislature should uphold its promise to students, educators, and families by maintaining the investments that were pledged.

I urge you to **reject Senate Bill 429 and prioritize the future of Maryland's students** - prioritize generating progressive revenue through the passage of Fair Share Maryland. Cutting funding now will have long-term

Even though statewide test scores are flat, there are plenty of notable improvements and struggles

Many individual school system saw percentage increases compared to last year's pass rates. Prince George's County saw a large drop.



Source: [Maryland State Department of Education](#) - Greg Morton/The Baltimore Banner

consequences that harm not just our schools, but our communities as a whole. Please vote no on SB429 and stand with those who believe in fully funding the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Genie O. Massey

SB429 Testimony Gretchen M. Tome.pdf

Uploaded by: Gretchen Tome

Position: UNF

**Testimony in OPPOSITION of
Senate 429: Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act**

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

Position: Oppose

February 12, 2025

My name is Gretchen M. Tome, and I am a Baltimore resident and School Social Worker, living and working in District 45. I am submitting this testimony **in strong opposition to Senate Bill 429**, which would significantly cut promised education funding under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. This bill undermines the investments our state has committed to making in our students, our teachers, and the future of our communities.

CHOOSE ONE OR TWO OF THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

Cuts to per-pupil foundation funding will mean fewer resources for classrooms, including teacher salaries, instructional materials, and critical student services. Schools already struggling to meet the needs of students will be forced to make tough choices, like increasing class sizes. Without adequate funding, many teachers will leave the profession, making teacher shortages worse.

This year alone, the school that I work at, Elmer A. Henderson: A Hopkins Partnership School, cut three teaching positions, has frozen a School Counselor position, and has several staff members, myself included, working more than one full-time position. Cutting teaching positions lead to increased class sizes in the 6th and 8th grade, increasing stress on teachers and decreasing personalized attention and support that students need. Without a School Counselor, one of the many important roles that they fill is managing the High School Choice process for our 8th graders, ensuring that they are aware of their options, the process, and get into schools that are the best fit. An Instructional Coach has had to take on that responsibility. While they are doing it to the best of their ability, it isn't the same as having the work done by School Counselor who is trained to provide this service to our students.

At a time when Maryland is experiencing a teacher shortage, delaying collaborative time grants will prevent teachers from receiving necessary professional development and planning time. These grants help educators collaborate, improve instruction, and better support students. Without them, schools will struggle to retain talented teachers. As a School Social Worker, I work with students who receive special education services and collaborating with teachers is a big part of my job. Due to shortages our school already faces, I have to also serve as my school's 504 Chair, misusing my clinical skills and training, and taking away time that I could be working with teachers to better support students' needs and serving as a bridge between families and our school. Being able to focus on my role as a School Social Worker would allow me to get to know our students and families better, have time to develop community partnerships, and have time to support teachers in providing special education services.

Delays in funding for community schools will widen the achievement gap and leave vulnerable students without the necessary support systems. Schools that were promised additional resources through Concentration of Poverty grants will not see the funds when they need them most. These grants provide essential services such as mental health care, after-school programs, and multilingual support for students. As a School Social Worker, I see firsthand how many students are struggling with mental health. If I didn't have to split my time between my role as a School Social Worker, a job that I went to school for and have 20 years experience doing, with the role of 504 Chair (which is meant to be filled by someone with a special education teaching background), I would have more availability to provide mental health supports in classrooms, small groups, and with individual students.

Maryland made a commitment to improving education through the Blueprint, but SB429 weakens these efforts when schools need support the most. Rather than cutting funding, the legislature should uphold its promise to students, educators, and families by maintaining the investments that were pledged.

I urge you to reject Senate Bill 429 and prioritize the future of Maryland's students - prioritize generating progressive revenue through the passage of Fair Share Maryland. Cutting funding now will have long-term consequences that harm not just our schools, but our communities as a whole. Please vote no on SB429 and stand with those who believe in fully funding the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Gretchen M. Tome, LCSW-C

3229 Shannon Dr.

Baltimore, MD 21213

United Way SB429. Stevens. Oppose.pdf

Uploaded by: Heidi Stevens

Position: UNF



**Testimony in OPPOSITION of
Senate 429: Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act**

**Budget and Taxation Committee/Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Position: Oppose
February 18, 2025**

Dear Chairman Feldman and Vice-Chairwoman Kagan,

I am Heidi Stevens, United Way of Central Maryland, Director of Community Schools in Baltimore City. I am submitting this testimony in strong opposition to Senate Bill 429, which would substantially reduce the promised education funding under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

Delays in funding for community schools will widen the achievement gap and leave vulnerable students without the necessary support systems. Schools that were promised additional resources through Concentration of Poverty grants will not see the funds when they need them most.

As the director of six community schools and a former Community School Coordinator, I have witnessed students thrive academically through tutoring programs, summer learning programs, and enriching after-school activities. Additionally, I have seen students grow emotionally through mental health support services. Without funding for education, districts will lose the hard-earned progress achieved in recent years, and students, along with their families, will not receive the quality of education they deserve.

Maryland made a commitment to improving education through the Blueprint, but SB429 weakens these efforts when schools need support the most. Rather than cutting funding, the legislature should uphold its promise to students, educators, and families by maintaining the investments that were pledged.

Please vote no on SB429 and stand with those who believe in fully funding the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Heidi Stevens
United Way of Central Maryland
heidi.stevens@uwcm.org
717-574-0694

Jaleah Lennon - SB429 Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Jaleah Lennon

Position: UNF

**Testimony in OPPOSITION of
Senate 429: Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act**

**Budget and Taxation Committee/Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Position: Oppose
February 14, 2025**

My name is Jaleah Lennon, and I am a student from Howard County. I am submitting this testimony in strong opposition to Senate Bill 429, which would significantly cut promised education funding under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. This bill undermines the investments our state has committed to making in students, educators, and the future of our communities.

Cuts to per-pupil foundation funding will mean fewer resources for classrooms, including teacher salaries, instructional materials, and critical student services. Schools already struggling to meet students' needs will be forced to make difficult choices, such as increasing class sizes and reducing extracurricular opportunities. Without adequate funding, teacher shortages will worsen as more educators leave the profession due to unsustainable working conditions.

In my own school, Guilford Park High School, these funding gaps have real consequences. As a newly established school with fewer built-up resources, we rely on promised funding to provide a quality education. Class sizes for high schools in my county have ballooned to around 33 students per class in the upper range, making individualized attention nearly impossible and increasing distractions. The strain on teachers is significant, as some must split their time between multiple schools due to funding shortages, adding stress and diminishing their ability to provide consistent support to students.

Additionally, transportation cuts have made it difficult for students to participate in extracurricular activities such as debate, student council, and fine arts programs. In the arts, funding shortages have limited access to essential resources like music assessments and multiple ensemble opportunities, which are crucial for a well-rounded education. These programs foster creativity, discipline, and teamwork—skills that are just as vital as core academic subjects.

Delays in funding for community schools will also widen the achievement gap and leave vulnerable students without the support systems they need. The Concentration of Poverty grants were designed to provide essential services such as mental health care, after-school programs, and multilingual support. As someone who received the bulk of my education in Prince George's County—where over 60% of students qualified for free and reduced meals and 25.7% were multilingual learners—I have seen firsthand how these programs can make a difference. Despite its challenges, my former school offered the International Baccalaureate program, giving students access to advanced coursework they would not otherwise have had. However, we lacked access to AP and honors classes that students in wealthier districts, such as Howard County, take for granted.

Maryland has a responsibility to ensure educational equity. The students in Prince George's County—where 131 schools receive a Concentration of Poverty Grant—deserve the same opportunities as those in more affluent areas. If I had not moved to Howard County, I would not have had access to the same academic resources, and that disparity is unacceptable. No child should be denied opportunities due to where they live, and delaying funding for these critical programs only reinforces systemic inequities.

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future was a promise to students, educators, and families. SB429 weakens that commitment at a time when schools need support the most. Rather than cutting funding, the legislature should

focus on maintaining these essential investments. One way to do so is by generating progressive revenue through the passage of Fair Share Maryland, ensuring that our education system remains adequately funded without placing additional burdens on those already struggling.

I urge you to reject Senate Bill 429 and prioritize the future of Maryland's students. Cutting funding now will have long-term consequences that harm not just our schools but our communities as a whole. Please vote no on SB429 and stand with those who believe in fully funding the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jaleah Lennon

ljaleah07@gmail.com

SB429_Oppose_Written_Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Jenna Hugg

Position: UNF

**Testimony in OPPOSITION of
Senate 429: Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act**

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

Position: Oppose

February 17, 2025

My name is Jenna Hugg, and I am a parent of a current and future public school student from Carroll County. I am submitting this testimony in strong opposition to Senate Bill 429, which would significantly cut promised education funding under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. This bill undermines the investments our state has committed to making in our students, our teachers, and the future of our communities.

Cuts to per-pupil foundation funding will mean fewer resources for classrooms, including teacher salaries, instructional materials, and critical student services. Schools already struggling to meet the needs of students will be forced to make tough choices, like increasing class sizes. Without adequate funding, many teachers will leave the profession, making teacher shortages worse. Funding cuts have already impacted the ability for each student to have a laptop assigned making it impossible to offer virtual learning on snow days or in the event of any school shut down.

At a time when Maryland is experiencing a teacher shortage, delaying collaborative time grants will prevent teachers from receiving necessary professional development and planning time. These grants help educators collaborate, improve instruction, and better support students. Without them, schools will struggle to retain talented teachers. My student was identified for early intervention services which allowed her to receive individual attention. These education services in collaboration with her general learning resulted in her scoring a 93% on the CCPS Mid-Year Benchmark Assessment, the County Average for her grade was 86%. Further monetary cuts and restrictions will impact the quality and availability of such specialized attention.

Delays in funding for community schools will widen the achievement gap and leave vulnerable students without the necessary support systems. Schools that were promised additional resources through Concentration of Poverty grants will not see the funds when they need them most. These grants provide essential services such as mental health care, after-school programs, and multilingual support for students. Several multilingual students have received the same services and similar programs as my daughter and have helped students in the same way. The delay in funding will harm the measurable progress of at-risk students who need our help the most.

Maryland made a commitment to improving education through the Blueprint, but SB429 weakens these efforts when schools need support the most. Rather than cutting funding, the legislature should uphold its promise to students, educators, and families by maintaining the investments that were pledged.

I urge you to reject Senate Bill 429 and prioritize the future of Maryland's students - prioritize generating progressive revenue through the passage of Fair Share Maryland. Cutting funding now will have long-term consequences that harm not just our schools, but our communities as a whole. Please vote no on SB429 and stand with those who believe in fully funding the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

**Sincerely,
Jenna Hugg**

CEC Testimony on SB 429 HB 504.pdf

Uploaded by: Julie Walsh

Position: UNF



**Testimony on SB 429/HB 504,
the Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act**

**before the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee, the Senate Education,
Energy, and the Environment Committee, the House Appropriations
Committee, and the House Ways and Means Committee**

Wednesday, February 19, 2025

**from Julie Walsh of the
Carroll Education Coalition**

OPPOSE

My name is Julie Walsh. I live in Mt. Airy and I am a mother to five children attending four Carroll County Public Schools (CCPS). I come to you today on behalf of the Carroll Education Coalition, a newly-formed group of Carroll County residents who are alarmed at the budget and staffing crisis facing CCPS, and who are committed to advocating for more funding at both the County and State levels.

CCPS serves more than 25,000 students with an annual budget of \$478 million. Outside of the classroom, its operations are leaner than perhaps anywhere else in the State: CCPS ranks 23rd in central office staff, 24th in instructional support staff, and 17th in educational support professionals. CCPS currently ranks last in the State for per-pupil spending.

Last week the residents of Carroll County learned that our Board of Education was considering a FY26 budget that would: cut 92 FTE, move around another 90 FTE, not meet employee and bus contractor compensation commitments, eliminate our nearly 50-year-old Outdoor School program, reduce students' access to laptops, and reduce funding for instructional materials.

CCPS projects that the staff cuts and relocations could result in class sizes of up to 44 at the elementary level, 40 at the middle school level, and 42 at the high school level. They expect to cut math and reading specialists from schools, in addition to other teacher and staff cuts.

Yesterday members of our coalition attended our Board of Education's budget meeting to ask for increased Carroll County funding for our schools. Today, I come to you to ask that you do what you can to relieve some of the pressure our school system is facing due to the State's fiscal situation and requirements related to the implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

Our requests are two-fold:

- 1. We ask that you oppose this bill's proposed reduction in the target per pupil foundation amount.**
- 2. Given the multiple fiscal pressures facing counties in the upcoming year, we ask that you phase in minimum school funding requirements (as defined in 5-234 of the education articles) over 3-5 years to allow counties to responsibly meet the needs of all students. Providing this flexibility will smooth out the transition for counties as they try to adjust to the new requirements.**

Thank you for your attention. We appreciate your commitment to the children of Carroll County and the entire State of Maryland.

sb429testimonypdf.pdf

Uploaded by: Kalman Hettleman

Position: UNF

Kalman R. Hettleman
830 W. 40th Street, Unit 807
Baltimore, Maryland 21211
khettleman@gmail.com
Phone:443-286-0854

SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY & THE ENVIRONMENT
SENATE BUDGET & TAXATION COMMITTEE
SENATE BILL 429: Excellence in Marland Public Schools Act
Date: February 17, 2025
POSITION: OPPOSE

Committee Chairs and Members

I am Kalman “Buzzy” Hettleman, an education policy analyst and former member of the Kirwan Commission.

I admire the hard, good work you do. Still, it seems near-impossible for any member to fully penetrate the complexity of this year’s budget and the Administration’s spin on it.

Yes, the state has a severe fiscal shortfall to deal with. But the simple truth is: First, the budget and SB 429 will cut literally billions of dollars from the funding for the Blueprint. And second, school funding and schoolchildren have been asked to bear a huge, disproportionate share of the fiscal pain.

The Administration justifies the largest cuts on the ground that Collaborative Time will require many more teachers who will be hard to recruit. That’s true. But what is omitted in the spin is that the savings could be spent incrementally on Collaborative Time and, even more, on the many parts of the Blueprint that are under-funded and dragging down implementation. Like interventions for struggling learners in reading and math; support staff like behavioral specialists; and fiscal relief for underwater local governments.

More than ever, state government seems to be renegeing on its commitment to students especially those poor, Black and Brown.

Our schoolchildren are depending on you to get at the truth and then have the political courage to do something about it.

Thank you.

Testimony CRSD HB0504 2025.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Kelly Quinn

Position: UNF

MARYLAND COALITION TO REFORM SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

HB 504 / SB 429: Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act February 12, 2025

POSITION: Unfavorable

The Maryland Coalition to Reform School Discipline (CRSD) brings together advocates, service providers, and community members dedicated to transforming school discipline practices within Maryland's public school systems. CRSD respectfully requests an unfavorable report on HB 504/SB 429. We maintain that the General Assembly must fully fund Blueprint for Maryland's Success.

CRSD has five guiding principles.

1. We are committed to the fair and equitable treatment of ALL students regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, religion, and socio-economic status, and reducing barriers to learning for ALL students.
2. We vow to work to eliminate any barriers to learning for students listed above.
3. We are committed to ensuring Maryland schools use exclusionary discipline only as a last resort and use alternatives whenever possible.
4. We are committed to advocating for the use of restorative practices in Maryland schools.
5. We imagine a broader vision of school safety, without punitive measures. We believe Maryland schools should be free of police. Working towards this goal, we will limit the power of the police to use school discipline.

Policies and practices for improved school climate and student wellbeing are woven throughout the Blueprint for Maryland's five pillars. CRSD's efforts most closely align with the fourth: More Resources to Ensure that All Students are Successful. The Maryland State Department of Education defines community schools, [As ones that] "promote positive, equitable outcomes by providing students and families with the physical and mental health, academic, and extracurricular supports needed to thrive. Community schools serve as hubs that bring families, communities, and partners together to remove barriers to learning. Using an asset-based approach, community schools strive to strengthen connections to generate improved student outcomes."¹

During a moment when elected officials insist that there are *perceptions* of increased youth crime, it is imperative that the same legislators continue to invest fully in public education

¹ Maryland State Department of Education, Community Schools + Concentration of Poverty Grants
<https://blueprint.marylandpublicschools.org/community-schools/>

without delay.² Judge Steven Teske, the presiding juvenile court judge in Clayton County, Georgia, identified school connectedness as one of the greatest protective factors for delinquency in his testimony during a U.S. Senate hearing on ending the school to prison pipeline.³ Community schools and wraparound services contribute to schools that are healthy, safe, and inclusive. We know that positive schools ensure greater community safety.

The proposal to freeze funding for community schools will disproportionately impact Black and Latine students, students from low wealth communities, multilingual learners, and students with IEPs and 504 plans. These cuts will have a significant negative effect on the districts that serve a greater proportion of these students.

CRSD respectfully opposes these bills and requests that you continue the commitment to approaches and practices that foster positive student behavior and a positive school climate for all. Positive schools are the building blocks of community safety.

For more information contact:

Maryland Coalition to Reform School Discipline
CRSDMaryland@gmail.com

CRSD Members:

The Choice Program at UMBC
Progressive Maryland
Public Justice Center
Disability Rights Maryland
Project HEAL at Kennedy Krieger Institute
Sayra and Neil Meyerhoff Center for Families, Children and the Courts at the University of
Baltimore School of Law
ACLU of Maryland
League of Women Voters of Maryland

² Hannah Gaskill, “How to address juvenile justice issues? Maryland Senate President Bill Ferguson says there’s a need for cohesion, responsibility.” Baltimore Sun, December 17, 2023
<https://www.baltimoresun.com/2023/12/17/how-to-address-juvenile-justice-issues-maryland-senate-president-bill-ferguson-says-theres-a-need-for-cohesion-responsibility/>

³ The Hon. Steven Teske, Testimony before the Senate Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Human Rights, Subcommittee Hearing on “Ending the School to Prison Pipeline” 2 (Dec. 12, 2012),
<https://www.judiciary.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/12-12-12TeskeTestimony.pdf>.

2025 - SB 0429 - Excellence in Maryland Public Sch

Uploaded by: Ken Phelps Jr

Position: UNF



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MARYLAND

Testimony in **OPPOSITION** to Senate Bill 429 Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act

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

UNFAVORABLE

To: Senator Guy Guzzone, Chair; Senator Jim Rosapepe, Vice Chair; and members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee:

To: Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair; Senator Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice Chair; and members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

From: The Rev. Margaret E. VanAuker, Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network; Episcopal Diocese of Maryland

Date: February 19, 2025

The Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network, the advocacy arm of the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland, has always supported policies that boldly and consistently push toward ensuring that all students have equitable access to high-quality schools. We are submitting this testimony in strong opposition to Senate Bill 429, which would significantly cut promised education funding under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. This bill undermines the investments our state has committed to making in our students, our teachers, and the future of our communities.

Delays in funding for community schools will widen the achievement gap and leave vulnerable students without the necessary support systems. Schools that were promised additional resources through Concentration of Poverty grants will not see the funds when they need them most. These grants provide essential services such as mental health care, after-school programs, and multilingual support for students.

Maryland made a commitment to improving education through the Blueprint, but SB429 weakens these efforts. Rather than cutting funding, the legislature should uphold its promise to students, educators, and families by maintaining the investments that were pledged.

We request an unfavorable report.

SB429:HB504 Oppose (Written).pdf

Uploaded by: Kenzie Funk

Position: UNF



**Testimony in OPPOSITION of
Senate Bill 429/House Bill 504: Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act**

**Senate Budget and Taxation/Education, Energy, and the Environment Committees
House Appropriations/Ways and Means Committees**

Position: Unfavorable

February 19, 2025

Strong Schools Maryland is a network of education advocates dedicated to ensuring the full funding and faithful implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future so every student in our state is equipped to thrive upon graduation. Strong Schools Maryland **strongly opposes Senate Bill 429/House Bill 504**, which would roll back critical investments in public education and break the commitments made to Maryland's students, educators, and families through the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. This bill does not promote excellence. It introduces funding cuts, delays, and freezes that disproportionately harm students in poverty, multilingual learners, and schools that need resources the most.

The Blueprint was built on years of research and public input, ensuring that every child in Maryland has access to a world-class education. SB429/HB504 undermines that work and jeopardizes the future of our public schools.

Cuts to Per-Pupil Education Funding

SB429/HB504 reduces the per-pupil foundation funding every year moving forward. For example:

- In FY2026, the per-student amount drops from the planned \$9,226 to \$9,063.
- By FY2033, instead of reaching \$12,365 per student, it's cut to \$11,536.

These reductions directly impact what schools can provide which leads to fewer classroom resources, larger class sizes, and fewer instructional supports for students. Schools already struggling to meet student needs will be forced to make impossible choices: eliminating staff, cutting academic programs, and scaling back individualized instruction.

The cuts occur by delaying the implementation of collaborative time for educators until FY2030 – four years beyond the original Blueprint timeline. [Collaborative time is essential for improving student outcomes](#), especially for students with disabilities and multilingual learners. It allows teachers to plan effective lessons, analyze student progress, and provide targeted interventions.

Maryland is already facing a severe teacher shortage, and delaying this support will only make things worse. Without structured professional development and planning time, teacher burnout and attrition will continue to rise, directly contradicting the Blueprint's commitment to strengthening the profession.

Cuts That Harm Maryland's Most Vulnerable Students

Because funding for low-income students (compensatory education) and multilingual learners (MLs) is tied to the per-pupil foundation amount, these groups are hit hardest by SB429/HB504's cuts:

- **Less Funding for Low-Income Students:** Schools serving high-poverty populations rely on additional funding for tutoring, social-emotional supports, and intervention programs. SB429/HB504 shrinks that funding, limiting resources that help close opportunity gaps.
- **Reduced Support for Multilingual Learners:** ML students already face systemic barriers. SB429/HB504 reduces funding for language services, teacher training, and curriculum supports—making it even harder for these students to succeed.

The bill claims to “hold special education students harmless,” but that’s misleading. [Many special education students also qualify for compensatory education \(36.9%\) or multilingual learner services \(12%\)](#) meaning cuts to these funding streams still harm them. Holding one funding stream flat while slashing the others does not protect these students.

Freezing Community School Funding & 50% Flexibility Provision

SB429/HB504 freezes the Concentration of Poverty School Grants for FY2027 and FY2028, stalling the expansion of community schools, [a proven strategy for closing achievement gaps](#). Community schools provide mental health care, after-school programs, and other essential services to the students who need them most.

The bill also introduces a 50% flexibility provision that allows Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to withhold half of the Concentration of Poverty Grant (CPG) funds instead of investing them directly into schools. This undercuts the entire purpose of community schools, redirecting resources away from students and toward central office budgets instead.

Maryland made a promise to expand and support community schools under the Blueprint. SB429/HB504 breaks that promise, taking resources away from the students these grants were designed to serve.

Not a Long-Term Solution

SB429/HB504 is not a responsible solution to Maryland's budget challenges. It's a short-sighted attempt to cut education funding instead of pursuing sustainable revenue solutions. Rather than delaying and weakening the Blueprint, the Legislature should fully implement the Fair Share Maryland plan, which provides a progressive revenue strategy to fund public education without harming students.

[Maryland has been a national leader in education reform](#), especially with the passage of the Blueprint. Passing SB429/HB504 would reverse that progress, repeating the same mistakes made after the 2008 financial crisis when the state abandoned its commitment to fully funding schools. We cannot afford to repeat history.

Reducing education funding is not an act of fiscal responsibility. It is a choice to walk away from Maryland's students, educators, and communities. SB429/HB504 undermines years of work to create a fully funded, equitable education system and will hurt the students who need the most support.

For these reasons, Strong Schools Maryland strongly urges an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 429/House Bill 504.

For more information, contact Riya Gupta at riya@strongschoolsmaryland.org.

SB429- Opposition.pdf

Uploaded by: Kyle Long

Position: UNF

**Testimony in OPPOSITION of
Senate Bill 429: Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act**

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

Position: Oppose

February 19, 2025

My name is Kyle Long, and I am a Baltimore resident and community based clinical worker partnering with families in Baltimore City. I am submitting this testimony **in strong opposition to Senate Bill 429**, which would significantly cut promised education funding under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. This bill undermines the investments our state has committed to making in our students, our teachers, and the future of our communities.

The majority of families that we partner with at my agency are connected to community schools and budget cuts would have significant negative impacts. Cuts to per-pupil foundation funding will mean fewer resources for classrooms, including teacher salaries, instructional materials, and critical student services. Schools already struggling to meet the needs of students will be forced to make tough choices, like increasing class sizes. Without adequate funding, many teachers will leave the profession, making teacher shortages worse. Hearing from families we work with, at the start of the school year, some class sizes had 30 or more students and some grades did not even have teachers.

Delays in funding for community schools will widen the achievement gap and leave vulnerable students without the necessary support systems. Schools that were promised additional resources through Concentration of Poverty grants will not see the funds when they need them most. These grants provide essential services such as mental health care, after-school programs, and multilingual support for students. Community Schools are already struggling to meet the mental health needs of their students and, with passage of this bill, that will only get harder. Outside of educational support, community schools provide necessary wrap around services that are critical to childhood development and family functioning. The families we work with have benefited from programs that support with next steps after high school, valuable after school programming that is otherwise not offered and food pantries to support with food security.

I urge you to reject Senate Bill 429 and prioritize the future of Maryland's students - prioritize generating progressive revenue through the passage of Fair Share Maryland. Maryland made a commitment to improving education through the Blueprint, but SB429 weakens these efforts when schools need support the most. Rather than cutting funding, the legislature should uphold its promise to students, educators, and families by maintaining the investments that were pledged. Cutting funding now will have long-term consequences that harm not just our schools, but our communities as a whole. **Please vote no on SB429 and stand with those who believe in fully funding the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kyle Long, LMSW

TENNEY CV 01022025.pdf

Uploaded by: Lauren Tenney, PhD, MPhil, MPA, BPS

Position: UNF

Lauren J. Tenney, PhD, MPhil, MPA, BPS
5809 Nicholson Lane, # 809, Rockville, Maryland 20852
516-319-4295 LaurenTenney@aol.com www.LaurenTenney.us

HIGHER EDUCATION

PhD, Psychology, Environmental (2014)

Graduate School and University Center, City University of New York, New York, New York
Cumulative GPA 3.85

Dissertation: (de)VOICED: Human Rights Now. An Environmental Community-Based Participatory Action Research Project.

Master of Philosophy, Psychology (2010)

Graduate School and University Center, City University of New York, New York, New York
Second Doctoral Examination: Passed with Distinction (March 2009)

Topic One: “Mad Annals: Consistent Attempts at Reform and Abolition Throughout the History of Institutions”

Topic Two: “On the Road toward Liberation: Slavery, Oppression, Racism, and the Black Power Movement”

Master of Arts, Psychology (en route) (2008)

Graduate School and University Center, City University of New York, New York, New York

Fieldwork: “Can You Dig It?” A participatory action research project based on The Opal, an inmate edited Journal published at the Utica State Lunatic Asylum from 1850 through 1860 exploring the similarities and differences of the 19th Century Lunatics Liberation Movement and the modern-day Mental Patients Liberation Movement.

Master of Public Administration (2003)

Metropolitan College of New York, New York, New York

Thesis: The Choice thru Voice Project. A participatory action project edited by the Statewide Youth Advisory Council to the New York State Office of Mental Health. The evolution of the Prime Directive Initiative (based on the Prime Directive Journal, Draft Copy written by Laura Cisco and Lauren J. Tenney (1999 – 2000). The Prime Directive Initiative is a recognized strategy to eliminate restraint and seclusion in the U.S Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Mental Health Services (2005) Roadmap to Seclusion and Restraint Free Mental Health Services.

Bachelor in the Professional Studies of Human Services (1998)

Audrey Cohen College, The College for Human Services, New York, New York

BOARDS & COMMITTEES

Academic Advisory Board Member

(2022 – 2023)

The Lancet Psychiatry Commission on Psychoses in Global Context
Academic Advisory Board

Advisory Council Member

2024 – 2028

Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness Advisory Council Disability Rights
Maryland

2020 – October 2023

Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness Advisory Council Disability
Rights Florida

Committee Member

(2018 – 2023)

Mental Health Subcommittee
National Council on Independent Living

Vice-President, Board of Directors

(2020 - September 01, 2021)

Picture Social Justice, Inc.

Facebook Administrator, General Support

(2016 – 2023)

Surviving Race: The Intersection of Injustice, Disability, and Human Rights

CERTIFICATION

CITI Certification, Social-Behavioral-Educational Research – Refresher Course

November 14, 2022 – November 14, 2023

Record ID: **52737048**

SKILLS

Work Style

Conscientious. Reliable. Flexible. Eager. Approachable. Open. Responsive. Creative. Agile. Interpersonal. Curious. Collaborative. Empathetic. Self-Direction, Team Player. Organized. Person-first, person-centered, multicultural approach.

Overarching Skills:

Advocate, Activist, Community Organizer, Facilitator, Trainer, Mediator, Motivational Speaker, Change Agent, Community Liaison, Public Speaker, Social Media Management, Public Affairs, Public Relations, College Professor, Grant Writer, and Fundraiser.

Basic Skills

Microsoft Office Suite, Google Suite, Adobe Suite, Video Production (shoot, edit, distribution). Podcast Production (record, edit, distribution). Written and Oral Communication. Classroom Management. Website Design and Development. Transcription. Interview. Branding. SEO. Information Architecture.

Research Skills:

Institutional Review Board Applications. Organizational Needs Assessments. Mixed Methods Research Design. Focus Groups. Interview. Participant Observation. Naturalistic Observation. Behavior Mapping. Mental Mapping. Life-Space Mapping. Archival and Historical Research. Biography. Environmental Inventory. Environmental Autobiographies and Workographies. Qualitative Analysis. Atmosphere Assessment, Literature Review. Video Research. Academic Writing. Participatory Action Research. Instructional Design. SPSS. GIS. Tableau. Qualtrics. APA Style 7.

UX Research:

Participatory Design. Field Study. Interviews. Focus Groups. Surveys. Card Sorting. A/B Tests. Daily Diaries. Journey Maps. Heat Maps. Usability Testing. Empathetic Iterative Development.

UX Design:

Critical Thinking. Analysis. Synthesis. Evaluation. Behavior Analysis. Pain Point Identification. Information Architecture. User Flow. Flow Charts. Mental Models. Wireframes. Low-Fidelity Prototypes. Equitable Design.

UX Writing:

Persona Development, User Story Development, and Scenario Development. Storyboards

UX Program Management:

Pitching. Presentations. Conference and Meeting Logistics.

Administration Skills:

Project Time Management. Conference Coordination. Environmental Inventory. Force Field Analysis. Form and Application Development. Grant Writing. Graphic Design. Mission and Values Development. Participatory Planning Processes. Program Design. Program Evaluation.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE**Keiser University Fort Lauderdale Campus, Florida****Assistant Professor (May 2021 – October 20, 2023)**

Delivered a range of on ground and remote undergraduate Psychology courses.

Advisor, student organization, Psychology Club

Academic Advising

Chair, Research Committee, Systemwide Psychology Research Committee.

Member, Retention Committee

Adjunct Professor (March 2020 – April 2021)**Keiser University Port Saint Lucie Campus, Florida**

Delivered a range of on ground and remote undergraduate courses including:

Introduction to Psychology; Life Span Development; Writing and Careers in Psychology;

Experimental Psychology; Counseling and Clinical Psychology; Psychology of Coaching and

Team Building; and Psychology Internship II Coordinator.

Keiser University Fort Lauderdale Campus, Florida (November 2020 – April 2021)

Writing and Careers in Psychology; Life Span Development; Social Psychology, Human

Exceptionality, and Psychology of Personality.

City University of New York, New York**College of Staten Island, Staten Island, New York****Adjunct Assistant Professor (2014 – Fall 2019)****Adjunct Lecturer (2009 – 2014)****Provost Fellow (2005 – 2009)**

Undergraduate courses designed and delivered include: Introduction to Psychology; Introduction to Psychology Super Jumbo Section; Research Methods and Ethics; Psychopathology; Theories of Personality; History and Systems of Psychology; History and Systems of Psychology Summer Intensive; Experimental Lab in Social Psychology; Developmental Psychology; Social Psychology; Cross-Cultural Psychology.

**Montclair State University, New Jersey
Adjunct Professor Fall 2014 – Spring 2019**

Undergraduate courses designed and delivered on ground and online include:

Developmental Psychology; Psychology of Women; History and Systems of Psychology (online); Children’s Rights and Child Advocacy; Psychological Aspects of Human Sexuality (online).

Graduate course designed and delivered on ground: Developmental Psychology.

Field School housed at Columbia University, New York

Nathan Kline Institute Center to Study Recovery in Social Contexts

Faculty (Summer/Fall 2010).

Team member for the development of the curriculum for the Field School.

Syllabus design. Teaching classes. Tutoring. External Supports.

RESEARCH

Archival Historical Research: 2004 – Present.

Currently working on a book contracted through Palgrave Macmillan/Springer Nature with the provisional title, “*Except as a punishment: American psychiatry in historical context.*” This work incorporates multiple research and historical projects as well as current archival research including a fresh perspective and yet-to-be revealed archival materials. Previous work is reorganized with new information in this volume that traces the establishment of the field of modern psychiatry, the roots of state-sponsored organized psychiatric industries, and the ways in which corporate institutions and trade organizations emerged in the 19th century as a competing system of slavery. *Can You Dig It?* (2005 – 2008) and *(de)VOICED: Human Rights Now* (2008 - 2014) are two participatory action research projects that gave insight into this historical work. *The Sprawl of American Psychiatry* (2017 – 2019) and other archival work was also piloted as a video project inspired by R. J. Hall called “Mental American Monster” (2020 – 2023).

<http://www.radpsynet.org/journal/vol5/Tenney.html>.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20160306123728/http://www.radicalpsychology.org/vol7-1/tenney2008.html>

https://academicworks.cuny.edu/gc_etds/296

<http://www.laurentenney.us/the-sprawl-of-american-psychiatry.html>

www.MentalAmericanMonster.org

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLYrOc52jufDUISoSE-SPgw>

Active.

Study: Hair Care? A Qualitative Research Study: Early Childhood Experiences of Hair Care, Child-Parental/Guardian Relationships, Attachment and Conflicts Concerning Hygiene, and Control of Hair Expression in Identity Throughout the Lifespan. Human Participant Research, IRB-approved.

Concluded.

Study: Watched for Life: What Is It Like to Live Under Active Surveillance for Monoclonal Gammopathy of Undetermined Significance (MGUS) and/or Leukocytosis and/or Their Resulting Consequences? Human Participant Research, IRB-approved.
Concluded.

Study: (de)VOICED: An Environmental Community-Based Participatory Action Research Project. Human Participant Research, IRB approved.
Research Terminated: July 25, 2016
Final Report: July 31, 2016
Text of Final Report: <http://laurenttenney.us/files/117279917.pdf>

Study: The Freedom Discussions. Human Participant Research, IRB-approved.
Nathan Kline Institute and Mental Health Empowerment Project, Inc. Collaboration.
<https://hd-ca.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Alexander-Mary-Jane-Recovery-in-Social-Contexts.4-30-2013-MJ-Alexander.pdf>
Concluded.

GOVERNMENT

New York State Office of Mental Health, Albany, NY (1998 – 2010)

*Center to Study Recovery in Social Context, Nathan Kline Institute.
Field School housed at Columbia University. (Summer/Fall 2010).*

Faculty/Tutor.

Syllabus development, teaching, and external supports.

Bureau of Children and Families. (2000-2003)

Statewide Projects Director

Local Youth Involvement Initiative; Coordinator of the Statewide Youth Advisory Council; and Coordinator of the Choice thru Voice Project.

Bureau of Recipient Affairs. (1999 – 2000)

Recipient Affairs Specialist

Co-chair, Children's Restraint and Seclusion Committee; Chair, Children's Trauma Committee; and Co-author (with Laura Cisco), Prime Directive Initiative.

Training Bureau. (October 1998 - December 1998).

Consultant

Child Visiting Policy in state-operated psychiatric facilities; GLBT research (now LGBTQI2SA); and the New York State Office of Mental Health's Trauma Initiative.

Recipient Advisory Committee (1993 –1999).

Member

NON-PROFIT

Mental Health Empowerment Project, Inc. Albany, NY. (2008 – 2020)

Consultant

Creating an Approachable Approach to the Capabilities Approach: The Freedom Discussions. Consultant (2009) Project Based.

Environmental Design and Staff Development. Consultant. (2008). Project based.

“Rethinking the NASHMPD Morbidity/Mortality Report” Focus Groups and Analysis with Isaac Brown. Project Based

Howie T. Harp Advocacy Training Center, Harlem, NY (2008 - 2010)

Consultant

Training on the history of the consumer and survivor movements; 5-week Weekly Educational Series on Family Education. Training: The current state of activism in human rights at the local, national, and international levels of legislation and government policy and regulation.

Sky Light Center, Staten Island, NY (1998-1998)

Unit Coordinator, Generalist

Responsibility for care coordination of 35 people; Coordinated, with members of this psychosocial clubhouse model program, lunch and dinner for more than fifty people a day.

Stage 2! Youth Empowerment, NYC, NY (1995 - 1997)

Co-Founder, Director

Contracted by New York State Office of Mental Health to create advocacy, self-help, and peer support activities for young people in state-operated psychiatric facilities in New York City and a plethora of other activities including program management, supervision, and contract negotiations.

Youth Empowerment Association! YEA! NYC, NY (1992 - 1995)

Director, Peer Counselor (1993 – 1995)

Coordinated activities of the organization. Participated in many meetings to give input into policy and regulation of the New York City Department of Mental Hygiene and the New York State Office of Mental Health.

Director of Public Relations; Peer Counselor. (1992 – 1993)

Coordinated media opportunities for the organization including work with MTV; press conferences; demonstrations; and panels.

ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL HONORS

December 2022. Howie the Harp Award. Alternatives Conference 2022.

May 2006, Youth Pioneer and Leader, Families Together in New York State.

October 2002, Support of Consumer Initiatives, Mental Health Empowerment Project, N.Y.

June 1999, Stigma Eraser Award, Families Together in New York State.

FELLOWSHIPS AND GRANTS

Provost Fellow, 2004- 2009. Psychology Department. Graduate School and University Center, City University of New York.

Creating a User-Friendly Version of the Capabilities Framework. Nathan Kline Institute, New York State Office of Mental Health. Awarded May 2008 to the Mental Health Empowerment Project, Inc.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Tenney, L. J. [Forthcoming]. *Except as a punishment: American psychiatry in historical context*. [Manuscript in preparation]. Palgrave Macmillan/Springer Nature.

Tenney, L. J. (2022). Spirituality, psychiatry, and mad studies. In Beresford, P. and Russo, J. (Eds.) (2022). *Routledge International Handbook of Mad Studies*. Routledge.
<https://www.routledge.com/The-Routledge-International-Handbook-of-Mad-Studies/Beresford-Russo/p/book/9781138611108>.

Tenney, L. J. (April 29, 2021). Racism and the rights movement.
<https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781003119401-7/racism-rights-movement-lauren-tenney>. In Newnes, C. (Ed.). (2021). *Racism in psychology: Challenging theory, practice and institutions*. Routledge.
<https://www.routledge.com/Racism-in-Psychology-Challenging-Theory-Practice-and-Institutions/Newnes/p/book/9780367635022>.

Tenney, L. J. (2020). Rights, Psy and forms of Slavery. *Journal of critical psychology, counselling, and psychotherapy*, 20(3), 27-30.
https://www.egalitarianpublishing.com/JCPCP/2020/jcpcp2003_Tenney.html.

Tenney, L. J. (September 11, 2019). Trump and Cuomo: Red flags are red herrings. *Mad in America: Science, psychiatry and social justice*.
<https://www.madinamerica.com/2019/09/trump-cuomo-red-flags-red-herrings/>.

- Burstow B. (2019) Dialogue with Survivor and Academic Lauren Tenney. In: The Revolt Against Psychiatry. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-23331-0_5.
https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-030-23331-0_5.
- Tenney, L. J. (July 1 2016). End Kendra's Law: Racist, classist practices in involuntary psychiatry persist. *Mad in America: Science, psychiatry and social justice*.
<https://madinamerica.com/2019/07/kendras-law-racist-classist-involuntary/>
- Tenney, L. J. (November 29, 2016). Warning: A psychiatric tsunami is upon U.S.. *Mad in America: Science, psychiatry and social justice*.
<https://www.madinamerica.com/2016/11/warning-psychiatric-tsunami-upon-u-s/>.
- Tenney L.J., Brown C., Cascio K., Cerio A., Grundfest-Frigeri, B. (2016) Spirituality Psychiatrized: A Participatory Planning Process. In: Burstow B. (eds) *Psychiatry Interrogated*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-41174-3_4. In Burstow, B. (Ed.). (2016). *Psychiatry interrogated: An institutional ethnography anthology*. Palgrave Macmillan. https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-41174-3_4#citeas.
- Tenney, L. (July 31, 2016). Final report of (de)VOICED (An environmental community- based participatory action research project. Research Terminated: July 25, 2016. Report Electronically submitted July 31, 2016. <http://laurentenney.us/files/117279917.pdf>.
- Member-Initiated Task Force of Division 35, Psychology of Women, American Psychological Association. (2016). Report on Division 35 involvement with PENS and its aftermath.
<https://div35mitf.wixsite.com/report>.
- Tenney, L. J. (March 25, 2016). Only 72 hours left to say #FDAStopTheShockDevice. *Mad in America: Science, psychiatry and social justice*.
<https://www.madinamerica.com/2016/02/40-days-to-tell-the-fdastoptheshockdevice/>.
- Maisel, E. R. and Tenney, L. J. (March 13, 2016). Lauren Tenney on mad activism. On the future of mental health interview series with Eric Maisel, PhD. *Psychology today*.
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/rethinking-mental-health/201603/lauren-tenney-mad-activism>.
- Tenney, L. J. (February 17, 2016). 40 days to tell the #FDAStopTheShockDevice. *Mad in America: Science, psychiatry and social justice*.
<https://www.madinamerica.com/2016/02/40-days-to-tell-the-fdastoptheshockdevice/>.
- Tenney, L. J. (December 30, 2015). Shock device as safe as eyeglasses? 89 days to say no. *Mad in America: Science, psychiatry and social justice*.
<https://www.madinamerica.com/2015/12/shock-device-safe-as-eyeglasses-89-days-to-say-no/>.
- Tenney, L. J. (November 24, 2015). Electroshocking Veterans and their fetuses. *Mad in America: Science, psychiatry and social justice*.
<https://www.madinamerica.com/2015/11/electroshocking-us-veterans-and-their-fetuses/>.

- Tenney, L. J. (August 11, 2015). Senate bill 1945: The new fraud – getting into the “Mental Health Reform Act of 2015. *Mad in America: Science, psychiatry and social justice*. <https://www.madinamerica.com/2015/08/s-1945-the-new-fraud-getting-into-the-mental-health-reform-act-of-2015/>.
- Tenney, L. J. (2015). PSY 352 History and Systems of Psychology Summer Intensive Syllabus. Published as an Undergraduate Teaching Resource. Society for the History of Psychology, Division 26 of the American Psychological Association. https://historyofpsych.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Updated_Tenney_PSY_352_Summer_2015_Syllabus_Final.pdf.
- Tenney, L. J. (June 24, 2015). A witness to fraud. *Mad in America: Science, psychiatry and social justice*. <https://www.madinamerica.com/2015/06/a-witness-to-fraud/>.
- Tenney, L. J. (June 7, 2015). With the public defrauded, the illegitimacy of forced psychiatry crystalizes. *Mad in America: Science, psychiatry and social justice*. <https://www.madinamerica.com/2015/06/with-a-public-defrauded-illegitimacy-of-forced-psychiatry-crystalizes/>.
- Tenney, Lauren J. (2014). *(de)VOICED: Human Rights Now. (An Environmental Community-Based Participatory Action Research Project)*. Proquest. UMI. CUNY Academic Works. https://academicworks.cuny.edu/gc_etds/296.
- Tenney, L. J. (April 23, 2014). An open letter to the Colorado House Health, Insurance and Environment Committee RE: HB1386. *Mad in America: Science, psychiatry and social justice*. <https://www.madinamerica.com/2014/04/open-letter-colorado-house-health-insurance-environment-committee-re-hb1386/>.
- Tenney, L. J. (April 20, 2014). I’m going, are you? How to get involved in the annual protest of the American Psychiatric Association. *Mad in America: Science, psychiatry and social justice*. <https://www.madinamerica.com/2014/04/im-going-get-involved-annual-protest-american-psychiatric-association/>.
- Tenney, L. J. (2010). *The Freedom Discussions*. (Unpublished Manuscript)
- Tenney, L. J. (2009). Opal, The. In Burch, S. *Encyclopedia of American disability history*. Facts on File. pp. 676-677. <https://www.handicapcenter.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Encyclopedia-of-American-Disability-History.pdf>.
- Tenney, L. J. and Hopper, K. (2009). *Freedom discussions: Values clarification in Capabilities Framework*.
- Downing, M. and Tenney, L. J. (Eds.). (2008). *Video Vision: Changing the culture of social science research*. UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing. <https://www.cambridgescholars.com/product/978-1-4438-0001-3>.

- Tenney, L. J. & MacCubbin, P. (2008). When no one was watching: Human subject protections and videotaping, Take 1. In Downing, M. & Tenney, L. (Eds.). (2008). Video Vision: Changing the culture of social science research. UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing. (pp. 14-79). <https://www.cambridgescholars.com/product/978-1-4438-0001-3>.
- Tenney, L. J. (2008). Psychiatric Slave No More: Parallels to a Black Liberation Psychology, *Journal of radical psychology*, 7. <https://web.archive.org/web/20160306123728/http://www.radicalpsychology.org/vol7-1/tenney2008.html>.
- Tenney, L. J. (2006). Who fancies to have a Revolution here? The Opal Revisited (1851- 1860). *Journal of radical psychology*, 5. <http://www.radpsynet.org/journal/vol5/Tenney.html>.
- Libman, K. Tenney, L. J. & Saegert, S. (2005). Good design alone can't change society. *Progressive planning*, 164, Summer, 12-14. <http://www.plannersnetwork.org/2005/07/good-design-alone-cant-change-society-marcus-garvey-village-brownsville-brooklyn-after-thirty-years/>.
- Tenney, L., J. with the New York State Office of Mental Health Statewide Youth Advisory Council. (2001). Nothing About Them Without Them: Youth Empowerment Programs. OMH quarterly, New York State Office of Mental Health. June.
- Tenney, L. J. (2000). It has to be about Choice. *Journal of clinical psychology*, 56(11), 1433-1445. Wiley and Sons. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/11098867/>.
- Cisco, L. & Tenney, L, J. edited by the Statewide Youth Advisory Council. (1999, 2000, 2003). My Prime Directive Journal Draft Copy. (Choice thru Voice Project, My Voice & My Private Voice). New York State Office of Mental Health.

OTHER PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES LECTURES AND PAPERS PRESENTED

- Tenney, L. J. (November 2-4, 2022). Artists in Action. Featured. Alternatives Conference, 2022.
- Tenney, L. J. (September 17 – October 8, 2022). Hallucinations and medications. House of Shadows. Tampa, Florida.
- Tenney, L. J. (August 31, 2022). Except as a punishment: 19th century psychiatric design. Keynote presentation. Surviving Race: The Intersection of Injustice, Disability, and Human Rights National Dialogues. Savannah, Georgia.
- Tenney, L. J. & Hall, R. J. (May 27, 2022). Mental American monster: The sprawl of American psychiatry. 24th Annual Family Café. Orlando, Florida.
- Belyea, Z. A., Bussell, C., Grant, T. A., and Tenney, L. J. (February 11, 2022). The Power of Writing. Present tense. Future perfect. SCCA 2022 Conference: Shaping purposeful writing center practices. Southeastern Writing Center Association. Nova Southeastern University. Florida.
- Adam, S. and Tenney, L. (December 23, 2021). The monster of psychiatry with Dr. Lauren Tenney. Crazy Making Podcast with Dr. Simon Adam. [The monster of psychiatry with Dr. Lauren Tenney by Crazy Making \(anchor.fm\)](#).
- Belyea, Z. and Tenney, L. J. (December 1, 2021). The Multiple Intelligences Project. Edited Video. KES II. Keiser University.

- Tenney, L. J. (November 17, 2021). Facilitator: Brainstorming Session on Professional Development and Scholarly Activities. Psychology Department Convocation. Keiser University.
- Tenney, L. J. (September 28, 2021). Panelist and video. Artists for Change: Politically, Personally, and Socially. Part 2. (Schedule was changed to accommodate my teaching schedule, published as Part 3). New York Association of Rehabilitation Services. 39th Annual Conference. United in Hope. Together for Justice. Wellness for All.
- Tenney, L. J. (September 2021). Art Exhibit. Two paintings included in a statewide exhibit. New York Association of Psychosocial Rehabilitation Services. 39th Annual Conference. United in Hope. Together for Justice. Wellness for All.
- Tenney, L. J. (July 14, 2021). Debut of Tribute to George Ebert. Video.
- Tenney, L. J. (April 2021). A.M.A. (1854) Pills vs. Bleeding. Video. Drop the Disorder Poetry and Music Evening. Zoom event. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V1nJXSCmFyk>.
- Tenney, L. J. (July, 2021). Art Exhibit. Two paintings included in a national exhibit. National Alternatives Conference.
- Caplan, P., Brown, C., Smith, A., Stone, S., and Tenney, L. J. (September, 2018). Modern myths of “mental illness”. National Association of Rights, Protection, and Advocacy (NARPA) Annual Conference, Baltimore, MD. <https://www.narpa.org/conferences/2018/modern-myths>.
- Farber, S., Giffen, T., and Tenney, L. J. (2016). Neoliberalism and the “Mental Health” System: The Failure of The Left. LeftForum 2016. New York City: John Jay College of Criminal Law, City University of New York.
- Tenney, L. J. (August 26, 2015). Unlocking individual passions as a means to student engagement, retention, and success. GSTA Teaching of Psychology, Division 2 of the American Psychological Association Mentorship Program, Workshop I: Total Student
- Tenney, L. J. and Dech, E. (August 22, 2015). Aspirational Arguments from (de)VOICED: Survivors of deadly force with deadly weapons. National Association of Rights, Protection, and Advocacy Annual Conference: Washington, D.C..
- Farber, S., Tenney, L. J., and Dubral, S. (2015). New mad pride movement: “Schizophrenics” and “Bipolars” as the new spiritual vanguard? Left Forum: 2015, May 30, 2015, John Jay College, CUNY: New York.
- Tenney, L. J., Dech, E., Liebert, R. (2015). This is not justice. There ought not be peace: Psychiatry, capitalism, and state power. Left Forum: 2015. May 30, 2015. John Jay College, CUNY: New York
- Tenney, L. J., Cook, L., Calkins, D., Cascio, K., & Shomo, A. (2013). (de)VOICED: Implications for People who Work in Peer Roles: Our Findings Affect Your Work. Seventh Annual Peer Specialist Conference: Crossroads: Creating New Paths to Whole Health: Health Care Reform and the Role of Peer Specialists. A Conference of the New York State Office of Mental Health. New York University. New York City.
- Tenney, L. J., Cook, L., Calkins, D. (2013). (de)VOICED: Environmental Workographies Reveal Multiple Human Rights Violations Committed in Psychiatric Places. Presented to the PhD Program in Environmental Psychology, Graduate School and University Center. New York.

- Tenney, L. J., Dech, E., Merlino, M., Brown, C., Sanchez, D., & Cascio, K. (2010). How the Murder of Our Sister Gave Us Life and What We are Doing with It. PsychOUT. A Conference for Organizing Resistance Against Psychiatry. A Conference of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto (Department of Adult Education and Counseling Psychology). Toronto, Canada.
- Tenney, L. J., Dech, E., Brown, C., Sanchez, D., & Cascio, K. (2010). (de)VOICED: An Environmental Community Based Participatory Action Research (ECBPAP) Project. PsychOUT: A Conference for Organizing Resistance Against Psychiatry. A Conference of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto (Department of Adult Education and Counseling Psychology) Toronto, Canada.
- Alexander, M.J., Hopper, K., McKinney, J., Brown, I., Koerner, J., & Tenney, L. J. (September 17, 2009). Capabilities: Research about Real Opportunities to Do and Be What You Value. NYAPRS Annual Conference, Kerhonkson, NY.
- Tenney, L. J. (July 30, 2009). Mad Pride: Demystifying Psychiatric Labels. Options for Independence “Adventures through Advocacy” Conference, Auburn, NY.
- Tenney, L. J. (March 26, 2009). Exclusion outlawed, contested access practiced: Negotiating public spaces with a psychiatric service dog. American Association of Geographers Annual Conference, Las Vegas, NV. (accepted).
- Tenney, L. J. (March 13, 2009). The Transformative Effects of Audrey Cohen on Education and Human Services: Celebrating her life and legacy. American Women of Psychology Annual Conference, Rhode Island.
- Tenney, L. J. (2009). Biodiversity contested: What’s that dog doing here? Nature Ecology & Society Colloquium, Graduate Center, CUNY.
- Felix, C., Donnelly, J., Orlando, S., Sanchez, D., Dech, E., & Tenney, L. J. (2008). Plenary Session: Youth Power! The Growing Force of Young Leaders. Alternatives 2008, Buffalo, New York.
- Tenney, L. J. and Hazen, D. (October 2008). Murder-By-Neglect: We the People Seizing Tragedy for Change. National Association for Rights Protection and Advocacy, Austin, Texas.
- Tenney, L. J. (August 2008). (de)mythifying youth power. Youth Power! Youth Leadership Forum, New York State.
- Tenney, L. J. (October 2007). Applying Audrey Cohen’s pedagogy in a CUNY classroom: Social Justice, Feminism, and Access to Education. Second Annual Feminist Pedagogy Conference: Graduate Center, CUNY. New York City.
- Tenney, L. J. (September 2007). Co-founder. Video Vision: A Conference for the Changing Culture of Social Science Research: Graduate Center, CUNY. New York City.
- Tenney, L. J. & Baker, D. (July 14, 2007). The Opal Project. Choice in Mental Health Systems, MindFreedom International Conference: Connecticut.
- Dech, E., Orlando, S., Sanchez, D., & Tenney, L. J. (October 2006). Empowering young people and increasing youth involvement. Taking Action for Independence: Changing Systems, Changing Lives. New York Association on Independent Living: Albany, New York.
- Tenney, L. J. (September 12, 2006). Saving Children Today from Psychiatric Abuse: Learning from History. Mind Freedom Radio News Hour with David Oaks Progressive Radio Network Guest: Lauren Tenney.
- Dech, E., Orlando, S., Sanchez, D., & Tenney, L. J. (May 2006). Youth Track: Where have we been? Where are we going? An overview of the youth movement; Youth Movement: Say What?!?; Make Your Voice Heard – It is Your Right! How to speak up for yourself and others; Bringing it Back: How to start and run your own peer group. Families Together in New York State Annual Conference: Albany, New York.

- Tenney, L. J. (June 11, 2005). How the UDC Program Worked: Student Presentation (Campagna, G., Giesecking, J., Libman, K., Liu, D., & Tenney, L.) Policy and Design for Housing: Lessons from the Urban Development Corporation 1968-1975: Graduate Center, CUNY New York City.
- Tenney, L. J. (2002). Opportunities for Self-Determination. The Choice thru Voice Project. New York Association of Psychosocial Rehabilitation Services 20th Annual Conference: Kerhonkson, New York.
- Tenney, L. J. (2000). Making your way out of the system. Consumers Educating the Community: A conference emphasizing recovery and self-sufficiency: Staten Island, New York.
- Tenney, L. J. (2000). Keynote Address: Stop and Think: The Lifelong Impact of Your Services on Children. New York State Office of Mental Health Statewide Inpatient Education Forum: Orange County, New York.
- Tenney, L. J. (May 22, 2000). Plenary Address: Stop forced Treatment: A Vision for the future. New York State Case Management Coalition 4th Annual Conference: Albany, New York.
- Tenney, L. J. (May 18, 2000). The Youth Movement in New York State. Linking New Yorkers Through the Family Support Movement Conference (Family Development Association of New York State): Albany, New York.
- Tenney, L. J. (October 27, 1999). Children's Advocacy Advanced Advocacy Training (Mental Patients Liberation Alliance): Utica, New York.
- Tenney, L. J. (July 1999). Plenary Address: Stop Forced Treatment: Breaking down the stigma of the mental patient. Workshop: Children and Youth Initiatives. New York State Case Management Coalition 3rd Annual Conference: Albany, New York.
- Tenney, L. J. (July 1999). Changing the Way, We View Ourselves Center for Self-Direction: Schenectady, New York.
- Tenney, L. J. (June 1999). Changing the Children's Mental Health System Our Time Has Come Conference (New York State Office of Mental Health): Kerhonkson, New York.
- Tenney, L. J. (May 19, 1999). Plenary Discussant: Why we must meet the same standards as the mainstream: The dangers of dumbing-down educational standards for children with a psychiatric diagnosis. New York State Office of Mental Health Statewide Forum for Inpatient Education: Albany, New York.
- Tenney, L. J. (May 1999). Life for Sale: As Is – Preventing Youth Suicide. Samaritans Hope Conference: Albany, New York.
- Tenney, L. J. (May 1999). How to work in partnership to bring youth perspective into the children's system. Healing Hearts Conference: Jamestown, New York.
- Tenney, L. J. (April 1999). The effects of labels. Sienna College: Albany, New York.
- Tenney, L. J. (April 1999). Youth Empowerment Initiatives. Mental Health Association of New York State 5th Annual Community Mental Health Promotion Training Conference: Albany, New York.
- Tenney, L. J. (April 3, 1999). Kick-Off for the Children's Trauma Committee. Mastering the Key Connection Conference (New York State Office of Mental Health Trauma Initiative): Syracuse, New York.
- Tenney, L. J. (May 24, 1995). Suicide: The Undying Truth. Halting the Violence: Eleventh Annual Manhattan Child and Adolescent Services Committee Conference: New York City.
- Baez, K. & Tenney, L. J. (March. 1995). Suicide: Success is the best revenge Peace Fest '95: Anti-Violence Conference: Bronx, New York.

Tenney, L. J. (November 1994). Plenary Address: Why young people must be at the table.
Community Support Programs, Center for Mental Health Services: Rockville, MD.

Tenney, L. J. (December 9, 1993). Issues of Substance Abuse and Mental Illness. Alternatives to
Court: New York City Department of Probation: Bronx: New York.

Testimony SB429_Oppose - Google Docs.pdf

Uploaded by: Laurette Chin

Position: UNF

**Testimony in OPPOSITION of
Senate 429: Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act**

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

Position: Oppose

February 12, 2025

My name is Laurie Chin, and I am an educator from Ellicott City. I am submitting this testimony **in strong opposition to Senate Bill 429**, which would significantly cut promised education funding under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. This bill undermines the investments our state has committed to making in our students, our teachers, and the future of our communities.

At a time when Maryland is experiencing a teacher shortage, delaying collaborative time grants will prevent teachers from receiving necessary professional development and planning time. These grants help educators collaborate, improve instruction, and better support students. Without them, schools will struggle to retain talented teachers. Collaborative time is crucial for Speech-language pathologists and others who work with students with complex communication needs. It is vital that we help all staff understand how to support student communication in the classroom including but not limited to: assisting in identifying vocabulary needs for academic content areas, training on student specific augmentative/alternative communication systems, training on modifications needed to academic materials to allow students to access the curriculum, and ways to be inclusive in their presentation to all student so as not to accidentally exclude students with complex communication needs. I need additional collaborative time to train staff on how to use Assistive Technology to support student success in communicating their thoughts and ideas in the classroom. Teachers, support staff and SLPs need collaborative time to program devices so students have robust vocabulary and systems that support them not only during academics, but also for social engagement with peers. Teachers and support staff need time to learn to support students using assistive technology such as speech generating devices and time to modify their lessons in order to allow all students to access materials and demonstrate their knowledge.

Maryland made a commitment to improving education through the Blueprint, but SB429 weakens these efforts when schools need support the most. Rather than cutting funding, the legislature should uphold its promise to students, educators, and families by maintaining the investments that were pledged.

I urge you to reject Senate Bill 429 and prioritize the future of Maryland's students - prioritize generating progressive revenue through the passage of Fair Share Maryland. Cutting funding now will have long-term consequences that harm not just our schools, but our communities as a whole. Please vote no on SB429 and stand with those who believe in fully funding the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Laurie Chin

Speech-language Pathologist

4618 Roundhill Road Ellicott City, MD 21043

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Uploaded by: Leslie Margolis

Position: UNF

Education Advocacy Coalition

for Students with Disabilities

SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY & THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
SENATE BUDGET & TAXATION COMMITTEE
SENATE BILL 429: Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act
DATE: FEBRUARY 19, 2025
POSITION: OPPOSE

The Education Advocacy Coalition for Students with Disabilities (EAC), a coalition of nearly 50 organizations and individuals concerned with education policy for students with disabilities in Maryland, strongly opposes Senate Bill 429.

When the Maryland General Assembly enacted the Blueprint for Maryland's Future after several years of intensive research, discussion and work by a broad group of education experts, the possibilities and potential for structural change in Maryland's education system were palpable. Many other states have been mired in litigation over their education funding systems. That Maryland could create a vision of world-class education and implement it through legislation rather than litigation was an extraordinary accomplishment. However, Senate Bill 429 would significantly undermine the goals of the Blueprint just four years into the 10 year implementation period.

Senate Bill 429 undercuts the Blueprint for Maryland's Future by:

- "pausing" Collaborative Time for four years, thereby cutting the foundation per pupil for all students and the associated weighted funding for economically disadvantaged students and emerging multilingual learners;
- freezing the Concentration of Poverty grants for community schools for two years; and
- through the proposed budget, cutting the annual funding allocation for the Blueprint-established Consortium for Community Supports by almost 70%.

These changes would do irreparable harm to students, including students with disabilities, who were promised "access to educational experiences and opportunities... that enable them to reach their full promise and potential and be ready for success...by the end of high school". It was commonly understood that the Blueprint would "require a sustained and coordinated statewide effort." Yet, with no input from stakeholders, including students, families, advocates, teachers, or administrators, Senate Bill 429 proposes changes that would substantially undercut the promise of the Blueprint and make it a shell of what it was intended to be. These changes are also being proposed with disregard for the research basis on which the plan was built.

The "pause" of Collaborative Time would lead to a catastrophic loss of funding from both state and local governments, with a cumulative loss of more than \$2.2 billion over the four years of

delay (FY26 to FY29). Based on the promised funding detailed in current law for the next eight years, the delay in funding collaborative time, the two-year freeze of concentration of poverty funding, and permanent reduction in behavioral health supports add up to a staggering loss of about \$7 billion. While the *bucket of funding* for special education may be “held harmless” by SB429, *actual students with disabilities* will be significantly harmed in a number of ways.

First, with respect to funding, every student who receives special education services would receive the same diminished foundation per pupil as all other students. As 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. When the funding to meet the needs of all students is inadequate, 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. There is broad consensus that the best way to improve education for students with disabilities is to improve general education; these proposed cuts will undercut those efforts.

Second, collaboration time is a research-based strategy for teacher retention that has been specifically identified as a powerful strategy for retaining special educators, an area of critical shortage. In January 2025, the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) at the U.S. Department of Education released a Dear Colleague letter on special education personnel retention, including the announcement of a “navigator” for retention issues and offering short-, medium-, and long-term solutions in each area.¹ To address the issue of isolation of special educators, the navigator presents a rich array of research and best practices related to collaboration time.

It is important to note that contrary to oft-repeated justifications of the proposed cuts, implementation of collaboration time is not dependent on a greatly expanded teacher workforce. Most of the specific strategies identified by the OSEP-promoted navigator do not involve hiring additional staff, but instead involve scheduling strategies, use of non-instructional staff, and enrichment or intervention time with outside partners or other non-teaching staff, including a large pool of tutors who are not certified or conditional teachers.

Although Senate Bill 429 calls for a small program of “pilot grants,” with the attendant costs and delays while application and evaluation processes are developed, the initial year of Collaborative Time funding could easily fund the implementation of these strategies immediately across the state. Our schools and students would begin reaping the benefits of

¹ Dear Colleague Letter on Special Education Personnel Retention. (Jan. 13, 2025), <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/idea-files/dear-colleague-letter-on-special-education-personnel-retention-jan-13-2025/>; Lead IDEA Center, Principal Navigator: Special Education Retention, <https://lead-idea.org/navigator/retention>

Collaborative Time by improving teachers' working conditions, encouraging retention, and improving student achievement.

Collaborative Time can be particularly helpful for students with disabilities. These students benefit in myriad ways when general educators (the content experts) and special educators (the experts in specially designed instruction) have time together to reflect on student data, to fill gaps in their knowledge and skills through professional learning, to support the development of conditionally licensed teachers on their teams and in their buildings, and to work with small groups and individual students.

The other proposed cuts will also have a disproportionate impact on students with disabilities. Many students with disabilities attend community schools and benefit from the wraparound services these schools provide, such as expanded school-based health center services, additional social workers, counselors, and psychologists, additional mentors and restorative practice coaches, and access to mental health practitioners. Community Schools provide a safety net for students and make success in school more likely.

Finally, at a time when Maryland leaders decry the mental health crisis affecting the state's children and youth, cutting the Blueprint-created Consortium for Community Supports by almost 70% through the Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act and thereby effectively eliminating school-based mental health services is counter-productive and makes absolutely no sense. The Consortium provides mental health funding to public schools in every jurisdiction in Maryland. In its first six months, the Consortium has provided mental health resources to more than 58,000 students across 80% of all Maryland public schools, increased Maryland's school mental health workforce by nearly 500 individuals, provided mental health training to more than 1000 school staff members and improved mental health outcomes for many students. For students with emotional and other disabilities, access to school-based mental health services is particularly important; many families have been unable to secure therapy and behavioral supports for their children because of long waiting lists or insurance issues. Mental well-being is essential for school success. Taking these supports away from students would be devastating to the students who need them and is a tone-deaf response to students and families who are desperate for these services.

Balancing the budget on the backs of children with disabilities is, in a word, unconscionable. The Blueprint is fully funded in FY26 and almost fully funded for FY27 with the Blueprint Fund. The state has been presented with options to increase revenue. Therefore, there is no need at this time to drastically cut Blueprint funding and put a halt to so much of the momentum that has been gained over the past four years.

Education Advocacy Coalition Testimony: Senate Bill 429

February 19, 2025

Page Four

For these reasons, the EAC opposes Senate Bill 429. We note, however, that Section 4 of Senate Bill 429 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: Leslie Seid Margolis, Co-Chairperson, at lesliem@disabilityrightsmd.org or 443-692-2505.

See next page for EAC signatories.

Education Advocacy Coalition Testimony: Senate Bill 429
February 19, 2025
Page Five

Respectfully submitted,

Selene Almazan, Selene Almazan Law, LLC
Rene Averitt-Sanzone, The Parents' Place of Maryland
Linda Barton, MSED, Education Consultant
Beth Benevides, Autism Society of Maryland, Co-Chairperson, Education Advocacy Coalition
Ellen A. Callegary, Attorney (Retired)
Melanie Carlos, xMinds (Partnership for Extraordinary Minds)
Stephanie Carr, S.L. Carr Education Consultants, LLC
Rich Ceruolo, Parent
Michelle Davis, ABCs for Life Success
Lisa Frank and Andrea Bennett, Special Kids Company
Riya Gupta, Strong Schools Maryland
Beth Ann Hancock, Charting the Course, LLC
Kalman Hettleman, Independent Advocate
Morgan Durand Horvath, M.Ed., Abilities Network
Rosemary Kitzinger and Marjorie Guldan, Bright Futures, LLC
Leslie Seid Margolis, Disability Rights Maryland, Co-Chairperson, Education Advocacy Coalition
Monica Martinez, Martinez Advocacy
Beth Nolan, MAT, Education Team Allies
Sumaiya Olatunde, H2D Counseling
Ellen O'Neill, Atlantic Seaboard Dyslexia Education Center
Ronza Othman, National Federation of the Blind of Maryland/Maryland Parents of Blind
Children
Jaime Seaton, BGS Law, LLC
Karleen Spitulnik, Decoding Dyslexia Maryland
Ronnetta Stanley, M.Ed., Loud Voices Together
Wayne Steedman, Steedman Law Group
Guy Stephens, Alliance Against Seclusion and Restraint
Maureen van Stone, Kendall Eaton, Genevieve Hornik, Project HEAL at Kennedy Krieger
Institute
Liz Zogby, Maryland Down Syndrome Advocacy Coalition

PTA Council of Baltimore County Opposition to SB42

Uploaded by: Leslie Weber

Position: UNF

**Testimony in OPPOSITION of Senate Bill 429: Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act
Budget and Taxation Committee/Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee**

Position: Oppose

February 17, 2025

I am writing on behalf of the PTA Council of Baltimore County, the official parent-group partner of Baltimore County Public Schools. National PTA, the largest and oldest child advocacy organization in the country, comprises Congresses in every state, Councils in many counties, and local school-based PTA units. The main goal of PTA is advocacy, speaking up for every child with one voice.

PTA Council is opposed to SB429 because it would create deep cuts to funding promised under the Maryland Blueprint.

Public schools are under attack at the federal level. In Baltimore County, we also fear that the Superintendent's proposed FY2026 Operating Budget will not be fully supported by County government. This is why state funding is all the more crucial to properly compensate teachers and to provide desperately needed resources and services to schools and students.

PTA Council, and the Baltimore County Education Justice Table at which we have a seat, wholeheartedly support community schools and the wraparound services they offer to students and families. We fear that mental health supports, after-school programming, and support for multilingual students/families will be negatively impacted if this bill passes.

Please don't allow SB429 to weaken school supports provided through the Blueprint. PTA Council urges you to reject Senate Bill 429.

Sincerely,

Leslie Weber

PTA Council of Baltimore County, Inc.

president@bcptacouncil.org

MDAC - 2025 - SB 429 - oppose.pdf

Uploaded by: Liz Zogby

Position: UNF



SB 429: Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act
February 19, 2025
Position: Oppose

The Maryland Down Syndrome Advocacy Coalition (MDAC) is a coalition of the five Down syndrome organizations in Maryland as well as individuals with Down syndrome and their family members who have come together to advocate for improved quality of life for all individuals with Down syndrome throughout the state of Maryland.

MDAC strongly opposes SB429, which would: cut the promised foundation per pupil amounts for all K-12 public school students every year from FY2026 through FY2033; cut the amount of funding promised to Maryland's 621 community schools for FY2027 through FY2031; and cut the annual funding for behavioral health supports through the Consortium for Community Supports by 70%. The cumulative loss of approximately \$7 billion of funding over eight years represents an **unprecedented disinvestment from Maryland's public schools.**

SB429 purports to "hold harmless" students who receive special education services by changing the current special education weight to dollar amounts based on the foundation and weights in current law. **While the bucket of funding for students who receive special education services may be held harmless, actual students with disabilities will be gravely harmed.** These students will, like all students, have their foundation allocation cut. Students with disabilities who are also eligible for compensatory education funding, eligible for multilingual learner funding, or attend community schools (i.e., those with high concentrations of poverty) will be impacted multiple times over. Students with disabilities are disproportionately economically disadvantaged,¹ and they and their school communities will be irreparably harmed by these cuts.

MDAC is also deeply concerned by the proposed four-year delay to initiating the phase-in of Collaborative Time. Collaborative Time is the programmatic element of the Blueprint law that is most likely to have a significant positive impact on improving the educational experiences of students with disabilities.

First, structures and systems that explicitly support **collaboration of general and special educators will contribute to dismantling the silos between general and special education, one of the biggest barriers to progress for students with disabilities.** Collaborative Time will allow educators, together, to reflect on student data, plan instruction, fill gaps in their knowledge and skills through professional learning, and provide direct support to individual and small groups of students. The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) identifies this type of collaboration as High Leverage Practice # 1, noting that it is "one of the most essential practices to master because it is

¹ In 2021-22, 36.7% of students with disabilities vs. 27.2% of all students are economically disadvantaged. See slide 21 in <https://blueprint.marylandpublicschools.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/20/2024/05/8.23.23SpecialEducationWorkgroup-A.pdf>

one of the HLPs used every single day regardless of grade level, content area, or disability status of students.”²

Second, **Collaborative Time is a research-based strategy for teacher retention.** In January 2025 the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) at the US Department of Education issued a Dear Colleague letter on special education personnel retention, which is one cause of critical shortages of special educators in Maryland and across the country. OSEP in collaboration with the CEEDAR and LEAD IDEA Centers launched *Principal Navigator: Special Educator Retention*,³ which includes a toolkit of short-, medium-, and long-term strategies for “establishing and protecting planning and collaboration time.” This toolkit⁴ includes a wide variety of research and best practices that do not involve additional teachers, but instead rely on scheduling strategies, use of non-instructional staff, and enrichment or intervention time with outside partners or other non-teaching staff. It is disingenuous to suggest that we can’t implement collaborative time without first solving the teacher shortage. These strategies are known, replicable, achievable, and cost-effective.⁵

By providing a menu of possibilities to LEAs and schools based on these best practices, Maryland could initiate Collaborative Time across the state in Fall 2025 as intended by the Blueprint.⁶ SB429 instead proposes repurposing some of the intended funding for a Collaborative Time Innovation Grant program which would dilute the funding’s impact, adding a new layer of central administration—with requirements for developing grant applications, application evaluations, and reporting. The “innovative ideas in the bill point to an obvious fact: We know how to innovate Collaborative Time in ways that do not require first hiring thousands of new teachers.

At the same time, MSDE could develop a statewide plan with benchmark objectives for reaching our ultimate goals in terms of producing a diverse, effective, and stable teacher workforce through intentional recruitment and retention strategies. The alternative (delaying collaborative time and cutting the funding) shortchanges children and teachers and will fundamentally set back the goals of the Blueprint, perhaps irretrievably.

SB429 proposes using other diverted funds for a “recruitment campaign,” focused on marketing and individual recruitment of teachers from outside the state. But such campaign will simply throw good money after bad unless we execute retention strategies that go to the heart of working conditions. We will never pipeline our way out of the teacher shortage. Oddly, the goal of the recruitment initiatives in SB429 is the reduction of “the number of conditionally licensed teachers”—yet growing that number has been Maryland’s primary strategy employed to date via

²<https://exceptionalchildren.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/HLP%201%20Admin%20Guide.pdf>

³ <https://lead-idea.org/navigator/retention>

⁴ (<https://lead-idea.org/resources/toolkit-2-promoting-shared-ownership-and-collaboration>

⁵ Rosenberg, D., Daigneau, R., & Galvez, R. (2018). Finding Time for Collaborative Planning. Education Research Strategies. <https://www.erstrategies.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/3876-finding-time-for-collaborative-planning.pdf>

⁶ An example is Fairfax County, VA, which started an early release initiative to provide time for collaborative planning and to complete state-mandated professional development on literacy instruction. They established partnerships with local organizations—including Boys and Girls clubs, Girl and Boy Scouts, STEM groups, and others—to help provide supervision and programs for students, and used central office staff members to help care for students while teachers work. See: Peetz, C, (2024, Aug 28). An Unconventional Way One District Is Adding Teacher Planning Time, *EdWeek*, <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/an-unconventional-way-one-district-is-adding-teacher-planning-time/2024/08>

Grow-Your-Own (GYO) programs. Conditionally licensed teachers are a pool of Maryland residents who have already committed to teaching and who are more diverse than our licensed workforce; our goal should be to help them get fully licensed. That effort should include collaborative time—a real investment in developing these educators.

In sum, this plan of short-term redirection of funds and long-term disinvestment spells disaster for the success of the Blueprint. We can do better. We have a plan, the evidence, the people, and for the next two years we have the Blueprint Fund to pay for it. All we need is a revitalized commitment. We can transform Maryland's public schools for all students, including students with disabilities.

For these reasons, MDAC strongly opposes SB429 and urges the General Assembly to stay the course and keep the promise of the Blueprint to Maryland's students and educators.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Zogby
Maryland Down Syndrome Advocacy Coalition
katzogby@gmail.com
443-691-1755

SB429 Oppose.pdf

Uploaded by: Marijane Mnck

Position: UNF

Indivisible HoCo MD

Testimony in **OPPOSITION** of **Senate 429: Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act**

Budget and Taxation Committee/Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Position: Oppose
February 17, 2025

My name is Marijane Monck, and I am a retired teacher and community advocate from Columbia, MD. I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the over 900 members of Indivisible Howard County comprising a number of actions teams, including the Education Action Team. We are **in strong opposition to Senate Bill 429**, which would significantly cut promised education funding under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. This bill undermines the investments our state has committed to making in our students, our teachers, and the future of our communities.

Cuts to per-pupil foundation funding nearly always result in increased class sizes. Research tells us that decreasing class size is one of the most effective ways to see student improvement.

We must recruit and retain talented educators. Salaries are not the only incentive, but they matter. Treating teachers as the professionals they are by offering professional development and time for collaboration goes a long way.

Community schools have become a necessity. Mental Health care, after-school programs, and multilingual support help students.

I urge you to reject Senate Bill 429 and prioritize the future of Maryland's students - prioritize generating progressive revenue through the passage of Fair Share Maryland. Cutting funding now will have long-term consequences that harm not just our schools, but our communities as a whole. Please vote no on SB429 and stand with those who believe in fully funding the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Marijane Monck
Education Action Team member
Indivisible Howard County
mjmonck@gmail.com

M.Bond_ SB429_Oppose.pdf

Uploaded by: Maya Bond

Position: UNF

**Testimony in OPPOSITION of
Senate 429/House Bill 504: Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act**

**Senate Budget and Taxation Committee/Education, Energy, and the Environment Committees
House Appropriations/Ways and Means Committees**

**Position: Oppose
February 19, 2025**

My name is Maya Bond, and I am an advocate from Baltimore County. I am submitting this testimony **in strong opposition to Senate Bill 429**, which would significantly cut promised education funding under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. This bill undermines the investments our state has committed to making in our students, our teachers, and the future of our communities.

Delays in funding for community schools will widen the achievement gap and leave vulnerable students without the necessary support systems. Schools that were promised additional resources through Concentration of Poverty grants will not see the funds when they need them most. These grants provide essential services such as mental health care, after-school programs, and multilingual support for students.

As a member of the Baltimore County Education Justice Table (BCEJT), I have partnered with many Community School Facilitators across the county on events and canvasses that have aided community schools within their first two years of implementation. Baltimore County will lose a total of over \$770,000 of expected per-pupil funds between FY26 and FY33 if collaboration time funding is paused for 4 years and over \$50,000,000 of expected concentration of poverty funds if frozen at FY26 levels for two years. This will have a disproportionate impact for not only the students who have benefitted from efforts such as food pantries, school supply drives and community garden initiatives, but also have a disproportionate impact on the ability of Community School Facilitators trust to be built within the community.

For example, the Community School Facilitator at Bear Creek Elementary is only entering their second year of community school implementation and has already done an incredible job with establishing partnerships to bring an array of after school activities like boys/girl scouts and dance programs for students but are already struggling with the current needs of the school population to also have translation services to ensure more families are able to participate and learn about opportunities the school plans on offering. Bear Creek Elementary will be losing over \$1,240,000 between FY27 and FY31 that was previously expected due to the proposed two year freeze. The Baltimore County Education Justice Table has helped put on a canvass and community event that has increased their family and local community member presence on the shared decision making committee for the school, however the loss of this amount of funds will severely limit the feasibility of being able implement the great ideas the school community has come together to brainstorm.

Maryland made a commitment to improving education through the Blueprint, but SB429 weakens these efforts when schools need support the most. Rather than cutting funding, the legislature should uphold its promise to students, educators, and families by maintaining the investments that were pledged.

I urge you to reject Senate Bill 429 and prioritize the future of Maryland's students - prioritize generating progressive revenue through the passage of Fair Share Maryland. Cutting funding now will have long-term consequences that harm not just our schools, but our communities as a whole. Please vote no on SB429 and stand with those who believe in fully funding the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Maya Bond

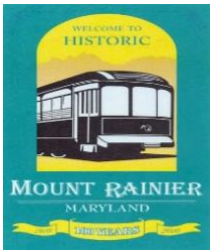
Baltimore County Education Justice Table

maya@wewontkeepquiet.org

Opposition to Senate Bill 429- Excellence in Maryl

Uploaded by: Mayor Celina Benitez

Position: UNF



Office of The Mayor Celina Benitez

1 Municipal Place, Mount Rainier, Maryland 20712 Telephone: (301) 985-6585 MountRainierMD.org

Monday, February 17, 2025

Re: Opposition to Senate Bill 429: Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act

Dear Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee and the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

On behalf of the City of Mount Rainier, we submit this testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 429. This bill threatens the vital funding commitments made under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, jeopardizing the quality of education for students in our community.

As a city that is home to two Title I schools—Mount Rainier Elementary School (MRES) and Thomas S. Stone Elementary (TSE)—we are deeply concerned about the devastating impact of this bill. According to projections from Strong Schools Maryland based on Maryland State Department of Education data, PGCPS is facing a catastrophic \$1 billion cut in per-pupil funding between FY26 and FY33.

The impact on our schools is staggering:

- **Mount Rainier Elementary School (MRES)** is projected to lose **\$1.978 million in funding between FY27 and FY31**, ranking among the largest cuts per capita in Prince George's County. For context, our entire school budget for the 2024-25 academic year is **\$1.85 million**—a cut of this magnitude would be unsustainable and catastrophic.
- **Thomas S. Stone Elementary School (TSE)** faces a **\$1.316 million reduction**, further stripping essential resources from students who rely on these services the most.

Our local community schools, like MRES and TSE, heavily depend on **Concentration of Poverty Grant funding**, which provides critical support such as mental health services, after-school programs, and multilingual support. The passage of SB 429 would dismantle these essential programs, widening the achievement gap and leaving our most vulnerable students without the resources they need to thrive.

Additionally, cuts to per-pupil foundation funding will force schools to make difficult decisions, such as increasing class sizes, cutting instructional materials, and reducing staff. At a time when Maryland is already facing a teacher shortage, these funding reductions will only exacerbate the issue, making it harder to recruit and retain highly qualified educators.

Maryland made a commitment to improving education through the Blueprint, and now is not the time to backtrack on that promise. Instead of reducing funding, we urge the legislature to **prioritize progressive revenue solutions through the passage of Fair Share Maryland** to ensure sustainable, equitable investment in our schools.

We strongly urge you to **reject Senate Bill 429** and stand with the students, families, and educators who depend on the Blueprint's full implementation. Cutting funding now will have long-term

consequences that extend far beyond our schools—our entire community will bear the burden of these losses.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Should you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact our office 301-985-6585 or via email MayorBenitez@MountRainierMD.org

Sincerely,



Mayor Celina R. Benitez, City of Mount Rainier

A Plea for the Blueprint for Maryland.pdf

Uploaded by: Molly Walker

Position: UNF

A Plea for the Blueprint for Maryland

Maryland Y Youth & Government

This document is written not from the voice of a politician, public financier, or activist, but the earnest conviction of the students of the State of Maryland. In the midst of the current fiscal panic that has swept over the capital, we set forth a case that not only is the Blueprint for Maryland a prudent investment, but also one that must be championed as a defining accomplishment of this legislature.

It has always been the firstmost objection of those skeptical of the Blueprint to critique the immense fiscal burden it entails. Indeed, this programme is not an inexpensive one, but the magnitude of its cost corresponds to the sublimity of its effects, both civil and economical. The greatest fallacy lies in the presumption that education is some ethereal public good that primarily may enhance the private lives of its benefactors but does not take account of any social or economic transformation. Indeed, just the contrary may be proven with regard to each major focus;

1) On the Universalization of Pre-Kindergarten

Numerous states have enacted Universal Pre-Kindergarten initiatives over the past three decades with remarkable empirical success. Reports of widespread ‘gains in cognitive development’ of which ‘racial and ethnic groups and children from all socioeconomic brackets benefit’ have begun to surface, raising important points concerning human capital development.^[1] Setting aside the numerous benefits from, ‘school readiness and child development to employability, to women’s equality, balancing work and family, reducing poverty, alleviating at-risk status and social integration,’ the economic consensus is clear.^[2] From neuroscientists to economists, the consensus is that ‘returns on investment in the early child development period exceed investment in any other period of human development.’^[2] The issue of course is that the realization of this investment takes two forms, where only the first is easily visible. Immediately there is an economic improvement, particularly for low-income families, in the alleviation of certain child care expenditures, but the real investment, which is in the children themselves, takes decades for the effects to be visible.

2) On the Qualification of Teachers

One of the great ambitions of the Blueprint is the competitive salary offered to teachers. Indeed, the same remarkable effects attributed to Universal Pre-Kindergarten have empirically been found to correlate also to high teacher salaries and high-quality academic credentials.^[1] Where diminishing teacher salaries have been found to increase urban-suburban divides as teachers flock from worse parent and administration systems, poor salaries have led to disastrous teacher turnovers, shortages, and under qualifications.^{[3][4]} The effect

of sustaining high teacher salaries is profound in economic implication. As higher quality teachers are hired, students become, ‘more likely to attend college, earn higher salaries, and are less likely to have children as teenagers.’^[5] Once more the loss from not investing in the Blueprint is long-term economic development, which in turn diminishes the economic position of the state more than any temporary deficit.

3) On the Creation of Career Pathways for Students

Yet again the shifting of the educational consensus toward career pathway programmes and Career and Technical Education creates an indispensable obligation of the State toward the Blueprint. The direct workforce contribution of these programs constitute thousands of well-paying, middle-skill jobs.^[6] Whereas the standard college-centred curricula of the orthodox educational pathway only appeals to about a third of the student population, extraordinary empirical success have been found in career-centred pathways, particularly in highly competitive fields in technology sectors.^[7]

The Blueprint for Maryland, contrary to the wary sentiment of its discontents, is not a reckless exercise in unchecked spending, but a deliberate and radical motion toward social advancement—backed by the foremost developments in economic, educational, scientific, and sociological literature. Its defence is not the unrepentant avarice of an expanding government, but the just deliverance of the populace from austerity. Shall we deviate from the grandeur envisioned half a decade ago in our paralyzing terror of deficit spending? Shall we be guided by the false prophet of political myopia? Or instead shall we confront it, look directly at the generations of our future, and remark with paramount certainty that we shall not abandon the prospects of social mobility—that we shall not commit our education to oblivion—and that we will never fall by the sword of economic stagnation? To balance the state budget is undoubtedly glorious, but it will never justify the evacuation of our educational promises to the engines of ruination.

[1] The Universal Pre-K Bandwagon, *The Phi Delta Kappan*, Vol. 87, No. 3, 2005.

[2] Susan Prentice, High Stakes: The “Investable” Child and the Economic Reframing of Childcare, *Signs*, Vol. 34, No. 3, 2009.

[3] Eric A. Hanushek and Steven G. Rivkin, Pay, Working Conditions, and Teacher Quality, *The Future of Children*, Vol. 17, No. 1, 2007.

[4] Barnett Berry and Patrick M. Shields, Solving the Teacher Shortage: Revisiting the Lessons We've Learned, *The Phi Delta Kappan*, Vol. 98, No. 8, 2017.

[5] Raj Chetty, John N. Friedman, and Jonah E. Rockoff, Measuring the Impacts of Teachers II: Teacher Value-Added and Student Outcomes in Adulthood, *The American Economic Review*, Vol. 104, No. 9, 2014.

[6] Bruno V. Manno, An Opportunity Framework for Career Pathway Programs, *The Phi Delta Kappan*, Vol. 102, No. 5, 2021.

[7] Victor M. Hernandez-Gantes and Edward C. Fletcher, The High School Career Academy as a Model for Promoting Technological Preparation: Promising Practices and Challenges in the United States, *Vocational Education and Training in the Age of Digitization: Challenges and Opportunities*, 2020.

Unlock Hope Invest in Kids SB429_Oppose_Template.p

Uploaded by: Mona Kurian

Position: UNF

UNLOCK HOPE
INVEST IN YOUTH



**Testimony in OPPOSITION of
Senate 429: Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act**

**Budget and Taxation Committee/Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Position: Oppose
February 17, 2025**

My name is Mona Kurian, and I am a student from Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony **in strong opposition to Senate Bill 429**, which would significantly cut promised education funding under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. This bill undermines the investments our state has committed to making in our students, our teachers, and the future of our communities.

Cuts to per-pupil foundation funding will mean fewer resources for classrooms, including teacher salaries, instructional materials, and critical student services. Schools already struggling to meet the needs of students will be forced to make tough choices, like increasing class sizes. Without adequate funding, many teachers will leave the profession, making teacher shortages worse. Last year my school experienced a funding cut, and many of my favorite teachers were forced to leave to work at other schools. This was incredibly impactful for the students at my school, as these teachers created an amazing atmosphere at my school and the school felt very different to go to every day. As a senior now, I won't personally experience the effects of this bill if passed, but I want those who are younger than me, specifically many of my young cousins, to be able to experience the level of education I was able to, if not better.

Delays in funding for community schools will widen the achievement gap and leave vulnerable students without the necessary support systems. Schools that were promised additional resources through Concentration of Poverty grants will not see the funds when they need them most. These grants provide essential services such as mental health care, after-school programs, and multilingual support for students. Personally, I know many of my friends entered elementary school not knowing English. Fortunately, they were given the resources to learn English, thus helping them adapt better to the school environment and not fall behind. If these incredibly important programs were not in place and went without funding, they wouldn't be as successful as they are today.

Maryland made a commitment to improving education through the Blueprint, but SB429 weakens these efforts when schools need support the most. Rather than cutting funding, the legislature should uphold its promise to students, educators, and families by maintaining the investments that were pledged.

I urge you to reject Senate Bill 429 and prioritize the future of Maryland's students - prioritize generating progressive revenue through the passage of Fair Share Maryland. Cutting funding now will have long-term consequences that harm not just our schools, but our communities as a whole. Please vote no on SB429 and stand with those who believe in fully funding the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mona Kurian

Maryland Youth and Government

monakurian@gmail.com

Natalie Mullens - Unlock Hope Invest in Kids SB429

Uploaded by: Natalie Mullens

Position: UNF



Testimony in **OPPOSITION** of
Senate 429: Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act

Budget and Taxation Committee/Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Position: Oppose
February 12, 2025

My name is Natalie Mullens, and I am a student from Montgomery County Maryland. I am submitting this testimony **in strong opposition to Senate Bill 429**, which would significantly cut promised education funding under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. This bill undermines the investments our state has committed to making in our students, our teachers, and the future of our communities.

I have been fortunate enough to attend a STEM Magnet Program at Montgomery Blair High School. This program benefits from a private foundation that helps support trips and events for the students. These trips have allowed us to have firsthand experiences at facilities like Wallops Island and have supported the trips of STEM based extracurriculars. Most schools in Maryland don't have access to a foundation or alumni network like Blair's and the Blueprint for Education can help fill this crucial gap in funding to support holistic education and unique experiences for students.

I also have many peers who have met with incredible success in high school, but in order to be the incredible students they are they need the additional support of special education professionals and IEPs. Without the blueprint these programs and in turn the success of these students is in serious jeopardy.

Additionally, taking a bigger picture perspective, investing in education is a cost saving measure in the long run. People who receive more education have higher incomes, are less likely to commit crimes, and healthier. By supporting education now we are decreasing the cost of governance in the future.

Maryland made a commitment to improving education through the Blueprint, but SB429 weakens these efforts when schools need support the most. Rather than cutting funding, the legislature should uphold its promise to students, educators, and families by maintaining the investments that were pledged.

I urge you to reject Senate Bill 429 and prioritize the future of Maryland's students - prioritize generating progressive revenue through the passage of Fair Share Maryland. Cutting funding now will have long-term consequences that harm not just our schools, but our communities as a whole. Please vote no on SB429 and stand with those who believe in fully funding the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Natalie Mullens

Maryland Youth and Government

nmullens111@gmail.com

Testimony Senate 429.pdf

Uploaded by: Nicole de la Torre

Position: UNF

Testimony in OPPOSITION of
Senate 429: Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act

Budget and Taxation Committee/Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Position: Oppose / February 12, 2025

My name is Nicole de la Torre, and I am a parent at Mount Rainier Elementary, and part of the PTO Board. I am submitting this testimony in strong opposition to Senate Bill 429, which would slash critical education funding promised under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. This bill doesn't just cut dollars—it cuts opportunities for our children, support for our teachers, and resources our schools desperately need. It undermines the commitments our state has made to invest in students, educators, and the future of our communities. Our children deserve better.

Our kids deserve better. Cutting per-pupil foundation funding means fewer resources in the classroom—fewer teachers, outdated materials, and less support for students who need it most. Schools that are already stretched thin will be forced to make impossible choices, like increasing class sizes or cutting critical programs.

We've already seen how hard it is to fill essential teaching positions. Without competitive salaries and real support, more teachers will leave the profession, and our students will suffer. Instead of making it harder to attract and keep great educators, we should be investing in them.

Delays in funding for community schools will only widen the achievement gap, leaving vulnerable students without the resources they rely on. Schools that were promised additional support through Concentration of Poverty grants won't get the help they desperately need. These grants provide mental health services, after-school programs, and multilingual support—lifelines for so many families in our school community.

Our students, teachers, and families deserve stability, opportunity, and real investment—not more budget cuts. We must stand up for them now.

I urge you to reject Senate Bill 429 and prioritize the future of Maryland's students - prioritize generating progressive revenue through the passage of Fair Share Maryland. Cutting funding now will have long-term consequences that harm not just our schools, but our communities as a whole. Please vote no on SB429 and stand with those who believe in fully funding the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.
Sincerely,

Nicole de la Torre
Mount Rainier Elementary Parent and PTO Co-Secretary (nicoledlt2@gmail.com)

PCAB- Testimony in OPPOSITION of Senate 429_ Exce

Uploaded by: PCAB Baltimore

Position: UNF



**Testimony in OPPOSITION of
Senate 429: Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act**

**Budget and Taxation Committee/Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Position: Oppose
February 17, 2025**

On behalf of the Parent and Community Advisory Board (PCAB) of Baltimore City, we are submitting this testimony **in strong opposition to Senate Bill 429**, which would significantly cut promised education funding under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. This bill undermines the investments our state has committed to making in our children, our teachers, and the future of our communities.

As parents and community members, we see firsthand the challenges our schools face. We believe every child deserves access to a high-quality education, regardless of their zip code. However, the proposed cuts in SB429 would have devastating consequences for students who already struggle with a lack of resources and support.

Cuts to per-pupil foundation funding will mean fewer resources in classrooms, including essential instructional materials, teacher salaries, and critical student services. Schools already stretched thin will have to make impossible choices—larger class sizes, reduced staff, and fewer enrichment opportunities. As parents, we worry about how these funding cuts will affect the quality of education our children receive. If our schools cannot retain experienced teachers or provide the necessary learning materials, our children will fall further behind.

Additionally, delays in funding for community schools will widen the achievement gap and leave our most vulnerable students without necessary support systems. Many of our schools serve students who rely on mental health services, after-school programs, and multilingual support funded through Concentration of Poverty grants. These programs are lifelines for families in Baltimore City, and postponing their funding means children will be left without the services they need to thrive.

Maryland made a promise to our students through the Blueprint, and SB429 weakens these efforts at a time when schools need support the most. Rather than cutting funding, the legislature should uphold its commitment to our children by maintaining the investments that were pledged.

We urge you to **vote no on SB429** and stand with the families and communities who believe in fully funding the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. The decisions made today will impact an entire generation of Maryland students—**please prioritize their future.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Parent and Community Advisory Board (PCAB), Baltimore City

Dear Governor Moore,

I hope this letter finds you well. My name is Corey Witherspoon, and I am a member of the Parent and Community Advisory Board (PCAB). I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the proposed budget cuts to the Blueprint for Maryland's Future and to urge your continued commitment to fully funding this critical initiative.

Maryland students have made significant progress due to the Blueprint's impact, and it is essential that we maintain this momentum. While I recognize the state's \$3 billion deficit and the difficult fiscal decisions that must be made, reducing Blueprint funding by \$218 million risks undermining the progress we have achieved in education reform. I acknowledge that the proposed budget still allocates \$9.7 billion for K-12 public schools—an increase of \$551 million (6%) from the previous year—but Maryland continues to face pressing challenges, particularly in addressing the severe teacher shortage.

As of January 2025, there is a shortage of 2,000 teachers across Maryland's schools, and approximately 6,000 additional educators hold only conditional certifications. While recent legislative efforts have sought to streamline teacher certification processes, sustained investment through the Blueprint is necessary to recruit and retain qualified educators. Without fully funding these initiatives, Maryland risks falling further behind in addressing its educator pipeline crisis.

Maryland currently ranks 26th nationally in high school graduation rates, 42nd in NAEP test scores, and 25th in NAEP reading scores. These rankings underscore the need for continued investment in education rather than reductions. However, the positive impact of the Blueprint is evident—Maryland ranks 11th in college readiness, demonstrating that targeted reforms are working to prepare students for future success.

Additionally, Maryland ranks 7th nationally in providing services for students with special needs, a testament to the effectiveness of our current investments. The Blueprint has played a crucial role in ensuring that schools have the resources to support students requiring accommodations, allowing them to bring in professionals and specialists to enhance educational outcomes. Reducing funding now could jeopardize these gains and negatively impact some of our most vulnerable students.

Another growing challenge is the increasing population of English Language Learners (ELLs) in Maryland. Currently, ELLs make up 10% of the student population—nearly 9,000 students—and the demand for English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers continues to rise. Many schools are struggling to find ESOL teachers, leaving students without the necessary support. The Blueprint's investment in these programs is critical to ensuring that ELL students receive the resources they need to succeed.

Furthermore, community schools, a vital component of the Blueprint, provide holistic support to students and their families by integrating academics with health and social services, youth and community development, and community engagement. The Blueprint facilitates this transformation through Concentration of Poverty Grants, and the goal is to convert nearly one-third of Maryland public schools to the community school model by 2027. These schools are essential in addressing both academic and non-academic barriers to student success, and their continued expansion should remain a priority.

Governor Moore, I greatly appreciate your dedication to balancing Maryland's budget while prioritizing education. However, I urge you to explore alternative areas for budget reductions to ensure that Maryland's students continue to thrive. The Blueprint for Maryland's Future represents an investment in the long-term success of our children, our workforce, and our state's prosperity.

Thank you for your time and leadership. I look forward to your continued support of Maryland's students and educators.

Respectfully,
Corey Witherspoon
Board Member, PCAB

SB429 Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Qamryn Askew

Position: UNF

SB429 | Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act



Associated Student Congress of Baltimore City

Brook Bourne, *President*
Justin Lyles, *Legislative Affairs Chair*
Qamryn Askew, *Communications Chair*

February 19, 2025

Dear Chair Guzzone, and the Budget & Taxation Committee,

The Associated Student Congress of Baltimore City is Baltimore’s city-wide student government organization, designated as the representative body of the over 70,000 students in Baltimore City Public Schools.

SB429 proposes significant reductions in education through FY33, undermining the commitments set out by the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future. These cuts threaten the foundation of equitable education in Maryland and disproportionately harm Baltimore City students—many of whom are beneficiaries of Concentration of Poverty Grants, which **SB429** aims to freeze until FY29.

There is a direct correlation, as consistently shown by empirical evidence¹, that a \$1,000 reduction in funding on a per-pupil basis led to a 3.9% decrease in average test scores in math and reading. By reducing the target per-pupil amount previously set, **SB429** risks replicating these outcomes, ending in similar result.

Despite the already aggressive teacher shortage in Maryland, SB429 delays the implementation of collaborative time for educators—postponing much-needed professional development and structured planning time until FY2030. Collaborative time is critical for refining lesson plans, analyzing student progress, and coordinating interventions, particularly for students with disabilities and multilingual learners. This four-year delay will only worsen teacher burnout and attrition, directly undermining the Blueprint’s goal of elevating the teaching profession.

Additionally, the bill allows Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to withhold up to 50% of Concentration of Poverty Grant funds, diverting resources away from schools and students. This policy weakens the community school model and contradicts the Blueprint’s commitment to educational equity.

SB429 does not offer a sustainable solution to Maryland’s fiscal concerns. Instead, it delays critical investments in education rather than exploring progressive revenue solutions like those proposed in the Fair Share Maryland plan.

Maryland has long been a leader in advancing equitable education policies, but SB429 reverses that progress. History has already shown us the consequences of defunding public education—after passing the Bridge to Excellence Act in the early 2000s, Maryland later abandoned those investments following the 2008 financial crisis. Now, history is repeating itself.

¹Jackson, C.K., Wigger, C., and Xiong, H. (2020). *The Costs of Cutting School Spending: Lessons from the Great Recession*. Education Next, 20(4), 64-71.

SB429 | Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act



Associated Student Congress of Baltimore City

Brook Bourne, *President*
Justin Lyles, *Legislative Affairs Chair*
Qamryn Askew, *Communications Chair*

These proposed cuts are not grounded in transparent discussions with stakeholders, nor are they necessary to secure the Blueprint's long-term success. Reducing education funding is not fiscal responsibility—it is a failure to uphold the commitments Maryland has made to its students.

For these reasons, we urge this committee to put forth an unfavorable report on **SB429** and instead support a full and fair funding plan that prioritizes students over short-term budget maneuvering.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Qamryn Askew

Communications Chair, Associated Student Congress of Baltimore City

AEMS - OPPOSE_ Senate Bill 429_ House Bill 504.pdf

Uploaded by: Rachel McGrain

Position: UNF



OPPOSE: Senate Bill 429/House Bill 504
Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act
Budget and Taxation Committee
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
House Appropriations Committee
Ways and Means Committee
February 19, 2025

Arts Education in Maryland Schools (AEMS) writes **in strong opposition to Senate Bill 429/ House Bill 504**, which would significantly cut promised education funding under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. This bill undermines the investments our state has committed to making in our students, our teachers, and the future of our communities.

AEMS is a statewide nonprofit, committed to ensuring that all students in the state of Maryland have access to high quality arts education. We envision a public education system in Maryland that supports, cultivates, nurtures, and uplifts all students' creativity through a robust arts education experience so that they can thrive in a healthy society. We regularly engage with arts educators around the state to learn about their successes and challenges as well as support them through professional development opportunities. **Maryland's arts educators are dedicated, passionate, and creative**, and they also face barriers that make it difficult to support their students in the best ways they know how. **SB429/HB504 poses yet another barrier** that will make their jobs serving our students more difficult, and it will continue to make it difficult to recruit new arts educators thereby stifling the reach of arts education in our public schools.

Cuts to per-pupil foundation funding will mean fewer resources for classrooms, including teacher salaries, instructional materials, and critical student services. **Schools already struggling to meet the needs of students will be forced to make tough choices**, like increasing class sizes. These sorts of situations have already happened, given that even current funding is insufficient. In budgeting for SY24-25, Frederick County Public Schools planned to cut 4th and 5th grade instrumental music programs until massive community outcry caused them to reverse their decision. Instead, they increased class sizes, which supplused one of the fewer than 10 dance educators working in Frederick County, completely **eliminating that high school's dance program** (COMAR states that ALL Maryland PreK-12 public school students should have access to Dance and the other 4 arts discipline throughout their entire school career – there are clearly not adequate funds to even meet existing regulations like this one). The reality of SB429/HB504 is that it will strain base funding, which will thereby make it **more difficult for local education leaders to support critical and central learning opportunities for students such as the arts that their communities value**.

Delaying collaborative time will also prevent teachers from receiving necessary professional development and planning time. Especially for new teachers who we hope to retain and develop, this planning time would be crucial to building their confidence and skills and allowing mentor teachers the time and space to support those new teachers without burning out. We hear this loud and clear in the arts community: especially for the many teachers who are taking up the call to serve and entering the classroom on conditional licenses, more support is needed and increased collaborative time would help. **Far from elevating the teaching profession, a stated goal in Pillar II, SB429/HB504 will deepen the crisis the Blueprint has promised to solve.**

Finally, delays in funding for community schools will widen the opportunity gap and leave vulnerable students without the necessary support systems. Many schools have been able to utilize these funds to support student's social-emotional development, critical thinking, and creativity through new arts learning experiences. LEAs have reported in their Blueprint implementation plans that these funds have been used to support student art shows for English Language Learners who are the first in their families to earn college credit; to provide after school music, theatre, and art clubs in collaboration with local cultural institutions; and to support full-time fine arts staffing in alignment with articulated community needs. **SB429/HB504's funding delays to community schools could endanger delivery and prevent further expansion of the arts to already-under-resourced schools.**

Maryland made a commitment to improving education through the Blueprint. **The legislature should uphold its promise to students, educators, and families by both 1) maintaining the investments that were pledged and 2) expanding the state's revenue by passing the Fair Share Maryland plan.** In the 2000s, Maryland passed an ambitious education reform plan based on the recommendations of the Thornton Commission: the Bridge to Excellence. But with the 2008 financial crisis, the plan was all but scrapped. Now history repeats unless bold action is taken. SB429/HB504 sacrifices the potential and growth of our most vulnerable populations; we urge you to **invest in our students, teachers, and communities** by upholding your promise to the Blueprint and rejecting the harmful alterations that SB 429 proposes. As education advocates, we are watching and keeping our constituents informed.

In the strongest possible terms, AEMS urges you to reject Senate Bill 429/House Bill 504 and prioritize the future of Maryland's students, generating progressive revenue through the passage of Fair Share Maryland. Cutting funding now will have long-term consequences that harm not just our schools, but our communities as a whole. **Please vote no on SB429/HB504 and stand with those who believe in fully funding the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

For questions, please contact AEMS Executive Director Rachel McGrain at rmcgrain@aems-edu.org.

Testimony against SB429.pdf

Uploaded by: RACHEL SIMMONSEN

Position: UNF

**Testimony in OPPOSITION to
Senate Bill 429: Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act**

**Budget and Taxation Committee/Education, Energy, and the Environment
Committee**

**Position: Oppose
February 12, 2025**

I'm a Baltimore City resident and the parent of two children who attend a Title I community school in the City. I submit this testimony **in strong opposition to Senate Bill 429**, which would significantly cut promised funding for community schools under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

Delays in funding for community schools would widen the achievement gap and leave vulnerable students without the necessary support systems they need to succeed. Schools that were promised additional resources through Concentration of Poverty grants would not see the funds when they need them most. These grants provide essential services such as mental health care and after-school programs, which have been critical in improving academic success at my children's school.

This legislation would also harm our children by reducing per-pupil foundation funding. This would mean fewer resources for classrooms, including teacher salaries, instructional materials, and critical student services. Schools like my children's that are already struggling to meet the needs of students would be forced to make tough choices, like increasing class sizes. Our school has worked hard in the past several years to limit class sizes, but this legislation would make it increasingly difficult to do so. And I fear that we would return to a time when our first grade had thirty-eight children—thirty-eight!—in one classroom. That is simply unacceptable. It is unfair to our children, and it is unfair to our teachers.

If you are serious about your promises to improve education and to support our children, please reject this legislation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Rachel Simmons
rachel.simmons@gmail.com
(410) 254-0307

Anthony Tilghman Testimony-SB 429.pdf

Uploaded by: Rick Tyler, Jr.-Chair

Position: UNF

Anthony Tilghman Testimony February 19, 2025

Senate Bill 429/House Bill 504: Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act

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

House Appropriations and Ways and Means Committee

Position: Oppose

Dear Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

My name is Anthony Tilghman, and I serve as a Commissioner for the City of District Heights, testifying today in my personal capacity. I strongly oppose Senate Bill 429, which would significantly cut promised education funding under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. This bill undermines critical investments in our students, educators, and communities at a time when they need support the most.

Key Concerns with SB429:

1 Teacher Shortages & Professional Development Cuts

Maryland is already struggling with teacher shortages. Delaying collaborative time grants will prevent educators from accessing necessary professional development and planning time, making it harder to retain high-quality teachers and improve instruction.

2 Harming Community Schools & Vulnerable Students

SB429 delays funding for community schools, which serve as lifelines for students in low-income communities. Concentration of Poverty grants—which provide mental health services, after-school programs, and multilingual support—will be cut or frozen, leaving vulnerable students without the resources they were promised.

3 Breaking Maryland's Commitment to Education

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future was a historic commitment to transforming education, and SB429 weakens this effort by cutting resources when schools need them the most. Instead of pulling back, we should be finding progressive revenue solutions to fully fund education, such as through Fair Share Maryland.

 **Call to Action: Vote NO on SB429**

Cutting education funding now will have long-term consequences, not just for our schools, but for the economic and social future of Maryland. I urge you to reject SB429 and uphold the state's promise to students, educators, and families by ensuring full funding for the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Anthony Tilghman

Anthony Tilghman

Award-Winning Photojournalist, Executive Director of #MakeSmartCool Inc

www.anthonytighman.com

MEC Testimony - SB429 - HB504.pdf

Uploaded by: Rick Tyler, Jr.-Chair

Position: UNF



Maryland Education Coalition



Ellie Mitchell & Rick Tyler, Jr. – Co-Chairs

Web site - www.marylandeducationcoalition.org *** Email – md.education.coaliton@gmail.com

February 19, 2025

SB0429 (HB0504) - Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act

Joint Hearing-1:00 p.m. - Legislative Services Building, Joint Hearing Room
Senate - Budget and Taxation) and Education, Energy, and the Environment Committees, and
House – Appropriations and Ways and Means Committees

The Maryland Education Coalition (MEC) has been at the table of every major public education initiative for the past 45 years and when the Blueprint was passed in 2020, MEC representatives collaborated with General Assembly leaders to ensure the Aid to Education budget was fully funded un future years. Therefore, **if the Governor and General Assembly make no funding changes to the public education budget it will remain fully funded through at least FY 2026! This is consistent with the requirements of the - [Maryland Constitution, Article VIII](#)**, backed by the courts and Marylanders.

MEC members and other stakeholder leaders, including those with extensive experience with education budgets and policies have unanimously determined that the proposed **“Excellence in Maryland Public Education Act” IT WILL NOT RESULT IN EXCELLENCE**, especially pages 3-15. Therefore, the Maryland Education Coalition strongly opposes **SB0429 (HB0504) - Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act and urges the General Assembly to vote unfavorable**. We also urge the members to listen to and work collaboratively with the organizations representing educators, superintendent’s, and board members to address their concerns with this bill.

An [Analysis of the Governor’s FY 2026 Budget](#) by the [Maryland Center on Economic Policy](#) (MDCEP) found that about **one-third of all of the proposed budget cuts would significantly impact public education** even though we have seen no evidence that public education has a direct impact on Maryland’s current budget deficit. They estimated that **within five years, the cuts to public education will be about 2.5 billion dollars**. This is not what was promised to students.

Any reductions, delays or cuts in the full funding of the foundation program as originally approved will have similar results that occurred [in 2007 when the General Assembly made significant cuts to the Bridge for Excellence Act \(Thornton\)](#) by having a negative impact the nearly 900,000 students in over 1,300 Maryland public schools. It puts local school systems at risk of eliminating hundreds of staff with fewer instructional resources and student services. Also, any cuts to the foundation, significantly impacts students with the greatest needs – lower income, multilingual and students with disabilities, which require more staffing, instructional resources, and services. This will not produce excellence.

Although there is a staffing shortage including student service professionals (school counselors, social workers, psychologist), **MEC supports the need for additional Collaborative Time to the extent possible**. Also, **pausing Collaborative Time isn’t just a delay; it’s a cut to essential services for students and investments in our educators**. Instead, LEA’s should be given greater flexibility to implement it. Also, **the foundation program ensures a base level of funding per pupil, but there are a number of significant costs to public education operations that are not specifically funded** including food service, school safety, utilities, health care costs, facilities maintenance, debt service, and under-funded students with disabilities cost. **It will also have a significant impact on local share contributions**.

Therefore, **MEC strongly urges an unfavorable report for SB 429/HB 504**. Keep your promise if you truly are 4 the Future of our students and supportive of the thousands school systems educators, administrators, and support staff. Instead, fully approve the [Fair Share for Maryland Act of 2025](#), attract revenue generating industries to Maryland and work with stakeholders to identify additional revenue sources and make cuts that are not Constitutionally required with long-lasting impacts to Maryland’s children and families.

MEC members - ACLU of MD, Arts Education in Maryland Schools, Arts Every Day, Attendance Works, CASA, Children’s Behavioral Health Coalition, Free State (Maryland) PTA, Decoding Dyslexia of Maryland, Disability Rights Maryland, League of Women Voters of MD, Let Them See Clearly, MSC-NAACP, Maryland Coalition for Gifted & Talented Ed, Maryland Alliance for Racial Equity in Education, Maryland Coalition for Community Schools, Public Justice Center, Maryland Down Syndrome Advocacy Coalition, Maryland Out of School Time Network, Maryland School Psychologists' Association, Parent Advocacy Consortium, School Social Workers of MD, Strong Schools Maryland, Kalman R. Hettleman, David Hornbeck, Rick Tyler, Jr., Sharon Rubinstein

BC - OPPOSE_ House Bill 504.pdf

Uploaded by: Riya Gupta

Position: UNF



OPPOSE: House Bill 504

Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act

House Appropriations/Ways and Means Committees

February 19, 2025

The Blueprint Coalition, a 30+ member organization representing hundreds of thousands of Marylanders and co-led by representatives of Strong Schools Maryland and the Maryland State Education Association, dedicated to the full implementation and funding of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, **strongly opposes House Bill 504**. HB504 would reduce promised education funding, undermining the commitment Maryland made to its students, educators, and communities.

House Bill 504, misleadingly titled the "Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act," does not advance excellence. Instead, it introduces sweeping funding cuts, delays, and freezes that will disproportionately harm at-promise students, particularly those living in poverty and multilingual learners. The Blueprint was developed through years of research, public hearings, and legislative debate. HB504 threatens to undo that progress and jeopardizes the future of Maryland's students and schools.

Significant Cuts to Per-Pupil Education Funding

The bill reduces the target per-pupil foundation amount every upcoming fiscal year. For example, in FY2026, the originally planned \$9,226 per-student allocation is cut to \$9,063. By FY2033, instead of reaching \$12,365, per-pupil funding is slashed to \$11,536. These cuts will mean fewer resources for classrooms, larger class sizes, and reduced instructional support. Schools already struggling to meet student needs will be forced to make difficult choices, whether to eliminate staff positions, limit academic programs, or reduce individualized instruction.

These cuts to target per-pupil amounts are caused through proposed delays to the implementation of collaborative time for educators. Maryland is already facing a severe teacher shortage, yet HB504 delays the implementation of collaborative time for educators, postponing much-needed professional development and planning time. [Collaborative time increases student outcomes](#) by allowing teachers to refine lesson plans, analyze student progress, and coordinate interventions, especially critical for students with disabilities and multilingual learners. Originally

scheduled to begin to phase in by FY2026, funding for collaborative time is now delayed until FY2030, forcing schools to operate four more years without these essential supports. This delay will exacerbate teacher burnout and attrition, as professional development and structured planning time are key to keeping educators in the profession – collaborative time also helps to retain teachers by improving the working environment. Without investment in teacher retention, Maryland will continue to face severe staffing shortages, undermining the Blueprint’s Pillar 2 goal of elevating the teaching profession.

Trickle-Down Cuts That Hurt the Most Vulnerable Students

Because funding for compensatory education students and multilingual learners is calculated as a percentage of the per-pupil foundation amount, any cuts to the foundation funding result in automatic reductions for these groups.

- **Compensatory Education Funding Shrinks:** Students who qualify for Free and Reduced-Price Meals (FARM) receive additional funding based on a multiplier of the foundation amount. When the foundation is cut, the funding available for low-income students declines in lockstep. This means less money for intervention programs, tutoring, social-emotional supports, and wraparound services that help students from historically underfunded communities.
- **Multilingual Learner Funding is Reduced:** Similarly, multilingual learners (MLs) receive supplemental funding based on the foundation formula. As the foundation amount shrinks, so does the funding for essential language services, teacher training, and curriculum adaptations that support our multilingual learners. ML students already face systemic barriers, and this bill will deepen those inequities.

The bill’s funding changes for students who receive special education services claim to “hold them harmless,” but in reality, the funding changes ignore the intersectionality of special education students, FARM students, and multilingual learners. [Many students with disabilities also qualify for compensatory education \(36.9%\) and ML services \(12%\)](#), meaning that cuts to these funding streams will still negatively impact them. While the bucket of funding for special education may be “held harmless” by HB504, the actual students with disabilities will be significantly harmed in a number of ways.

Freezing Community School Funding and 50% Flexibility Provision

The bill pauses increases in Concentration of Poverty School Grants for FY2027 and FY2028, stalling the expansion of community schools that serve Maryland’s most vulnerable students. These schools were promised additional support through the Blueprint to provide mental health care, after-school programs, multilingual services, and other essential wraparound supports.

[Community schools are a proven model](#) for addressing achievement gaps, yet HB504 deliberately freezes progress in these schools for two years. This means fewer counselors, fewer health services, and fewer academic interventions for students who need them most. Schools

that were relying on these funds will be forced to make cuts, leaving students without access to necessary resources.

Alarming, the bill also proposes new 50% flexibility allowance for Local Education Agencies (LEAs) with two or more community schools, which permits up to 50% of Concentration of Poverty Grant (CPG) funds to be withheld by central offices instead of being used directly in schools. By allowing LEAs to withhold up to half of these funds, HB504 deprives schools of essential services and diminishes their ability to address the root causes of inequity. This policy shift moves Maryland further away from the community school model that the Blueprint promised to expand and moves resources further away from the students these grants were meant to serve.

Not a Long-Term Solution

HB504 does not offer a real solution to the state's fiscal concerns. Instead, it takes the easy way out – delaying investments in education while refusing to fully explore sustainable revenue options. The Blueprint was built on a long-term vision for transforming Maryland's schools, but HB504 abandons that vision in favor of short-term budget maneuvering. Rather than cutting critical education funding, the Legislature should fully implement the Fair Share Maryland plan, which provides a progressive revenue strategy to keep the Blueprint on track.

[Maryland has been a national leader in advancing equitable education policies](#), rejecting harmful efforts to defund public education. However, HB504 reverses that progress. At a time when the federal government is actively rolling back protections for marginalized communities, Maryland should be strengthening its investment in public education, not weakening it.

This is not the first time Maryland has faced this choice. In the early 2000s, the state passed the Bridge to Excellence Act, based on the recommendations of the Thornton Commission, only to abandon those investments after the 2008 financial crisis. Now, history is repeating itself.

These proposed cuts are not grounded in transparent discussions with stakeholders, nor are they necessary to ensure the long-term success of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. The decision to reduce education funding is not an act of fiscal responsibility; it is a choice to abandon the commitments that the Legislature has made to Maryland's students. The Blueprint Coalition stands firmly in support of a full and fair funding plan, rather than balancing the budget at the expense of the state's most vulnerable children.

For these reasons, we urge the committee to issue an Unfavorable Report on House Bill 504.

Please contact Riya Gupta at riya@strongschoolsmaryland.org for additional questions.

BC - OPPOSE_ Senate Bill 429.pdf

Uploaded by: Riya Gupta

Position: UNF



OPPOSE: Senate Bill 429
Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act

Senate Budget and Taxation/Education, Energy, and the Environment Committees
February 19, 2025

The Blueprint Coalition, a 30+ member organization representing hundreds of thousands of Marylanders and co-led by representatives of Strong Schools Maryland and the Maryland State Education Association, dedicated to the full implementation and funding of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, **strongly opposes Senate Bill 429**. SB429 would reduce promised education funding, undermining the commitment Maryland made to its students, educators, and communities.

Senate Bill 429, misleadingly titled the "Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act," does not advance excellence. Instead, it introduces sweeping funding cuts, delays, and freezes that will disproportionately harm at-promise students, particularly those living in poverty and multilingual learners. The Blueprint was developed through years of research, public hearings, and legislative debate. SB429 threatens to undo that progress and jeopardizes the future of Maryland's students and schools.

Significant Cuts to Per-Pupil Education Funding

The bill reduces the target per-pupil foundation amount every upcoming fiscal year. For example, in FY2026, the originally planned \$9,226 per-student allocation is cut to \$9,063. By FY2033, instead of reaching \$12,365, per-pupil funding is slashed to \$11,536. These cuts will mean fewer resources for classrooms, larger class sizes, and reduced instructional support. Schools already struggling to meet student needs will be forced to make difficult choices, whether to eliminate staff positions, limit academic programs, or reduce individualized instruction.

These cuts to target per-pupil amounts are caused through proposed delays to the implementation of collaborative time for educators. Maryland is already facing a severe teacher shortage, yet SB429 delays the implementation of collaborative time for educators, postponing much-needed professional development and planning time. [Collaborative time increases student outcomes](#) by allowing teachers to refine lesson plans, analyze student progress, and coordinate interventions, especially critical for students with disabilities and multilingual learners. Originally

scheduled to begin to phase in by FY2026, funding for collaborative time is now delayed until FY2030, forcing schools to operate four more years without these essential supports. This delay will exacerbate teacher burnout and attrition, as professional development and structured planning time are key to keeping educators in the profession – collaborative time also helps to retain teachers by improving the working environment. Without investment in teacher retention, Maryland will continue to face severe staffing shortages, undermining the Blueprint’s Pillar 2 goal of elevating the teaching profession.

Trickle-Down Cuts That Hurt the Most Vulnerable Students

Because funding for compensatory education students and multilingual learners is calculated as a percentage of the per-pupil foundation amount, any cuts to the foundation funding result in automatic reductions for these groups.

- **Compensatory Education Funding Shrinks:** Students who qualify for Free and Reduced-Price Meals (FARM) receive additional funding based on a multiplier of the foundation amount. When the foundation is cut, the funding available for low-income students declines in lockstep. This means less money for intervention programs, tutoring, social-emotional supports, and wraparound services that help students from historically underfunded communities.
- **Multilingual Learner Funding is Reduced:** Similarly, multilingual learners (MLs) receive supplemental funding based on the foundation formula. As the foundation amount shrinks, so does the funding for essential language services, teacher training, and curriculum adaptations that support our multilingual learners. ML students already face systemic barriers, and this bill will deepen those inequities.

The bill’s funding changes for students who receive special education services claim to “hold them harmless,” but in reality, the funding changes ignore the intersectionality of special education students, FARM students, and multilingual learners. [Many students with disabilities also qualify for compensatory education \(36.9%\) and ML services \(12%\),](#) meaning that cuts to these funding streams will still negatively impact them. While the bucket of funding for special education may be “held harmless” by SB429, the actual students with disabilities will be significantly harmed in a number of ways.

Freezing Community School Funding and 50% Flexibility Provision

The bill pauses increases in Concentration of Poverty School Grants for FY2027 and FY2028, stalling the expansion of community schools that serve Maryland’s most vulnerable students. These schools were promised additional support through the Blueprint to provide mental health care, after-school programs, multilingual services, and other essential wraparound supports.

[Community schools are a proven model](#) for addressing achievement gaps, yet SB429 deliberately freezes progress in these schools for two years. This means fewer counselors, fewer health services, and fewer academic interventions for students who need them most. Schools

that were relying on these funds will be forced to make cuts, leaving students without access to necessary resources.

Alarming, the bill also proposes new 50% flexibility allowance for Local Education Agencies (LEAs) with two or more community schools, which permits up to 50% of Concentration of Poverty Grant (CPG) funds to be withheld by central offices instead of being used directly in schools. By allowing LEAs to withhold up to half of these funds, SB429 deprives schools of essential services and diminishes their ability to address the root causes of inequity. This policy shift moves Maryland further away from the community school model that the Blueprint promised to expand and moves resources further away from the students these grants were meant to serve.

Not a Long-Term Solution

SB429 does not offer a real solution to the state's fiscal concerns. Instead, it takes the easy way out – delaying investments in education while refusing to fully explore sustainable revenue options. The Blueprint was built on a long-term vision for transforming Maryland's schools, but SB429 abandons that vision in favor of short-term budget maneuvering. Rather than cutting critical education funding, the Legislature should fully implement the Fair Share Maryland plan, which provides a progressive revenue strategy to keep the Blueprint on track.

[Maryland has been a national leader in advancing equitable education policies](#), rejecting harmful efforts to defund public education. However, SB429 reverses that progress. At a time when the federal government is actively rolling back protections for marginalized communities, Maryland should be strengthening its investment in public education, not weakening it.

This is not the first time Maryland has faced this choice. In the early 2000s, the state passed the Bridge to Excellence Act, based on the recommendations of the Thornton Commission, only to abandon those investments after the 2008 financial crisis. Now, history is repeating itself.

These proposed cuts are not grounded in transparent discussions with stakeholders, nor are they necessary to ensure the long-term success of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. The decision to reduce education funding is not an act of fiscal responsibility; it is a choice to abandon the commitments that the Legislature has made to Maryland's students. The Blueprint Coalition stands firmly in support of a full and fair funding plan, rather than balancing the budget at the expense of the state's most vulnerable children.

For these reasons, we urge the committee to issue an Unfavorable Report on Senate Bill 429.

Please contact Riya Gupta at riya@strongschoolsmaryland.org for additional questions.

HB0504-SB0429 comments.pdf

Uploaded by: Shannon Hinkhaus

Position: UNF

HB0504/SB0429 Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act - [UNFAVORABLE](#)

Dear Representatives,

I am asking you to forget about HB0504/SB0429.

Blueprint is a disaster and ignores local control.

Blueprint will cause a massive shift in spending from the South side of our county to other areas, all based on FARM students and NOT based on performance. That is ridiculous. Blueprint will cause some elementary class sizes to balloon to 40 children in a class. That is insane and in no way going to help schools.

I do not want to fund universal Pre-K. The state does not need to control more of our children.

I do not want to pay for Juniors and Seniors to take college courses. They can find funding for Community College if they are serious students.

Please show CARROLL COUNTY that you care about them too even though they do not typically vote Democrat. This is why.

[REPEAL BLUEPRINT](#), that is our only option. Lift the heavy hand of the state. Do you like Trump telling you what we can and cannot teach and how we must use our funds? Try living in Carroll County.

Shannon Hinkhaus

Carroll County, MD

CASA_SB429.pdf

Uploaded by: Shannon Wilks de Benitez

Position: UNF



Testimony on SB0429
Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act

Senate Budget and Taxation

February 19, 2025

Dear Honorable Chair Guzzone and Members of the Committee,

CASA provides testimony on Senate Bill 429- Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act to highlight the needs for continued analysis on how to best serve Maryland students. CASA is a national powerhouse organization building power and improving the quality of life in working-class: Black, Latino/a/e, Afro-descendent, Indigenous, and Immigrant communities.

With a membership of over 173,000 members, CASA creates change with its power-building model blending human services, community organizing, and advocacy to serve the full spectrum of the needs, dreams, and aspirations of members. For nearly forty years, CASA has employed grassroots community organizing to bring our communities closer together and fight for justice, while simultaneously providing much-needed services, helping to ensure that low-income immigrants can live rich and full lives. For over a decade, CASA has provided first and second generation immigrant high school students with culturally and linguistically relevant leadership development as well as college and career readiness.

As a member of both the Blueprint Coalition and the Maryland Alliance for Racial Equity in Education, CASA played an instrumental role in the passage of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future and have been a strong supporter of culturally responsive implementation that addresses the immediate needs of our most vulnerable and historically marginalized community members, in particular our Black and Brown immigrant youth and their families. While the passage of the Blueprint was a significant step towards alleviating the inequities of our Maryland education system, its intended outcomes have yet to be fully realized. The General Assembly promised students, educators, and Maryland a "world class" education system that would lead to a thriving economy in which each individual can meet their full potential in the career that best aligns with their skills and interests, regardless of background and personal circumstance. However, SB 429 attempts to dramatically reduce funding for Maryland's world-class education system. At a time when the federal government is actively rolling back protections for marginalized communities, Maryland should be strengthening its investment in public education, not weakening it.

Senate Bill 429, introduces funding cuts, delays, and freezes that will disproportionately harm multilingual learners and those living in poverty. The Blueprint was developed through years of research, public hearings, and legislative debate. SB 429 threatens to undo that progress and jeopardizes the future of Maryland's students and schools.

The bill reduces the target per-pupil foundation amount every upcoming fiscal year which will mean fewer resources for classrooms, larger class sizes, and reduced instructional support. Furthermore, because funding for compensatory education students and multilingual learners is calculated as a percentage of the per-pupil foundation amount, any cuts to the foundation funding result in automatic reductions for these groups. Students who qualify for Free and Reduced-Price Meals (FARM) receive additional funding based on a multiplier of the foundation amount. When the foundation is cut, the funding available for low-income students declines in lockstep. This means less money for intervention programs, tutoring, social-emotional supports, and wraparound services that help students from historically underfunded communities. Similarly, multilingual learners (MLs) receive supplemental funding based on the foundation formula. As the foundation amount shrinks, so does the funding for essential language services, teacher training, and curriculum adaptations that support our multilingual learners. ML students already face systemic barriers, and this bill will deepen those inequities.

The bill also proposes to stall the expansion of community schools that serve Maryland's most vulnerable students. These schools were promised additional support through the Blueprint to provide mental health care, after-school programs, multilingual services, and other essential wraparound supports. Community schools are a proven model for addressing achievement gaps. However, SB 429 deliberately freezes progress in these schools for two years. This means fewer counselors, fewer health services, and fewer academic interventions for students who need them most. Schools that were relying on these funds will be forced to make cuts, leaving students without access to necessary resources.

These changes to the current implementation of the Blueprint direct impact working-class and immigrant families and students. In order to best serve immigrant students and their families linguistically and culturally relevant programming and wraparound services are needed. Community schools in particular ensure that immigrant students thrive within our educational system and ultimately become contributing members of our economy and workforce.

CASA, along numerous education advocates, want to work closely with the Governor and the entire administration to find a solution that meets of balancing our State's budget without sacrificing our students' future or abandoning our promise to future generations of world-class public schools.

CASA respectfully asks the committee to uphold its commitment to equitable education and keep its promise to fully fund the Blueprint for Maryland's Future by submitting an unfavorable report on SB 429.

SB429_Oppose_Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: TAYLOR BOREN

Position: UNF

**Testimony in OPPOSITION of
Senate 429/House Bill 504: Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act**

**Senate Budget and Taxation Committee/Education, Energy, and the Environment Committees
House Appropriations/Ways and Means Committees**

**Position: Oppose
February 19, 2025**

My name is Taylor Boren, and I am an educator from Baltimore County. I am submitting this testimony **in strong opposition to Senate Bill 429**, which would significantly cut promised education funding under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. This bill undermines the investments our state has committed to making in our students, our teachers, and the future of our communities.

Cuts to per-pupil foundation funding will mean fewer resources for classrooms, including teacher salaries, instructional materials, and critical student services. Schools already struggling to meet the needs of students will be forced to make tough choices, like increasing class sizes. Without adequate funding, many teachers will leave the profession, making teacher shortages worse.

As a Baltimore county educator, I am seeing firsthand average class sizes of over 25 students in most elementary schools. Many, if not most, schools still struggle, as they have for years, to find enough daily sub coverage for staff absences. When this happens, it often leads to even larger class sizes as uncovered classes get split into other classrooms for all or part of the school day. In many schools this is the rule, NOT the exception. We must continue to make education a top priority and legislators must keep their funding promises to educators and students if we are to avoid a crisis.

Maryland made a commitment to improving education through the Blueprint, but SB429 weakens these efforts when schools need support the most. Rather than cutting funding, the legislature should uphold its promise to students, educators, and families by maintaining the investments that were pledged.

I urge you to reject Senate Bill 429 and prioritize the future of Maryland's students - prioritize generating progressive revenue through the passage of Fair Share Maryland. Cutting funding now will have long-term consequences that harm not just our schools, but our communities as a whole. Please vote no on SB429 and stand with those who believe in fully funding the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Taylor Boren

taylorboren25@gmail.com

1112 Wiseburg Road

White Hall, MD 21161

Mooreletter01.09 (2).pdf

Uploaded by: THORNELL JONES

Position: UNF

January 10, 2025

The Honorable Wes Moore
Governor of Maryland
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Governor Moore,

The fiscal cliff of \$2.7 billion facing the State of Maryland is a very real challenge to the State's leaders. Addressing that challenge will shape our obligations and opportunities for years to come, and your balanced budget proposal will define your approach to educating all of Maryland's children.

In your Inaugural Address two years ago, you made two fundamental commitments to the state's citizens:

- . Leave no one behind; and
- . End childhood poverty.

Your education plan, "From Cradle to Career: Investing in Our Students and Building a World Class Education System," includes guarantees that education will always be a top priority, the Blueprint is fully funded and implemented, and state leaders will work closely with local leaders, educators, parents and community organizations to address our most pressing challenges.

The fiscal cliff is such a challenge. You and others have indicated that some "adjustments" to the Blueprint will be necessary and that increased taxes must face a "very high bar" for support. With all respect for the challenges ahead, we believe that the critical needs of our children should not be on the chopping block and should not be approached in a piecemeal fashion.

As strong supporters of your agenda, we are not asking that you perform miracles. You have made excellent choices in appointing our Superintendent, Dr. Cary Wright, and our State Board President, Josh Michael. We ask that the balanced budget proposal you present next week further reflect the solemn commitments you have made to all the State's citizens.

Sincerely yours,

Thornell Jones, President
World Class Grads Maryland

Senate (SB) 429- Excellence in Maryland Public Sch

Uploaded by: William Reid

Position: UNF

**Testimony in OPPOSITION of Senate (SB) 429: Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act by
Dr. William Reid
Budget and Taxation Committee/Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Position: Oppose
February 19, 2025**

Good afternoon, Chair, Vice Chair, and the Budget and Taxation Committee/Education, Energy, and Environment Committee members. I am Dr. William Reid, and I reside in Frederick, Maryland. I serve as an Executive Board Member of the Rural Maryland Council, a leader and board member of Progressive Maryland, and the Chair of Frederick Progressives. I strongly oppose Senate Bill 429, which would significantly cut the promised education funding under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

This bill threatens the very investments our state has committed to making—investments in our students, our teachers, and the future of our communities. Cutting per-pupil foundation funding risks larger class sizes, fewer instructional materials, and reduced critical student services. Already stretched thin, teachers will likely leave the profession, deepening the educator shortage. Additionally, SB429 will delay crucial funding for community schools, further widening the achievement gap and depriving vulnerable students of the necessary educational support. Schools expecting to receive Concentration of Poverty grants will lack the resources for mental health services, after-school programs, and multilingual student support. Maryland promised to uplift and strengthen our education system with the Blueprint. This bill weakens that promise when schools need support the most. In Frederick County alone, we stand to lose \$3.3 million in community school funding between 2027 and 2031, with similar losses across other counties.

Instead of cutting funding, we must prioritize progressive revenue solutions like *Fair Share Maryland* to ensure we meet our commitments to students, educators, and families. The future of our schools, communities, and state depends on fully funding the Blueprint. I urge you to vote **no** on Senate Bill 429 and stand with those who believe in keeping Maryland's promise to its students. Thank you.

Written Testimony on SB 429 _ HB 504 - Maryland St

Uploaded by: Joshua Michael

Position: INFO

February 19, 2025

The Honorable Guy Guzzone
Chair, Senate Budget & Taxation Committee

The Honorable Ben Barnes
Chair, House Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Brian Feldman
Chair, Senate Education, Energy, and the
Environment Committee

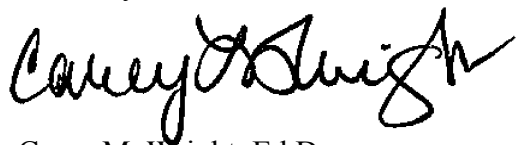
The Honorable Vanessa Atterbeary
Chair, House Ways and Means Committee

RE: Letter of Information – Senate Bill 429 and House Bill 504 – Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act

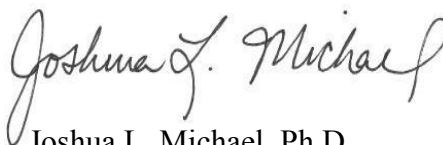
Dear Chairs Guzzone, Barnes, Feldman, and Atterbeary, and members of the Senate Budget & Taxation, Senate Education, Energy, and Environment, House Appropriations, and House Ways and Means Committees:

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), led by the State Superintendent and the State Board of Education, stands deeply committed to realizing the promise of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future for providing a world-class education for children from all backgrounds in Maryland. As leaders in implementing the Blueprint, we focus on ensuring that every student is safe, supported, and connected in our schools, that they receive a strong foundation in literacy and numeracy, and that we are preparing them for success in college and their future careers. We believe the Blueprint pointed us in the right direction four years ago, and, in order to stay on that trajectory, we must continue to adapt the Blueprint to meet the realities of public education today. Therefore, we offer perspective on policy proposals related to the Blueprint intended to improve outcomes for students across Maryland. Outlined here is information on education policy matters related to Senate Bill 429 / House Bill 504.

Sincerely,



Carey M. Wright, Ed.D
State Superintendent of Schools
Maryland State Department of Education

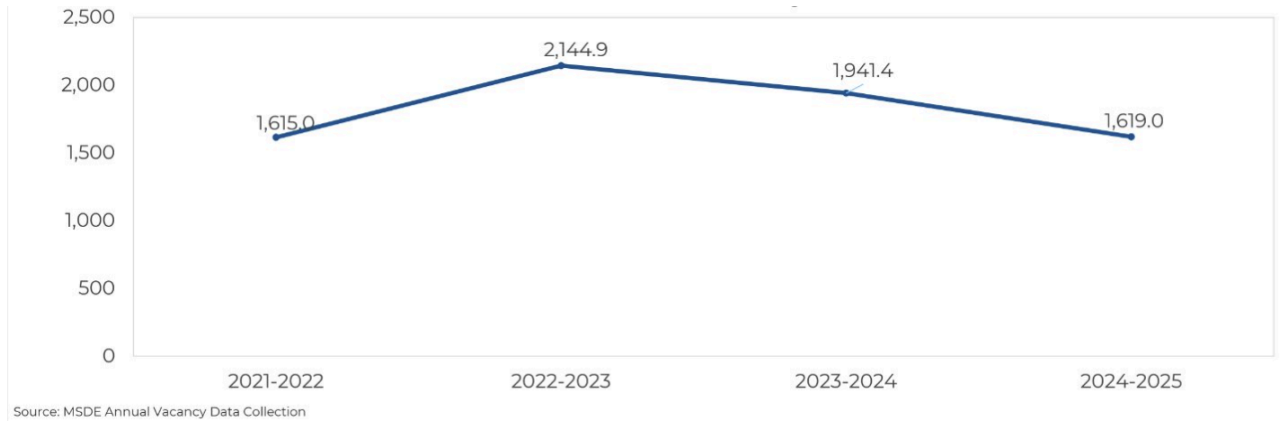


Joshua L. Michael, Ph.D
President
Maryland State Board of Education

Teacher Shortage

Districts across the country face widespread teacher shortages, including those in Maryland. According to the Learning Policy Institute State Teacher Shortage 2024 Update, estimates indicate that, at a minimum, 406,964 positions nationally were either unfilled or filled by teachers not fully certified for their assignments, representing about 1 in 8 of all teaching positions.¹ At the start of this school year, there were 1,619 unfilled teaching positions and 6,074 positions filled by conditionally licensed educators.² While the number of teacher vacancies has declined 25% over the past three years, one in ten Maryland classrooms remains either staffed by a substitute teacher or an unlicensed teacher. And one in three new teachers hired in Maryland is not a licensed teacher before entering the classroom.

Figure 1: Teacher Vacancies on the First Day of School



Furthermore, the teacher shortage disproportionately impacts our students in high-poverty schools. Inexperienced teachers, teachers teaching outside of their field, and teachers who hold emergency and provisional licenses are placed in high-poverty schools at higher percentage rates than in low-poverty schools.³ Despite incentives to recruit more Nationally Board Certified teachers to low-performing schools, only 12%, or 264, of Maryland’s distinguished teachers opt to teach in our schools that need the most support. Further, NBC teachers are underrepresented in community schools, schools serving our highest-poverty communities.

¹ Tan, T. S., Arellano, I., & Patrick, S. K. (2024). State teacher shortages 2024 update: Teaching positions left vacant or filled by teachers without full certification. Learning Policy Institute. <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/state-teacher-shortages-vacancy-2024>

²Teacher Recruitment, Development, and Retention Report to AIB and MSBOE, January 25, 2025

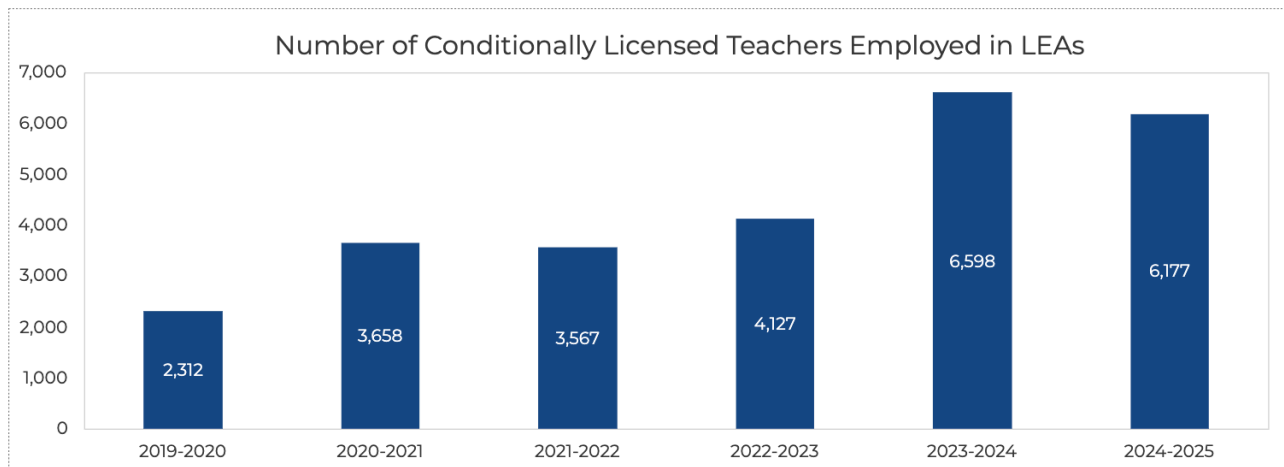
³ 2023-2024 LEA Staff Data collected through the 2024-2025 MSDE Annual Staff Data Collection

Table 1: Teacher Qualifications - High and Low Poverty Schools, SY 2023-2024

Category	All Schools	High Poverty Schools	Low Poverty Schools	Difference (Percentage Points)
Inexperienced Teachers	17.8%	22.7%	12.8%	9.9
Out-of-Field Teachers	11.2%	15.8%	6.2%	9.6
Teachers with Emergency or Provisional Licenses	9.9%	14.6%	5.1%	9.5

Like many other states, Maryland allows local education agencies (LEAs) to issue a conditional teacher license to an individual who has not yet met the requirements for professional certification if the position cannot be filled with a licensed teacher. The issuance of conditional teacher licenses in Maryland increased significantly from 2019 to 2023 (Figure 2).⁴

Figure 2: Number of Conditionally Licensed Teachers Statewide

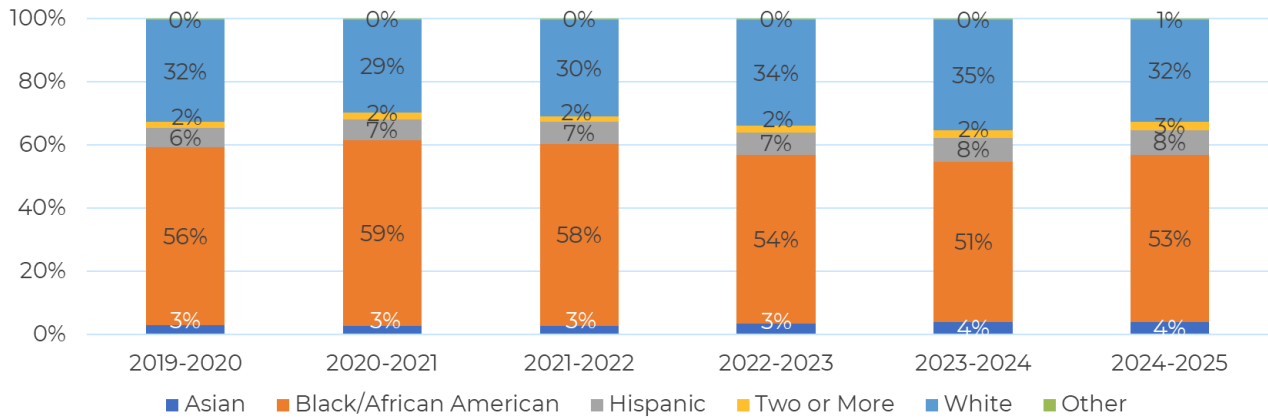


Source: MSDE Staff Data Collection and MSDE Educator Licensure System.

Of critical importance is the fact that conditionally licensed teachers are significantly more diverse than traditionally prepared teachers and more closely mirror Maryland’s student population. Over 60% of our conditionally licensed teachers are Black and Brown educators (Figure 3) and are more often from the community of the students they serve. This presents an opportunity to support and develop leaders from your neighborhoods who have stepped up to serve students in our public schools in your districts.

⁴ MSDE Annual Staff Data Collection.

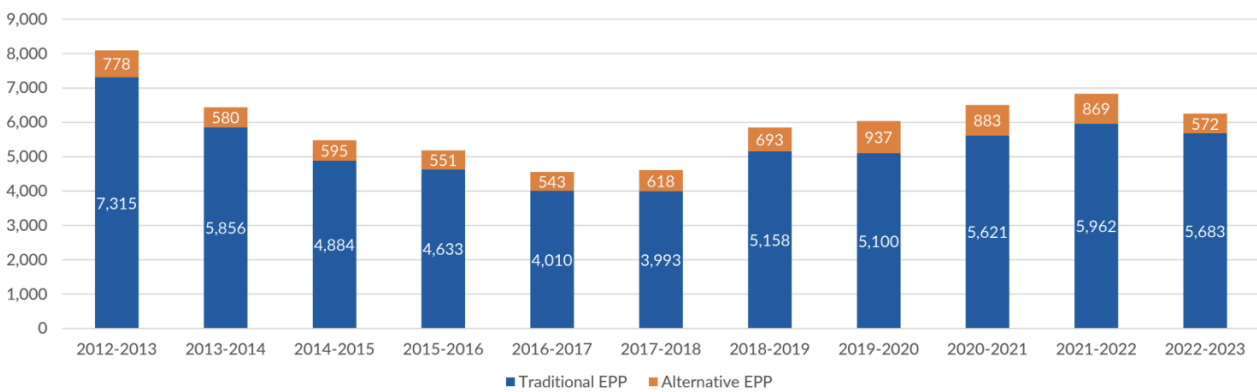
Figure 3: Maryland Conditional Licensure Demographic Trends



For many years, conditional licensure was predominantly limited to a subset of hard-to-staff districts and to specialized licensure areas such as CTE instructors and certain STEM disciplines. Today, conditional licensure has proliferated across the state. As the number of imported teachers has declined due to the expanding national teacher shortage, over 60% of our conditionally licensed teachers are Black and Brown educators and are more often from the community of the students they serve. These community leaders have answered the call to serve in our public schools.

Enrollment in Maryland educator preparation programs has increased since 2016-2017, reversing a trend, but our programs are not yet producing more graduates (Figure 4). To date, no more than 1 in 5 of our teacher vacancies is filled with graduates from one of Maryland’s traditional educator preparation programs. We continue to be a net importer of teachers from other states, but we are importing fewer licensed educators than in past years.

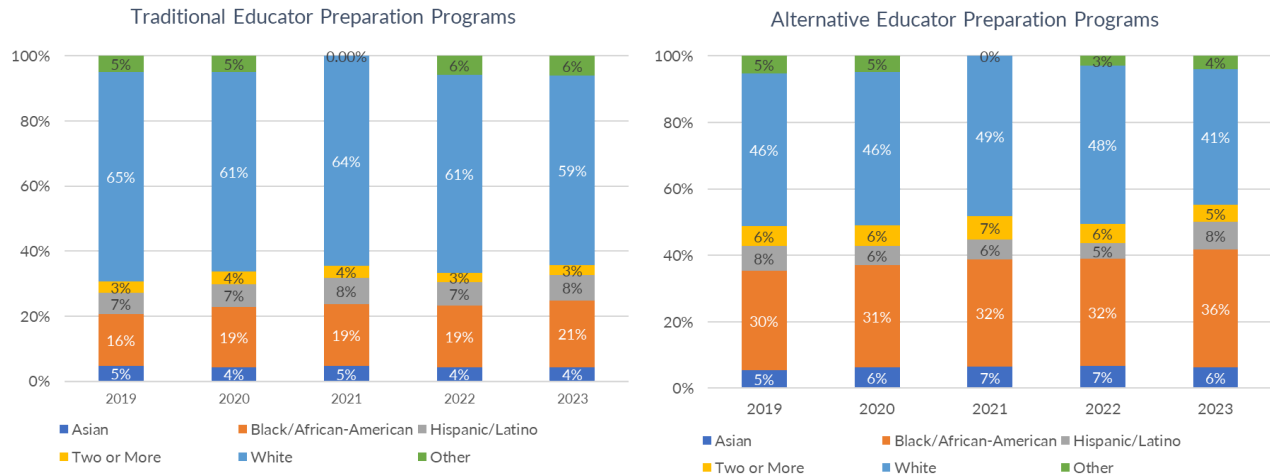
Figure 4: Teacher Preparation Enrollment Trends



Source: Title II Reports (title2.ed.gov)

While Maryland’s student population is diverse, the Maryland traditional educator preparation program pipeline and overall teacher workforce is predominantly white and female. Research shows that teachers of color contribute to better outcomes for all students, including improved social-emotional, behavioral, and academic results. One randomized control trial found that teachers of color positively impact 4th and 5th grade students in these areas⁵.

Figure 5: Maryland Teacher Preparation Enrollment Demographics⁶



In Maryland, enrollment in alternative Resident Teacher preparation programs is more diverse than in traditional educator preparation programs (Figure 5). Resident Teachers spend a minimum of one year in the classroom employed on a Resident Teacher License while they receive on-the-job training, support, and mentorship from the educator preparation provider. These differ from traditional programs in that alternative preparation leads to teacher licensure, but not necessarily to a degree. Resident Teacher programs allow an individual to begin teaching and receive a salary much earlier in the program, and they usually cost much less than traditional routes. While Resident Teacher programs are a cost-effective way to diversify the teacher workforce, there are currently only 13 programs - all located within the central corridor of the State. The percentage of completers from Resident Teacher programs is relatively small. For example, during the 2022-2023 school year, only 199 of the 1,768 teacher graduates were from Resident Teacher programs (see Figure 6).

As we work to achieve the Blueprint’s vision for high-quality and diverse teachers in every school, we must prepare our conditionally licensed teachers to become fully licensed.

We also need to provide opportunities for others who are dedicated to serving students, including our educational support professionals (ESPs). In 2024, MSDE partnered with LEAs, the Maryland

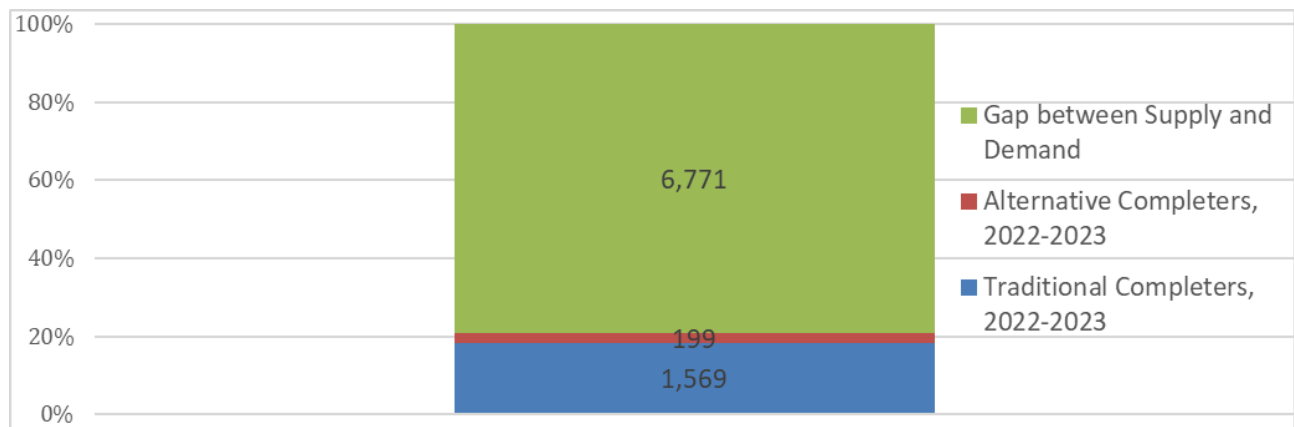
⁵ Blazar, D. (2021). Teachers of Color, Culturally Responsive Teaching, and Student Outcomes: Experimental Evidence from the Random Assignment of Teachers to Classes. EdWorkingPaper No. 21-501. Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University.

⁶ Title II Annual Teacher Preparation State Report

State Education Association (MSEA), the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), and the Public School Superintendents’ Association of Maryland (PSSAM) to distribute and encourage the completion of a survey for ESPs across Maryland. When asked the question, “Would you like to pursue a career in teaching or another certificated role in your local school system,” 3,576 ESPs responded “yes” and an additional 2,256 were unsure⁷. Paraprofessionals (teaching aides, library/media center aides, and other aides) make up 13,423 of the ESP population in Maryland. Their average salary is \$36,139.93, and their median salary is \$34,207⁸. Although paraprofessionals are primed for recruitment into the teaching profession, most are not able to take a leave of absence from their job to complete a student teaching experience.

While enrollment in teacher preparation programs has increased since 2017, Maryland programs are not producing enough graduates to meet teacher demand. Maryland programs produced 1,768 teacher candidates in 2023⁹; however, at the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year, there were 8,539 teaching positions left unfilled or filled with unqualified individuals¹⁰. Assuming every 2023 Maryland graduate chose to work in Maryland public schools the following year, the state would still have a gap of 6,771 qualified teachers.

Figure 6: Maryland Supply of Teachers vs. Demand for Teachers



⁷ Noncertificated Education Support Professionals Joint Chairman’s Report pg. 182, December 2024

⁸ Noncertificated Education Support Professionals Joint Chairman’s Report pg. 182, December 2024

⁹ 2022-2023 Title II Teacher Preparation Report

¹⁰ 2023-2024 MSDE Vacancy Collection; 2023-2024 MSDE Staff Data Collection

Collaborative Time

The Blueprint emphasizes the need for more time for educators to focus on instructional planning, coaching, and student engagement outside of the classroom through a policy provision referred to as "collaborative time". Also known as the "60/40 rule", the policy seeks to alter the typical ratio of 80% a teacher's time classroom teaching and other 20% professional responsibilities. This approach provides educators with more dedicated time to collaborate, enhance their skills, and more effectively support students by creating additional opportunities for professional development, small group instruction, co-teaching, and family involvement.

We believe more collaborative time and professional learning is critical to improving the working conditions for the educators we hope to attract into teaching and retain. Evidence shows effective, job-embedded professional development is a critical strategy for improving teacher effectiveness.¹¹

Yet, the teacher shortage makes the implementation of collaborative time, as first envisioned by the Blueprint, impossible to implement without sacrificing instruction for students and risking negative impacts on student achievement. The Blueprint calls for hiring over 2,000 new teachers this coming year and 13,000 more teachers across the state over the 8 year phase-in of the policy provision. Absent a legislative remedy this year, LEAs must begin negotiating terms to adjust teacher workload for the upcoming school year.

We must ensure that the collaborative time policy does not unintentionally decrease instructional time for students or negatively impact academic performance. To reduce teacher instructional time to 60% from 80%, while holding constant the number of teachers in Maryland, can only be achieved by covering more classes with unlicensed teachers or increasing class size. Additionally, as the demand for teachers rises, we must be cautious that efforts to fill vacancies do not unfairly pull educators from districts and schools who serve students living in poverty. Lower-income schools already experience higher teacher turnover than more affluent schools, and increased competition for teachers could exacerbate this disparity. While some districts have expressed readiness to implement collaborative time, these districts are our highest-income communities.

Reversing the teacher shortage is a national problem that could take years, and we cannot wait to improve collaborative time for teachers. Senate Bill 429 / House Bill 504 includes grants for schools to develop their own models for collaborative time, such as more paid teacher collaborative time after school. This type of approach could be implemented now with the teachers we have. Therefore, we support the implementation of pilot programs enabling schools to develop innovative collaborative time models while we invest in Grow Your Own programs and expand state and local professional development for teachers.

¹¹ Taylor, J. A., Getty, S. R., Kowalski, S. M., Wilson, C. D., Carlson, J., & Van Scotter, P. (2015). An Efficacy Trial of Research-Based Curriculum Materials With Curriculum-Based Professional Development. *American Educational Research Journal*, 52(5), 984-1017. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831215585962>

Teacher Recruitment and Grow Your Own Programs

Grow Your Own (GYO) programs are focused on recruiting and preparing community-based candidates to teach in their local schools. These programs increase retention and promote strong connections between teachers and the students and families they serve. This involves recruiting teacher candidates from nontraditional populations who are more likely to reflect the diversity of students in the district. Senate Bill 429 / House Bill 504 expands and fully funds the existing Grow Your Own Grant Program at a scale that we believe will have a sizable impact on the teacher shortage in the next five to ten years.

The amendments to the existing program allow for more flexibility and prioritize programs that emphasize paid, on-the-job training such as teacher apprenticeships and teacher residencies. A registered teacher apprenticeship is an "earn and learn" model that provides structured, paid, on-the-job learning experiences combined with related instruction. Teacher residency programs integrate teacher preparation coursework with training in the classroom as part of their curriculum. Both models require a partnership between the local education agency and the educator preparation program and emphasize clinical experience under the guidance of a mentor teacher.

Maryland must invest in teacher recruitment initiatives and flexible GYO teacher preparation programs that allow local education agencies to develop recruitment pathways for nontraditional populations like ESPs, career changers, and community members to ensure Maryland students have access to diverse and highly qualified teachers. Having GYO programs that leverage flexible models of teacher preparation is critical to the success of recruiting ESPs into the teaching profession.

MSDE supports the expansion of GYO teacher preparation programs that allow individuals who are committed to Maryland's children and families to earn an income while they prepare for teacher licensure.

In addition to expanding GYO programs, MSDE believes that a national marketing campaign can help Maryland to meet the moment, recruiting a diverse pool of highly qualified teachers who are passionate about working in a state that supports public education. Identifying individuals interested in teaching through digital marketing, public service announcements, and direct outreach is a beginning; however, to ensure a return on investment, prospective teachers must be cultivated with one-on-one mentoring, inspirational multi-media, informational guides, events, and experiences. Prospective teachers need assistance and support as they navigate the process of being trained, licensed, and hired. Senate Bill 429 / House Bill 504 supports this by allocating funding for a teacher recruitment campaign. Partnering with a national education nonprofit with experience in guiding state education agencies is critical to the success of the initiative.

While Maryland has historically been dependent on educators prepared out of state to staff its classrooms, the number of licenses issued to applicants from other states peaked at 63% in 2022¹². Bringing teachers from other states into Maryland is likely to continue to be key to our teacher workforce. Given this, we need to consider policy options that streamline the process of highly-qualified, experienced teachers obtaining their Maryland teaching license.

The Council of State Governments (CSG), in partnership with the Department of Defense (DoD) and the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) developed an interstate occupational licensure compact called the Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact (ITMC). Interstate compacts are constitutionally authorized, legislatively enacted, legally binding agreements among states.¹³ The ITMC allows teachers to use an eligible license held in a compact member state to be granted an equivalent license in another compact member state.

The ITMC utilizes a model different from that of other interstate teacher licensure compacts. Compact Member states submit licenses that are eligible for the compact and meet a set of criteria outlined in the legislation. To be eligible, a license must require a bachelor's degree and completion of a state-approved program for teacher licensure like a teacher preparation program at a college or university. Furthermore, for a license to be eligible under the compact it must be unencumbered (i.e., not restricted, probationary, provisional, substitute, or temporary). Teachers holding a compact-eligible license can apply for licensure in another member state and receive the closest equivalent license without submitting additional materials, taking state-specific exams, or completing additional coursework.

The compact does not alter member states' ability to regulate the teaching profession or teacher licensure; however, member states do take on the responsibility of granting licenses to out-of-state teachers who hold an eligible license. While reciprocity is granted for initial certification requirements, Maryland's standards apply upon application of renewal requirements and the educator career ladder.

The ITMC is governed by an intergovernmental agency known as the Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact Commission (The Commission). The Commission is composed of one commissioner from each member state who is the principal administrative officer of the state licensing authority or their designee. The Commission holds regular, public meetings and has the ability to create rules and bylaws to effectuate the compact. Maryland would be the 13th state to join. Several other states are considering legislation to join the Compact. It is critical for Maryland to not be left behind.

¹² Maryland Educator Certification Systems

¹³ National Center for Interstate Compacts: <https://compacts.csg.org/our-work/ics/>

Eligibility to participate in the ITMC requires enacting the model legislation¹⁴ developed by the Council for State Governments National Center for Interstate Compacts. Senate Bill 429 / House Bill 504 paves the way for Maryland to enter the ITMC by codifying the model legislation and amending the laws that would prevent Maryland from participating in the compact.

¹⁴ [Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact Model Legislation](#), National Center for Interstate Compacts.

Community Schools

A community school is a public school that serves as a hub for students, families, and the broader community by integrating academics, health and social services, youth and community development, and community engagement. These schools adopt a whole-child approach to education, ensuring that students receive comprehensive support to succeed both inside and outside the classroom¹⁵. Wraparound services - including extended learning time, healthcare, mental health support, and family engagement - address barriers to learning and create environments where students thrive. Through the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, Maryland has emerged as a national leader in implementing community schools.

Maryland is beginning to show academic progress; 4th grade reading scores now rank 20th in the nation, up from 40th just two years prior. However, we must ensure our efforts to support students living in poverty improve outcomes; our economically disadvantaged students rank 42nd in 4th grade reading when compared to like peers nationally. We believe the policy provisions pertaining to community schools in Senate Bill 429 / House Bill 504 will further efforts to ensure efficacy of this initiative.

Nationally, research consistently indicates that community schools contribute to improved student achievement, attendance, graduation rates, and family engagement while reducing disciplinary issues and addressing chronic absenteeism. A synthesis of 143 studies confirmed that community schools showed statistically significant improvements in test scores, GPA, and high school graduation rates.¹⁶

A RAND Corporation study on the New York City Community Schools Initiative found that community schools reduced chronic absenteeism by 5.6 percentage points in the first year, leading later to measurable gains in math and ELA scores.¹⁷ Research conducted by the Annenberg Institute at Brown University confirmed that attendance improvements in community schools often precede and predict long-term academic gains, underscoring the importance of holistic interventions.¹⁸ Community schools may help close opportunity gaps for marginalized students. Some models, such as City Connects in Boston, have successfully reduced disparities for low-income families, dual-language learners, and students with disabilities.¹⁹

¹⁵ Coalition for Community Schools. (2021). *What is a Community School?* Institute for Educational Leadership. Retrieved from <https://www.communityschools.org>.

¹⁶ Goldman, B., Gracie, J., & Porter, S. R. (2023, October). *Can individualized student supports improve economic outcomes for children in high-poverty schools?* Harvard University.

¹⁷ Johnston, W. R., Engberg, J., Opper, I. M., Sontag-Padilla, L., & Xenakis, L. (2020). *Illustrating the Promise of Community Schools: An Assessment of the Impact of the New York City Community Schools Initiative*. RAND Corporation.

¹⁸ Covelli, L., Engberg, J., & Opper, I. M. (2022). *Leading Indicators of Long-Term Success in Community Schools: Evidence from New York City*. EdWorkingPaper No. 22-669. Annenberg Institute at Brown University.

¹⁹ Bohannon, A., Owusu, I., Ilamaran, A., & Hernandez, M. (2025). *Community Schools: An Overview of the Evidence*. NORC at the University of Chicago.

Community schools provide a strong return on investment, with estimates suggesting a \$3 to \$15 social return for every dollar invested.²⁰ These benefits extend beyond students to their families and communities, improving economic stability, access to healthcare, and overall well-being.

Community schools have demonstrated positive economic returns by increasing student earnings in adulthood, as found in studies conducted by Harvard University.²¹

In Maryland, we are beginning to see positive impacts of the community school model. Analysis indicates that community schools operating for five or more years have statistically significantly higher attendance rates than non-community schools.²² Surveys conducted by the Maryland Center for Community Schools at Towson University shows that students in community schools feel more engaged, supported, and safe; have stronger staff-student relationships; receive more academic and behavioral supports; and show greater respect for diversity - when compared to non-community schools.²³

A recent analysis of Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP) data shows that schools with a poverty level greater than 80%, which have been implementing the community school strategy for a longer period of time, experienced an increase of 6 percentage points in literacy performance between 2022 and 2024. In contrast, schools with a poverty level below 40% saw an increase of only 3 percentage points.

Table 2: MCAP Literacy Proficiency by School Poverty Level

School Poverty Level	ELA 2022	ELA 2023	ELA 2024	Change (in percentage points)
Low (0-39%)	60.3%	62.5%	63.1%	+2.8
Modest (40-59%)	37.3%	39.1%	39.2%	+2.0
Concentrated Poverty (60-79%)	25.0%	27.5%	27.9%	+2.9
Highly Concentrated Poverty (80-100%)	13.0%	16.6%	19.4%	+6.4

School poverty categories are defined using 2024 data with the same schools included in each category in all three years. Low poverty schools are defined as 0-40% economically disadvantaged students, Modest schools are 40-<60%, Concentration of Poverty schools are 60-80%, and High Concentration of Poverty schools are 80-100%.

²⁰ Goldman, B., Gracie, J., & Porter, S. R. (2023, October). *Can individualized student supports improve economic outcomes for children in high-poverty schools?* Harvard University.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Durham, R., & Connolly, F. *Baltimore Community Schools Evaluation Report*. (2017).

²³ Durham, R., Shiller, J., & McDowell, J. (2024). *Building Better Learning Environments: The Positive Impact of Community Schools on School Climate*. Maryland Coalition for Community Schools. Winter 2024-25 Research Brief.

One community school that started implementing the community school strategy over the past four years had a chronic absenteeism rate of 51.4% at the end of the 2020-2021 school year. By the end of the 2023-2024 school year, this percentage decreased to 20.8%. Another community school recorded a chronic absenteeism rate of 52.8% in the 2020-2021 school year, which fell to 22.5% by the end of the 2023-2024 school year. During the 2023-2024 school year, 10 community schools in Wicomico County provided over 54,000 pounds of food to students and families through food pantries.

The Office of Community Schools at MSDE plays a pivotal role in advancing this work by:

- Developing tools and resources for community school leaders to ensure consistency and effectiveness in implementation;
- Providing continuous technical assistance and professional learning opportunities for community school coordinators;
- Partnering with national experts and leveraging partnerships with local leaders to facilitate capacity-building opportunities and offer level-setting meetings that align stakeholders' understanding of the strategy; and
- Working alongside the Governor's Office of Children to identify opportunities to strengthen community schools by connecting them with state agency resources.

Partnerships with the Maryland State Education Association (MSEA) and the National Education Association (NEA) provide structured support through the *Virtual Community School Implementation Institute* and other professional learning programs tailored to the needs of community school coordinators and stakeholders.

Since the inception of the Concentration of Poverty Grants in Fiscal Year 2020, the number of eligible schools has dramatically increased from 193 to 617 community schools across 23 out of 24 LEAs statewide, now representing over 45% of Maryland's public schools. By fiscal year 2026, 715 schools are projected to be designated as community schools, with now more than half of Maryland's public schools receiving this designation.

Table 3: New Community Schools by School Year

School Year	Number of New Community Schools
2019-2020	207
2020-2021	40
2021-2022	45
2022-2023	54
2023-2024	101
2024-2025	170

The expansion of community schools by LEA can be found in the Appendix C. The number of community schools at each poverty level, by LEA, can be found in Appendix D (Fiscal Year 2025) and Appendix E (Fiscal Year 2026). Appendix F outlines the level of funding allocated for community schools each year, broken down by grant type (personnel grant and per-pupil grant).

Maryland’s ambitious expansion of the community schools strategy has outpaced the infrastructure needed for full and effective implementation. We have seen uneven implementation across the state. A 2023 review of Maryland’s community schools conducted by the National Center for Community Schools²⁴ found that school and district staff lacked sufficient knowledge of the community school model and the State’s vision for implementation.

Some community schools were not able to spend down all of their CPG funds. An audit²⁵ involving eight LEAs by the Maryland Office of the Inspector General for Education revealed that clear policies were not provided and that there was insufficient training on the management of CPG funds. According to the audit report, this resulted in \$12.3 million in unused funds from Fiscal Year 2020 to Fiscal Year 2022, with LEAs facing challenges in determining allowable expenditures.

A 2024 Community Schools Legislative Report²⁶ recommends additional support to establish school steering committees, target interventions for absenteeism, and leverage data collection tools for improved accountability and impact analysis starting in August 2025.

²⁴ [Maryland Community Schools Technical Assistance Assets and Needs Assessment](#) (2024), National Center for Community Schools.

²⁵ [Investigative Audit 23-0001-A: Management and Oversight of the Concentration of Poverty Grant](#) (2024), Office of the Inspector General for Education.

²⁶ [Community Schools Legislative Report](#) (2024), Maryland State Department of Education.

Senate Bill 429 / House Bill 504 makes amendments that address implementation challenges, further develop and promote evidence-based practices amongst community school leaders, and ensure funding is used effectively and strategically to meet community needs.

Additional funding alone will not drive effective implementation. As proposed, Senate Bill 429 / House Bill 504 includes policies that would strengthen our community schools program:

- **Evaluation:** Invests in conducting a multi-year process of evaluating the outcomes of implementing the community schools model across the state.
- **Technical Assistance:** Provide community school practitioners with robust learning opportunities and on-the-ground implementation support. Builds on existing partnerships with Maryland institutions of higher education and brings on national partners to provide tiered support in implementing best practices.
- **Expanded Ability for District-Level Coordination:** Enables LEAs with at least two community schools to utilize a portion of their funding for district-level coordination in collaboration with the eligible schools while simultaneously increasing accountability through MSDE approval of CPG budgets.
- **Broadened Funds Usage:** Grants MSDE the authority to adjust the kinds of expenditures that are allowable based on evidence-based practices and demonstrated needs.
- **Additional Staffing:** Expands beyond the current two-person MSDE Community Schools team to enable differentiated support across districts.

The Blueprint's expansion of the community school model is evidence-based and being implemented with intention across the State. A program evaluation will improve the efficacy of implementation, assessing where the model is being used effectively and where implementation adjustments are needed. While much of the existing research on Maryland's community school strategy has focused on Baltimore City, a statewide evaluation is essential to understand its impact across diverse geographic and demographic contexts fully. Maryland's LEAs are implementing community schools in urban settings like Baltimore City, suburban communities like Howard County, and rural areas like Caroline County, each with unique challenges and opportunities.

A comprehensive evaluation will provide critical insights into how the community school model operates in these distinct settings, ensuring that policies and funding strategies are tailored to the specific needs of each region. By assessing implementation across urban, suburban, and rural districts, Maryland can develop data-driven solutions that maximize impact, enhance best practices, and ensure equitable access to resources for all students, regardless of where they live. A statewide approach will position Maryland as a national leader in evidence-based, adaptable community school implementation, demonstrating how this strategy can thrive in any setting when adequately supported.

Senate Bill 429 / House Bill 504 calls for a statewide evaluation and the launch of a technical assistance network that would enhance the ability of schools to track progress, refine their

approaches, and continuously improve outcomes for students and families. These measures would help Maryland fully capitalize on the substantial investments already being made into community schools, maximizing their impact on student achievement, attendance, and family engagement.

Another challenge that LEAs have is under current law, only LEAs with 40 or more community schools are permitted to coordinate services and pool resources at the district level. This allows these LEAs to negotiate better service agreements, streamline implementation, and drive sustainable improvement in student outcomes. Some examples of district-wide uses of CPG funding from Baltimore City Public Schools include:

- Ensuring that all traditional schools have at least one full-time social worker;
- Funding one of two staff positions at the pre-kindergarten Judy Centers;
- Supporting attendance and positive school climates by funding district-level attendance positions, school-based wholeness specialists, and vendors providing mentoring support; and
- Supporting community schools with filling teacher vacancies by funding the Teach for America and Baltimore City Teacher Residency programs.

Senate Bill 429 / House Bill 504 extends this same ability to offer district-level community school support to LEAs with between 2 and 39 eligible schools. Senate Bill 429/House Bill 504 allows these LEAs to use Concentration of Poverty Grant (CPG) funding for contracted services and providing resources and supports more efficiently.

Furthermore, Senate Bill 429 / House Bill 504 requires MSDE to collaborate with LEAs to develop, review, and approve comprehensive implementation plans, reinforcing the use of a clear and sound strategy across the state. Community schools would establish annual measurable goals aligned with the priorities identified in their assets and needs assessments. This accountability measure ensures that each school remains focused on targeted improvements that address student and community needs. Additionally, community school coordinators and principals would be responsible for monitoring progress and utilizing data-driven approaches to continuously refine their strategies. This will ensure greater accountability, stronger oversight, and long-term sustainability while maintaining flexibility to address local needs.

Additionally, Senate Bill 429 / House Bill 504 expands the allowable use of CPG funds to include early literacy and numeracy tutoring, incentives for experienced teachers, and initiatives to address chronic absenteeism - providing targeted interventions that directly impact student success.

By expanding MSDE's capacity to support community schools through additional staffing and regulatory authority, the state will be well-positioned to implement best practices, tailor strategies to the unique needs of each community, and provide national leadership in this transformative educational model. With these enhancements, Maryland is poised to set the gold standard for community schools nationwide, demonstrating how a well-resourced, data-driven, and

equity-focused strategy can drive meaningful improvements in education and community well-being.

Maryland's diverse educational landscape also necessitates expanded staffing beyond the current two-person team at the MSDE Office of Community Schools. Increased personnel within MSDE would enhance the agency's ability to provide differentiated support tailored to the varying needs of community schools across different districts.

The community school provisions outlined in Senate Bill 429 / House Bill 504 will strengthen Maryland's commitment to equitable education by fostering deep, systemic collaboration between schools, families, and communities. By increasing support for this proven strategy, MSDE will be better positioned to cultivate relationships with community partners, facilitate resource-sharing, and ensure the continued success of students in Maryland's community schools.

Educator Development and Retention

Pillar 3 of the Blueprint, focused on College and Career Readiness, is built on an aligned PreK-12 instructional system, starting with a strong foundation in early literacy and numeracy. Similarly, Pillar 2 calls for High Quality and Diverse Teachers and Leaders including systemic professional development that helps teachers improve the performance of their students. We support policy proposals embedded within Senate Bill 429 / House Bill 504 that accelerate progress within these key pillars of the Blueprint.

Academic Excellence Program

Academic outcomes in Maryland reveal substantial gaps in literacy and mathematics proficiency, especially for students from historically disadvantaged backgrounds. The 2023-24 school year data on the Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP) highlight these disparities:

- **Literacy:** Elementary school students had an English Language Arts (ELA) proficiency rate of only 47.2%, with stark gaps between student groups. Students with disabilities had a proficiency rate of 12.7%, multilingual learners showed 23.8% proficiency, and economically disadvantaged students had a 29.5% proficiency rate.
- **Mathematics:** Elementary students displayed a 34.8% proficiency rate. Middle school proficiency was lower, with only 21% of students demonstrating proficiency. The gaps were even more pronounced for multilingual learners (6.3% proficiency), students with disabilities (6.8% proficiency), and economically disadvantaged students (10.9% proficiency).

Another important measure of student achievement is the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), better known as the Nation's Report Card. NAEP is a congressionally mandated assessment of fourth and eighth grade reading and math performance given every two years. NAEP is the only test administered nationwide that allows direct comparison of student achievement across states because all students take the same test. Maryland NAEP scores have dropped dramatically over the last decade. In 2013, Maryland was among the top two highest-performing states on NAEP. By 2022, our ranking had fallen to 40th. From 2022 to 2024, Maryland students demonstrated real progress in reading and modest improvement in math. Our 4th grade reading scores now rank 20th in the nation, up from 40th just two years prior. This is a promising indicator of improvement in early literacy.

Table 4: NAEP State Rankings, 2013-2024

Maryland	Rank (out of 50 states)					
	2013	2015	2017	2019	2022	2024
Grade 4 Reading	2	26	12	25	40	20
Grade 8 Reading	6	18	22	17	25	21
Grade 4 Math	16	29	23	33	42	39
Grade 8 Math	20	25	31	29	42	38
Grade 4 Reading	2	26	12	25	40	20

Figure 7 shows proficiency has declined in all grades and subject areas from 2013 to 2024, and proficiency rates in 2024 are still well below historical performance levels.

Figure 7: NAEP Proficiency Rates, 2013-2024

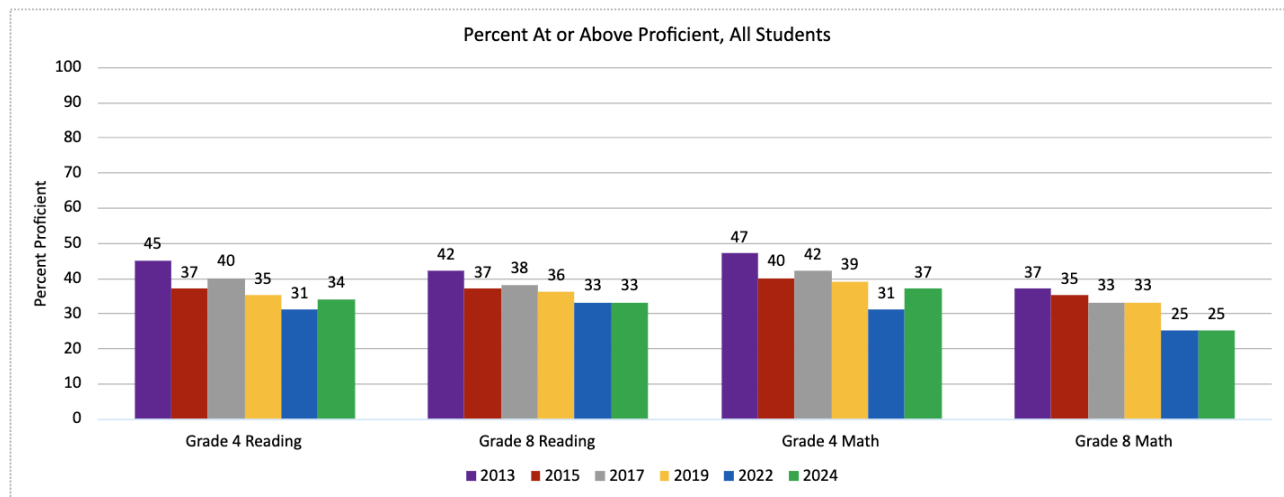
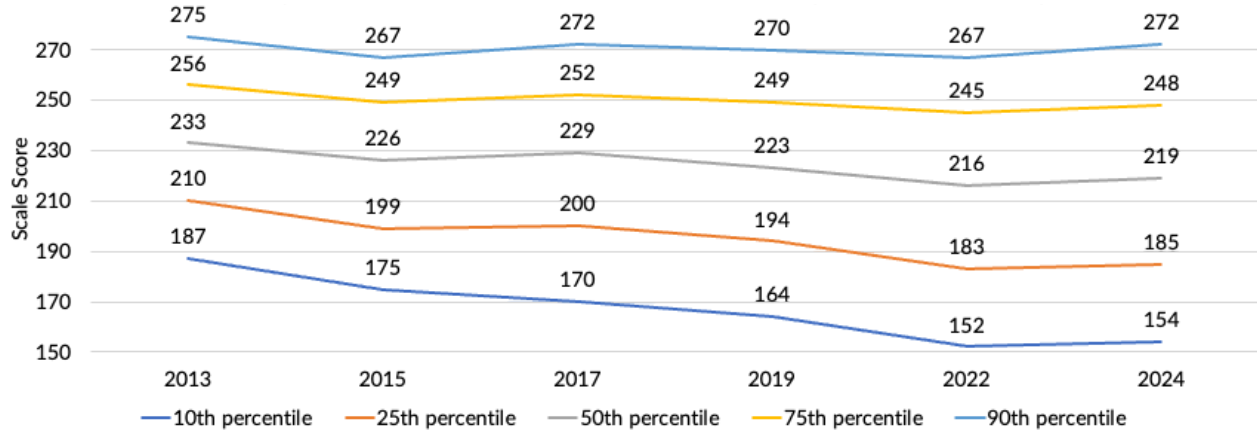


Figure 8 shows the scale score for NAEP in 4th grade reading at each of the benchmark percentile rankings. Each line represents the scale score for the 10th, 25th, 50th, 75th, and 90th percentile in terms of their performance. From 2013 to 2024, the gap between our highest- and lowest-performing students has widened over time. The scale score for our lowest-performing students (at the 10th percentile) has decreased over time. The same is true in 8th grade reading, 4th grade math, and 8th grade math. It will be important for us to monitor this and ensure that we are supporting our teachers to ensure they are prepared to deliver the high-quality core instruction and additional interventions needed to cultivate academic excellence among all learners.

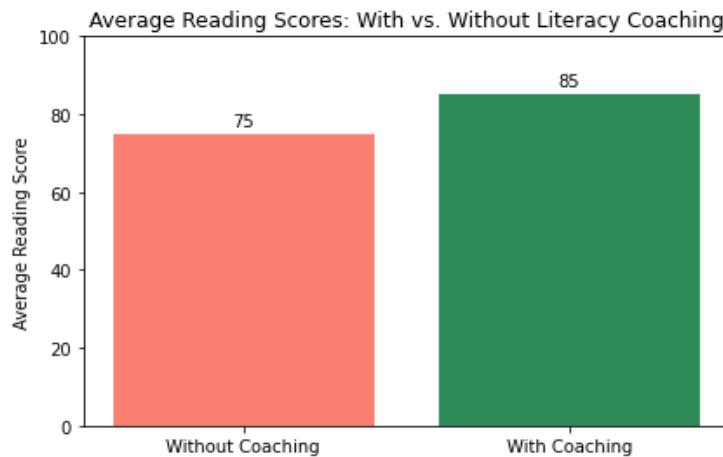
Figure 8: Average Maryland NAEP Scores by Percentile Grouping for Grade 4 Reading



These gaps underscore the need for additional support to improve student outcomes in both literacy and mathematics, particularly for underserved communities. The rising number of teachers on conditional licenses presents a challenge to ensuring high-quality instruction in our classrooms. Many teachers are underqualified or assigned to teach subjects outside their area of expertise. Local school systems need instructional coaches to support these teachers and their students.

In models such as Mississippi’s structured literacy coaching initiative, research has indicated that students in schools with literacy coaches achieved higher reading scores than those without such support. For example, one might see an approximate increase from an average score of 75 (without coaching) to 85 (with coaching).²⁷

Figure 9: Average Reading Scores in Mississippi’s Literacy Coaching Model²⁸

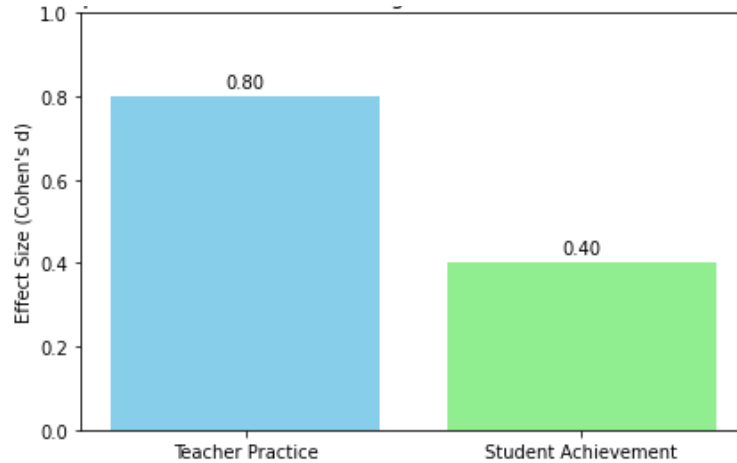


²⁷Folsom, J., Smith, K., Burk, K., & Oakley, N. (2016). Educator outcomes associated with implementation of Mississippi’s K–3 early literacy professional development initiative (NCEE 2016 0018). National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

²⁸Folsom, J., Smith, K., Burk, K., & Oakley, N. (2016). Educator outcomes associated with implementation of Mississippi’s K–3 early literacy professional development initiative (NCEE 2016 0018). National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

In addition, a meta-analysis by Kraft, Blazar, & Hogan (2018) found that instructional coaching has a *large positive effect* on teacher practices (often reflected as a higher effect size) and a *moderate positive effect* on student achievement.²⁹

Figure 10: Impact of Instructional Coaching on Teacher Practices and Student Achievement



Folsom, et al. (2016) found that literacy coaching, when based on a strong model (such as the Science of Reading), leads to improvements in teacher instructional strategies and increased student literacy outcomes because it provides ongoing, professional development that is deeply embedded in teachers' classroom work with students, specific to grade levels or academic content, and focused on research-based practices.

Jim Knight, a leading expert in instructional coaching, emphasizes that effective coaching is built on partnership, active listening, and evidence-based practices. His research highlights the importance of collaborative goal setting, where coaches and educators work as equals to identify areas for growth. Knight advocates for an approach grounded in principles such as equality, choice, voice, reflection, dialogue, and reciprocity. This approach ensures that coaching is not top-down but rather a collaborative process that values teacher expertise and fosters mutual learning. Knight stresses that coaching should be non-evaluative, creating a safe and supportive environment where teachers feel empowered to take risks, reflect honestly, and make meaningful improvements to their practice. By prioritizing teacher autonomy, trust, and continuous dialogue, effective coaching empowers educators to refine their practice and enhance student learning.³⁰

Traditional one-time workshops often fail to drive long-term instructional improvements. Research has consistently shown that professional development initiatives must be sustained and integrated into classroom practices to have lasting effects. Coaching, particularly when embedded in professional learning, has proven to be an effective method for ensuring continuous improvement among educators.

²⁹ Kraft, M. A., Blazar, D., & Hogan, D. (2018). *The effect of teacher coaching on instruction and achievement: A meta-analysis of the coaching literature*. *Review of Educational Research*, 88(4), 547–588. DOI: 10.3102/0034654318774303

³⁰ Knight, J. (2007). *Instructional Coaching: A Partnership Approach to Improving Instruction*. Corwin Press.

High-quality professional development is an investment in both student achievement and in our teacher workforce. It enhances teacher working conditions by fostering a sense of support, collaboration, and professional growth. Research from the Learning Policy Institute highlights that effective professional development improves instructional practices, leading to greater job satisfaction and lower attrition rates. Sustained learning opportunities allow teachers to refine their skills, adapt to evolving educational demands, and feel more confident in their roles. A study by Kraft & Papay (2014) found that teachers working in schools with strong professional learning environments showed greater long-term improvement in effectiveness and were more likely to remain in the profession.³¹ By prioritizing meaningful professional learning, schools can create a culture of continuous growth, reducing burnout and turnover while improving student outcomes.

Learning Forward’s Standards for Professional Learning provides a strong framework for instructional coaching.³² A meta-analysis conducted by the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders at the American Institutes for Research found that nearly all 2022 Standards had substantial positive effects on teacher instruction. Among the significant findings, improvements in instruction ranged from 0.42 standard deviations for Equity Foundations to 0.98 standard deviations for Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction. Similar trends were observed in student achievement, with positive average effects across all standards, as shown in the charts below.

³¹ Kraft, M. A., & Papay, J. P. (2014). Can Professional Environments in Schools Promote Teacher Development? Explaining Heterogeneity in Returns to Teaching Experience. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 36(4), 476–500. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0162373713519496>

³² Garrett, R., Zhang, Q., Citkowitz, M., & Burr, L. (2021). How Learning Forward’s Standards for Professional Learning Are Associated With Teacher Instruction and Student Achievement: A Meta-Analysis. https://www.air.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/Learning-Forward-Standards-for-Professional-Learning-Meta-Analysis-Report-December-2021_0.pdf

Figure 11: Average Effect Sizes of Teacher Instruction for Each 2022 Learning Forward Professional Learning Standard

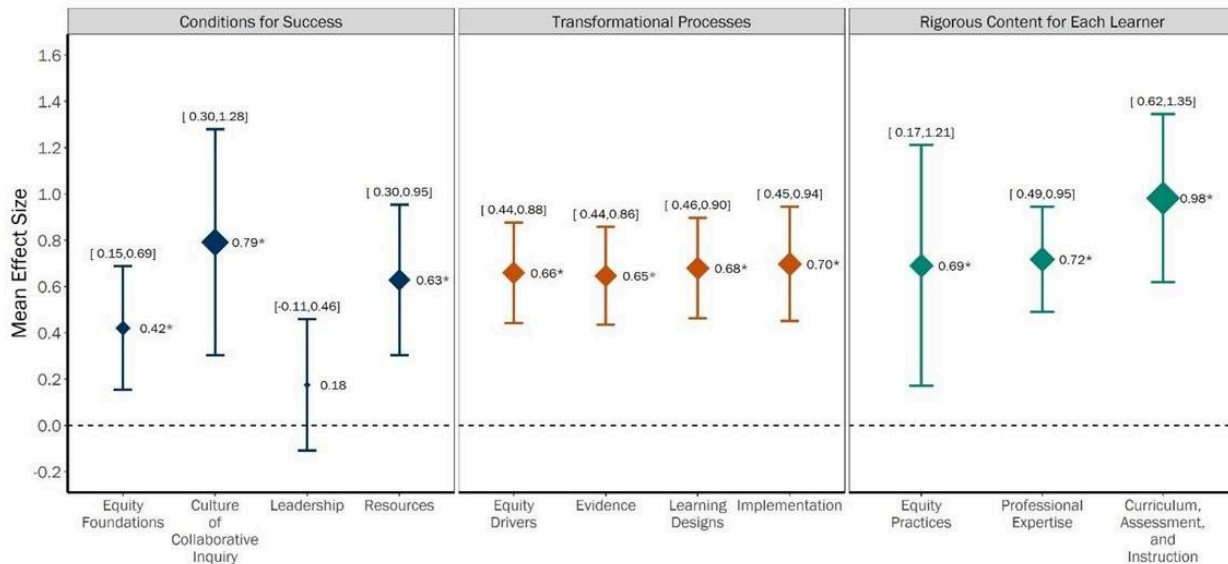
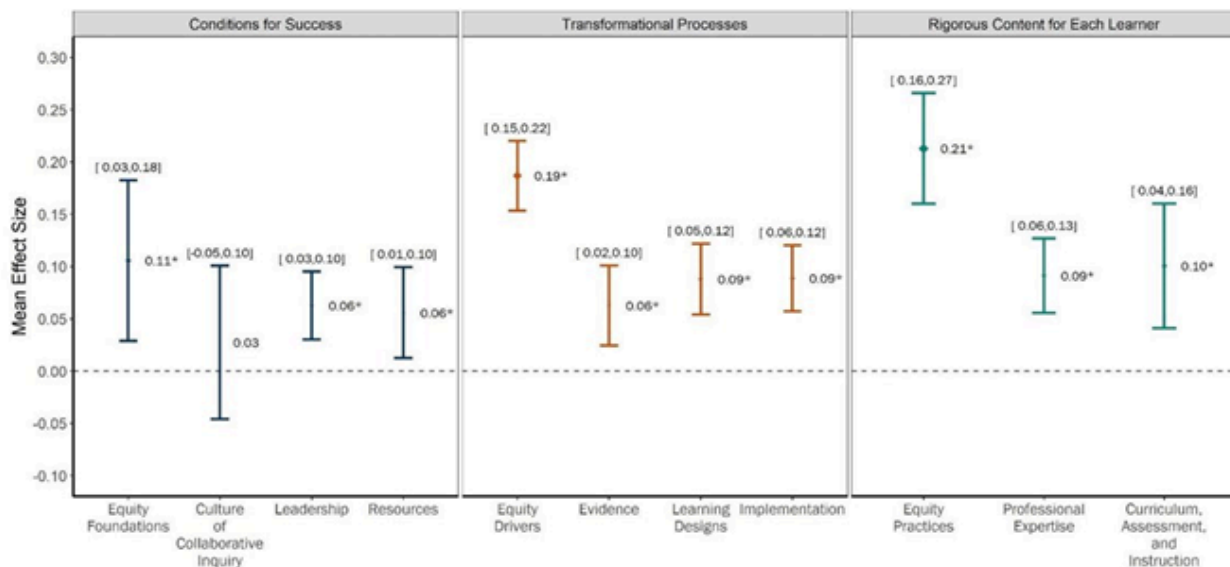


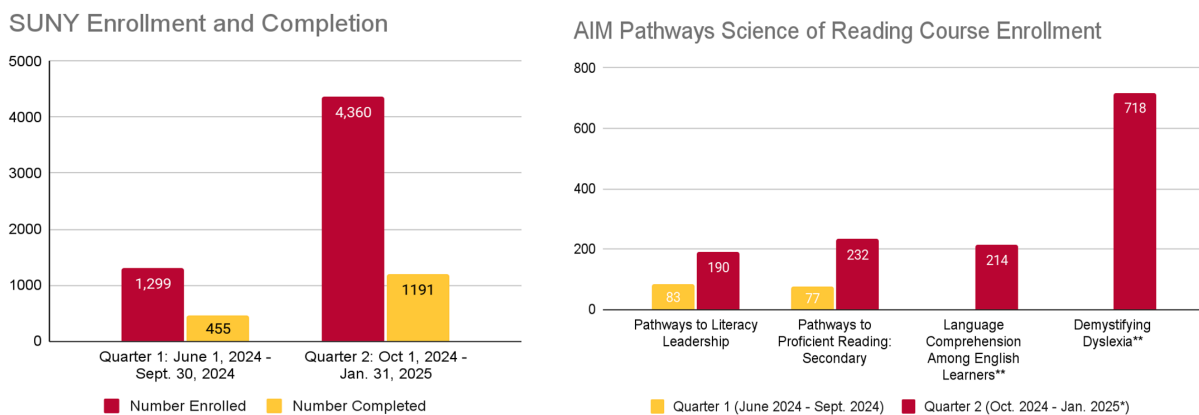
Figure 12: Average Effect Sizes of Student Achievement for Each 2022 Learning Forward Professional Learning Standard



MSDE has already begun addressing these challenges through strategic initiatives such as mentoring programs for conditionally licensed teachers and targeted professional learning for paraprofessionals seeking certification. These initiatives are designed to directly address the teacher shortage and ensure that all educators, especially those serving historically underserved student groups, receive the support needed to improve their practices and student outcomes.

MSDE is not only ready for this kind of investment, but we have already made significant strides in laying the foundation for success. Through the Science of Reading (SoR) micro-credentials, funded by a \$6.8 million grant from the IBIS Group, we are seeing positive feedback from teachers and LEAs, confirming that our efforts are already yielding results. As of January 2025, 4,360 Maryland educators have enrolled in the SoR coursework from SUNY, 1,354 educators have enrolled in the SoR coursework from the AIM Institute, and 90 participants from Maryland Institutes of Higher Learning have engaged in this offering. These courses are expanding due to strong demand. One teacher shared: “I loved this course and feel it is very meaningful to the work I do. I have taken many aspects of this course and applied them to my classroom and lessons.” This feedback underscores the real-world value and application of our professional development.

Figure 13: Science of Reading Course Enrollment and Completion



Historically, there has been a perception that MSDE does not deliver effective professional development. As such, the Department has made a clear shift in our approach, and results are promising. MSDE’s offerings, such as the Pathways to Literacy Leadership course, are fostering leadership development at the district level, and professional learning opportunities for literacy coaches continue to see growing participation and high levels of engagement. With a 3.87 out of 4.0 rating on key effectiveness indicators from participants, our professional development is resonating with educators. These efforts reflect our commitment to transforming professional learning for educators in Maryland, and the positive outcomes in early literacy and teacher development demonstrate that MSDE is poised for continued success in driving improvements in educational outcomes.

Senate Bill 429 / House Bill 504 proposes the creation of the Academic Excellence Program (AEP) to deploy instructional coaches and coordinators of professional learning (CPL) to schools that need them. Similar programs in other states have driven significant increases in student achievement³³.

³³ Slungaard Mumma, K., & Winters, M. A. (2023). The effect of retention under Mississippi's test-based promotion policy.

The program's goals include:

1. **Student Outcomes:** Improving proficiency rates in literacy and mathematics, especially among historically underserved student groups.
2. **Educator Efficacy:** Building teacher confidence and competence in delivering high-quality, evidence-based instruction.
3. **Systemic Sustainability:** Creating coaching and professional learning structures that will continue to operate even after initial funding phases out.

Through the Academic Excellence Program, state instructional coaches will be hired and deployed to ensure that literacy and mathematics instruction improves across the state. Key components include:

- **Coaches for Literacy and Mathematics:** Coaches will support teachers in both core subjects, ensuring that educators have the tools and support to provide effective instruction aligned with the Science of Reading and mathematics standards.
- **Regional Project Managers:** Funded by philanthropy, these managers will hire and train the coaches and ensure fidelity to the research-based coaching mode. Through a regional structure, these managers will ensure alignment with local needs and provide guidance based on the unique needs of each LEA's literacy and mathematics programs.

Coaches will work directly with teachers, facilitating collaborative learning communities and providing personalized feedback. Coaches will focus on strengthening Tier 1 instruction and embedding research-based practices into daily instruction. The coaching cadre may include:

- Literacy coaches
- Mathematics coaches (hired through an RFP process)
- Data coaches
- Early childhood coaches
- Special education coaches

Coordinators of Professional Learning (CPLs) will be hired to lead targeted professional development in schools. The key responsibilities of CPLs will include:

- **Access to Professional Learning:** Ensuring that all educators, from paraprofessionals to principals, have access to high-quality professional development, including free services to build capacity in critical areas like literacy, mathematics, special education, and other content areas.
- **Learning Walks and Data Use:** CPLs will conduct learning walks in collaboration with school leaders, collecting data to inform professional learning plans tailored to the needs of individual schools.
- **Tailored Support:** Schools will be able to request specific professional learning sessions from CPLs to address their unique needs. CPLs will also provide asynchronous and synchronous learning opportunities for educators at all levels.

The Educators in Residence (EIR) model that is used in other states will be utilized to hire new coaches and coordinators, ensuring that schools have access to high-quality expertise while minimizing the need for additional state-allocated positions. This approach ensures that MSDE is not expanding its own staff but rather leveraging external support to build educator capacity within LEAs. The EIR model focuses on:

- **Building Educator Capacity:** Instead of adding more staff to MSDE, this initiative enhances the capacity of educators selected to serve as coaches by providing them with world-class training, a strong community of practice, and opportunities to hone and sharpen their content-specific coaching skills. This model emphasizes the development of educators who are not only equipped to coach but also to lead and innovate within their schools and districts.
- **Identification of High-Performing Educators:** Through collaboration with LEAs, high-performing educators with strong leadership and coaching potential will be selected to serve as Educators in Residence.
- **Tailored Support:** EIRs will collaborate with coaches and CPLs to implement evidence-based practices aligned with state and local priorities.

Some superintendents have noted that they already have instructional coaches at the LEA level. In fact, a survey conducted last summer confirmed that many LEAs do employ coaches. However, no school district has a coach in every school, and some have only a handful. The Academic Excellence Program (AEP) is designed to supplement and enhance the existing efforts of LEAs, not replace them.

By deploying a statewide cadre of instructional coaches, we can ensure that coaching is grounded in consistent, high-quality training aligned with research-based best practices. Currently, instructional coaching varies widely across districts, despite clear research on what makes coaching effective. This initiative allows us to set a statewide standard for excellence in instructional coaching. State coaches will work collaboratively with LEA coaches, providing resources, professional learning, and structured support that strengthens local capacity. Additionally, many state coaches will eventually return to their home districts, bringing with them enhanced expertise and leadership skills that will further elevate instructional coaching at the LEA level. A key component of this initiative is joint training—LEA coaches will have the opportunity to participate in the same professional learning as state coaches. In fact, LEA coach training has already begun, ensuring alignment and coherence across districts.

Ultimately, this program is about long-term, systemic improvement—supporting teachers, building sustainable coaching models within LEAs, and ensuring that literacy and math instruction statewide is aligned to rigorous, evidence-based standards.

By creating an EIR model, MSDE provides a unique opportunity to strengthen pre-existing structures in LEAs. The Academic Excellence Program is designed to enhance and supplement

existing structures in LEAs, by deploying a cadre of coaches from the state to provide support and ensure consistency in coaching experiences. Although several LEAs have reported having coaches already staffed, instructional coaching from district to district varies, despite clear research on what effective coaching looks like. The deployment of state coaches allows MSDE to set high standards and norm expectations for LEA coaches by providing training and resources for all instructional coaches in Maryland. By streamlining training at the state level using an EIR model, many state coaches will, after a few years, return to their districts and serve as LEA coaches or in other key leadership roles within LEAs. The Academic Excellence Program is as much about the positive impacts on LEAs in the long run as it is about the positive impacts on the individual teachers who will work with the state coaches.

To ensure accountability and continuous improvement, the Academic Excellence Program will incorporate a robust evaluation framework. The evaluation will focus on:

1. **Student Outcomes:** Tracking literacy and mathematics proficiency gains, with an emphasis on closing achievement gaps.
2. **Implementation Fidelity:** Monitoring the execution of the program across schools and LEAs.
3. **Data Analysis:** Collecting and analyzing data on teacher practices, student outcomes, and program fidelity to inform decisions.
4. **Stakeholder Input:** Incorporating feedback from educators, school leaders, and families to refine program strategies.

The Academic Excellence Program proposed by Senate Bill 429 / House Bill 504 represents a comprehensive approach to addressing the critical needs in literacy and mathematics education in Maryland's schools. By investing in the professional development of educators, the program is well-positioned to bridge performance gaps and ensure all students have access to high-quality, evidence-based instruction.

Maryland School Leadership Academy

Research shows that effective school leadership has a significant impact on both teacher retention and student achievement. According to a study by the Wallace Foundation, schools led by strong leaders experience higher teacher satisfaction, increased teacher retention rates, and improved student performance. In fact, school leadership is one of the most significant in-school factors influencing teacher retention. Teachers are more likely to stay in schools where they feel supported by their leaders, with leadership providing clear expectations, professional development opportunities, and a culture of trust and collaboration³⁴. Leadership development is integral to the school improvement process.

³⁴Wallace Foundation, *The Role of School Leadership in Improving Student Achievement*, (2013). Available at: <https://www.wallacefoundation.org>.

It is critical that we not only develop strong school leadership, but we retain those leaders for a positive impact on teachers and students. Maryland school districts experience a 78% retention rate of school leaders in districts, losing nearly 1 in 5 administrators each year. This level of turnover causes instability in school systems, negatively impacting teachers and students. Research notes that inadequate preparation and professional development is a leading reason cited in principals' decisions to leave their jobs. The same study shows that better-prepared principals, including those who have had mentors, are less stressed and stay longer, even if they are in high-need schools. By providing appropriate support, principals feel more efficacious, and better about their work, making them more likely to stay. These findings suggest the importance of supporting principals in building their capacity to do the complex work required in their schools³⁵.

Since we know effective school leadership drives teacher retention and student outcomes, one of the highest-leverage investments Maryland can make is providing training and mentoring for our existing and future school leaders. Senate Bill 429 / House Bill 504 proposes the creation of a Maryland School Leader Academy designed to cultivate both sitting and aspiring school administrators' skills in two essential areas:

- **Instructional Leadership and Professional Learning:** Build teacher capacity through lesson observations, instructional coaching, and effective collaborative planning teams focused on internalizing academic standards and curriculum and using academic data from formative assessments to inform instruction.
- **Teacher Recruitment and Retention:** Use proven strategies for recruiting and retaining a high-quality and diverse teaching team, distribute leadership among administrators and teacher leaders, and prepare teachers who want to become school leaders in the future through training and on-the-job learning.

Drawing on the principles of the Strategic Education Research Partnership (SERP) Coherence Framework³⁶, this Academy would focus on aligning school leadership actions with broader educational goals. Strong, coherent leadership fosters a unified approach across all levels, from administrators to teachers, driving improvements in instructional practice and student outcomes.

The Maryland School Leader Academy, as proposed, would charge MSDE with offering a tuition-free, cohort-based training program designed to equip leaders with the tools to create such supportive school environments. This approach aligns with the SERP Coherence Framework's emphasis on building leadership capacity, fostering shared responsibility, and creating organizational structures that support continuous improvement in teaching, learning, and teacher retention.

³⁵ Levin, S. & Bradley, K. (2019). *Understanding and Addressing Principal Turnover: A Review of the Research*. Reston, VA: National Association of Secondary School Principals.

³⁶ Forman, M. L., Stosich, E. L., & Bocala, C. (2017). *The internal coherence framework: Creating the conditions for continuous improvement in schools*. Harvard Education Press.

Building upon the initial success of the 2024-2025 Blueprint Leadership Training program, the proposed Maryland Leadership Academy extends and improves upon the current training model. In January 2025, 892 school leaders representing all 24 local education agencies (LEAs) participated in the Blueprint Leadership Training across five regions. The training refreshed instrumental skills for instructional leaders, while leveraging a rare opportunity for principals and assistant principals to collaborate with other school leaders from across the state. Survey data from the Blueprint Leadership Training indicated positive results in all categories assessed. Participants rated the professional development at an average of 3.7 out of 4, including the relevance to their role and coherence with the larger vision and priorities of MSDE. Additional feedback from the training shared a sentiment of gratitude for a collaborative experience and a feeling of empowerment when returning to their respective schools. This Blueprint Leadership Training program is a strong start for growing the capacity of school leaders.

The creation of the Maryland Leadership Academy would allow the state to sustain this progress and build on it. An essential component of the Academy is the inclusion of mentorship for principals. Similar to other professions, research shows the benefits of providing school leaders with mentors³⁷. Research indicates that mentoring programs for school leaders can significantly enhance their effectiveness and positively impact school performance. A study published in the *School Leadership Review* highlights that mentoring is one of the most effective strategies to develop leadership skills in new principals. The study emphasizes the importance of effective mentoring strategies and the mentor-mentee relationship in fostering principals' growth, particularly in improving teacher quality and student achievement.³⁸ Additionally, a report by the Wallace Foundation titled "Good Principals Aren't Born — They're Mentored" discusses the critical role of mentoring in the development of effective school principals. The report provides insights into how structured mentoring programs can prepare principals to lead schools successfully, ultimately benefiting student outcomes.

The Maryland School Leader Academy's proposed activities include pairing participants with experienced mentors who have demonstrated success as school principals. MSDE, in collaboration with LEAs, would identify these mentors, who may receive stipends for supporting the development of Maryland's future school leaders.

As proposed, the Maryland School Leader Academy would play a critical role in strengthening leadership within Maryland's community schools and low-performing schools. To maximize its impact, the Academy would prioritize the selection of participants who are either currently serving in these schools or are committed to transitioning into them. By focusing on these high-need areas,

³⁷ The Wallace Foundation. (2007). Good principals aren't born—they're mentored: How leadership coaching can build stronger school leaders. The Wallace Foundation. Retrieved from <https://wallacefoundation.org/sites/default/files/2023-09/Good-Principals-Arent-Born-Theyre-Mentored.pdf>

³⁸ Bertrand, Lisa A.; Stader, David; and Copeland, Sherry (2018) "Supporting New School Leaders Through Mentoring," *School Leadership Review*: Vol. 13 : Iss. 2 , Article 7. Available at: <https://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/slr/vol13/iss2/7>

the program aims to cultivate a pipeline of highly skilled, equity-driven leaders who can address the unique challenges faced by these schools.

Through targeted professional development, mentorship from experienced principals, and access to research-based leadership strategies, Academy participants would be equipped to foster school cultures that promote academic excellence, student well-being, and community engagement. This policy-driven approach ensures that resources are strategically allocated to the schools where strong, effective leadership is most needed, ultimately driving sustainable improvements in student outcomes and school performance.

To ensure long-term sustainability and impact, the Academy would leverage existing funds from the Blueprint Leadership Academy along with new state commitments. The Blueprint laid the groundwork by allocating funds to provide training for superintendents, local school board leadership, and principals. This policy builds on this idea of aligning across components of the educational ecosystem - school leadership, district leadership, school board leadership, MSDE, and AIB - to ensure best practices are shared across all parts of our public school system.

Summary

We remain deeply committed to realizing the promise and vision of the Blueprint, building a world-class public education system for all of Maryland's students, and doing what it takes to get it right. The stakes are high – the Blueprint is truly a once-in-a-generation opportunity and represents our nation's biggest bet on public education.

We understand that achieving the goals of the Blueprint requires thoughtful, deliberate implementation focused on student outcomes. Our mission remains clear: deliver a world-class education for every child in Maryland. We look forward to partnering with the Maryland General Assembly and stakeholders across the state to ensure every child in Maryland receives the world-class education they deserve.

Appendix A: Teacher Vacancies and Conditional Licensure by LEA (FY 2025)

Local Education Agency	Fully Licensed Teachers	Conditionally Licensed Teachers	Vacancies	Total Teacher Positions	Percentage of Fully Licensed Teachers	Percentage of Conditionally Licensed Teachers	Vacancy Rate
Allegany	632	1	7	640	99%	0%	1%
Anne Arundel	5,498	714	67	6,279	88%	11%	1%
Baltimore City	4,416	917	188	5,521	80%	17%	3%
Baltimore	6,550	877	74	7,501	87%	12%	1%
Calvert	940	37	10	987	95%	4%	1%
Caroline	399	32	0	431	93%	7%	0%
Carroll	1,728	90	5	1,823	95%	5%	0%
Cecil	1,016	50	0	1,066	95%	5%	0%
Charles	1,624	334	62	2,020	80%	17%	3%
Dorchester	299	54	12	365	82%	15%	3%
Frederick	2,873	215	38	3,126	92%	7%	1%
Garrett	281	6	1	288	98%	2%	0%
Harford	2,479	176	2	2,657	93%	7%	0%
Howard	4,123	155	52	4,330	95%	4%	1%
Kent	141	17	4	162	87%	11%	2%
Montgomery	11,145	666	157	11,968	93%	6%	1%
Prince George's	7,795	1,582	901	10,278	76%	17%	9%
Queen Anne's	537	15	0	552	97%	3%	0%
Somerset	1,013	73	8	1,094	93%	7%	1%
St. Mary's	214	17	15	246	87%	7%	6%
Talbot	328	17	5	350	94%	5%	1%
Washington	1,534	42	3	1,579	97%	3%	0%
Wicomico	1,160	69	5	1,234	94%	6%	0%
Worcester	593	6	4	603	98%	1%	1%
Totals	57,318	6,162	1,620	65,100	88%	10%	2%

Appendix B: Teacher Vacancies and Conditional Licensure by Licensure Area (FY 2025)

Licensure Area	Fully Licensed Teachers	Conditionally Licensed Teachers	Vacancies	Total Teacher Positions	Percentage of Fully Licensed Teachers	Percentage of Conditionally Licensed Teachers	Vacancy Rate	Percentage of Positions Filled without a Fully Licensed Teacher
Arts	4,214	491	96	4,801	88%	10%	2%	12%
Career / Technology Education (7-12)	1,376	301	53	1,730	80%	18%	3%	20%
Computer Science	163	50	5	218	75%	23%	2%	25%
Early Childhood (PreK-3)	11,447	689	124	12,260	93%	6%	1%	7%
Elementary Education (1-6)	15,117	1,095	392	16,604	91%	7%	2%	9%
Environmental Education (PreK-12)	20	20	0	40	50%	50%	0%	50%
English (7-12)	3,868	420	39	4,327	89%	10%	1%	11%
ESOL (PreK-12)	1,273	190	104	1,567	81%	13%	7%	19%
Health (PreK-12)	1,015	48	14	1,077	94%	5%	1%	6%
Mathematics (7-12)	2,926	291	33	3,250	90%	9%	1%	10%
Middle School Areas (4-9)	533	55	139	727	73%	9%	19%	27%
Physical Education (PreK-12)	1,904	235	29	2,168	88%	11%	1%	12%
Science (7-12)	3,070	337	35	3,442	89%	10%	1%	11%
Social Studies (7-12)	3,387	306	24	3,717	91%	8%	1%	9%
Special Education	4,937	1,385	459	6,781	73%	22%	7%	27%
World Language (PreK-12)	1,370	231	69	1,670	82%	14%	4%	18%
Other Teaching Areas	698	18	5	721	97%	3%	1%	3%
Total	57,318	6,162	1,620	65,100	88%	10%	2%	12%

Appendix C: Number of Community Schools by Local Education Agency by Year

Local Education Agency	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026
Allegany	1	4	4	4	6	14	17
Anne Arundel	2	9	12	15	23	38	47
Baltimore City	126	112	117	117	148	150	150
Baltimore County	4	10	22	38	55	91	110
Calvert	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Caroline	0	1	1	2	3	8	9
Carroll	0	0	0	0	1	2	4
Cecil	1	3	3	4	4	9	11
Charles	0	0	1	2	5	10	14
Dorchester	5	5	5	5	6	11	10
Frederick	2	3	2	4	5	9	10
Garrett	0	0	0	0	1	5	5
Harford	3	3	7	7	10	16	17
Howard	0	0	0	0	1	8	12
Kent	0	0	2	2	2	3	5
Montgomery	8	16	19	26	34	53	77
Prince George's	45	63	75	92	107	129	148
Queen Anne's	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
St. Mary's	0	1	1	1	2	3	5
Somerset	4	4	4	5	6	7	7
Talbot	0	0	0	1	1	2	5
Washington	0	5	7	8	12	18	24
Wicomico	5	7	9	9	10	23	16
Worcester	0	0	0	3	4	6	7
SEED School	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Totals	207	247	292	346	447	617	715

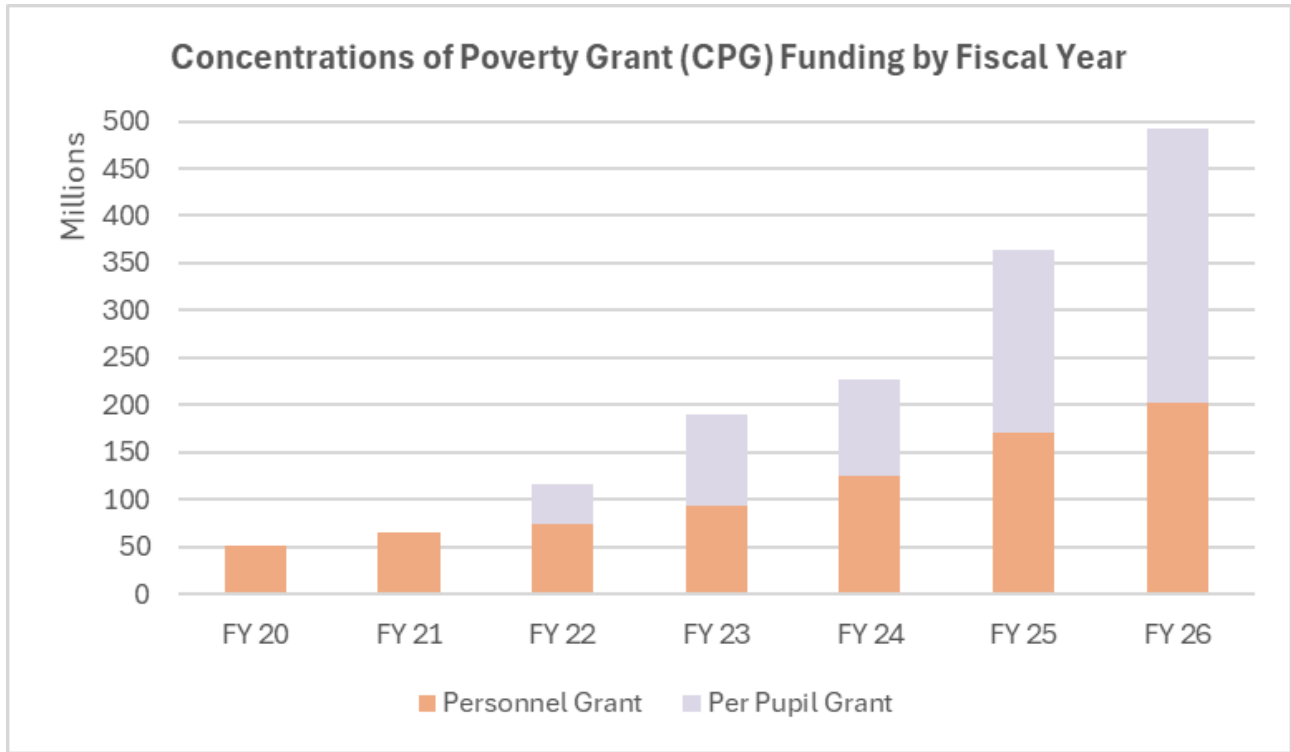
Appendix D: Fiscal Year 2025 Distribution of Community Schools by Poverty Level

Local Education Agency	55-59.4%	60-64.4%	65-69.4%	70-79.4%	>=80%	# Schools	% of State Total
Allegany	5	2	3	3	1	14	2%
Anne Arundel	10	4	6	8	10	38	6%
Baltimore City				1	149	150	24%
Baltimore County	17	27	21	20	6	91	15%
Calvert							0.0%
Caroline	1	4	1		2	8	1%
Carroll		1			1	2	0.3%
Cecil	1	4	2	2		9	1%
Charles	4	1	2	2	1	10	2%
Dorchester	1	1	2	5	2	11	2%
Frederick	3	1	1	1	3	9	1%
Garrett	1	3	1			5	0.8%
Harford	4	1	3	5	3	16	3%
Howard	4	4				8	1%
Kent	1			2		3	0.5%
Montgomery	5	12	15	16	5	53	9%
Prince George's	13	8	14	36	58	129	21%
Queen Anne's			1			1	0.2%
St. Mary's	1			2		3	0.5%
Somerset			1	6		7	1%
Talbot	1			1		2	0.3%
Washington	3	3	4	3	5	18	3%
Wicomico	12	5	6			23	4%
Worcester	2		1	3		6	1%
SEED School					1	1	0.2%
Grand Total	90	81	84	116	247	617	
Percent of Total	15%	13%	14%	19%	40%		

Appendix E: Fiscal Year 2026 Distribution of Community Schools by Poverty Level

Local Education Agency	55-59.4%	60-64.4%	65-69.4%	70-79.4%	>=80%	# Schools	% of State Total
Allegany	8	2	3	3	1	17	2%
Anne Arundel	17	6	6	8	10	47	6%
Baltimore City				1	149	150	21%
Baltimore County	31	33	21	20	6	111	15%
Calvert	1	1				2	0.4%
Caroline	2	4	1		2	9	1%
Carroll	2	1			1	4	1%
Cecil	1	6	2	2		11	2%
Charles	8	1	2	2	1	14	2%
Dorchester	1	1	2	5	2	11	2%
Frederick	3	2	1	1	3	10	1%
Garrett	1	3	1			5	1%
Harford	4	2	3	5	3	17	2%
Howard	7	5				12	2%
Kent	2	1		2		5	1%
Montgomery	16	24	16	16	5	77	11%
Prince George's	21	19	14	36	58	148	20%
Queen Anne's	1		1			2	0.3%
St. Mary's	2	1		2		5	1%
Somerset			1	6		7	1%
Talbot	3	1		1		5	1%
Washington	7	5	4	3	5	24	3%
Wicomico	12	5	6			23	3%
Worcester	3		1	3		7	1%
SEED School					1	1	0.1%
Grand Total	154	123	85	116	247	724	
Percent of Total	21%	17%	12%	16%	34%		

Appendix F: Concentrations of Poverty Grant (CPG) Funding by Fiscal Year



	FY 20	FY 21	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24	FY 25	FY 26
Number of Community Schools	207	247	292	346	447	617	715
80-100% Schools	Personnel	Personnel	Personnel Per-Pupil	Personnel Per-Pupil	Personnel Per-Pupil	Personnel Per-Pupil	Personnel Per-Pupil
75-79% Schools		Personnel	Personnel	Personnel Per-Pupil	Personnel Per-Pupil	Personnel Per-Pupil	Personnel Per-Pupil
70-74% Schools			Personnel	Personnel	Personnel Per-Pupil	Personnel Per-Pupil	Personnel Per-Pupil
65-69% Schools				Personnel	Personnel	Personnel Per-Pupil	Personnel Per-Pupil
60-64% Schools					Personnel	Personnel	Personnel Per-Pupil
55-59% Schools						Personnel	Personnel

SB429.DDCouncil.LOI.pdf

Uploaded by: Rachel London

Position: INFO



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

Written Testimony on SB 429 _ HB 504 - Maryland St

Uploaded by: Shawn Rushing

Position: INFO

February 19, 2025

The Honorable Guy Guzzone
Chair, Senate Budget & Taxation Committee

The Honorable Ben Barnes
Chair, House Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Brian Feldman
Chair, Senate Education, Energy, and the
Environment Committee

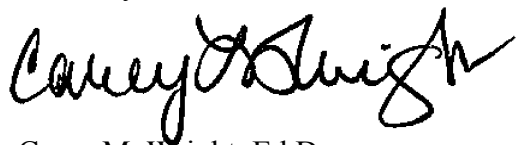
The Honorable Vanessa Atterbeary
Chair, House Ways and Means Committee

RE: Letter of Information – Senate Bill 429 and House Bill 504 – Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act

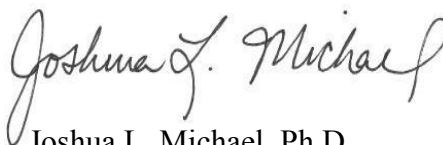
Dear Chairs Guzzone, Barnes, Feldman, and Atterbeary, and members of the Senate Budget & Taxation, Senate Education, Energy, and Environment, House Appropriations, and House Ways and Means Committees:

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), led by the State Superintendent and the State Board of Education, stands deeply committed to realizing the promise of the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future for providing a world-class education for children from all backgrounds in Maryland. As leaders in implementing the Blueprint, we focus on ensuring that every student is safe, supported, and connected in our schools, that they receive a strong foundation in literacy and numeracy, and that we are preparing them for success in college and their future careers. We believe the Blueprint pointed us in the right direction four years ago, and, in order to stay on that trajectory, we must continue to adapt the Blueprint to meet the realities of public education today. Therefore, we offer perspective on policy proposals related to the Blueprint intended to improve outcomes for students across Maryland. Outlined here is information on education policy matters related to Senate Bill 429 / House Bill 504.

Sincerely,



Carey M. Wright, Ed.D
State Superintendent of Schools
Maryland State Department of Education

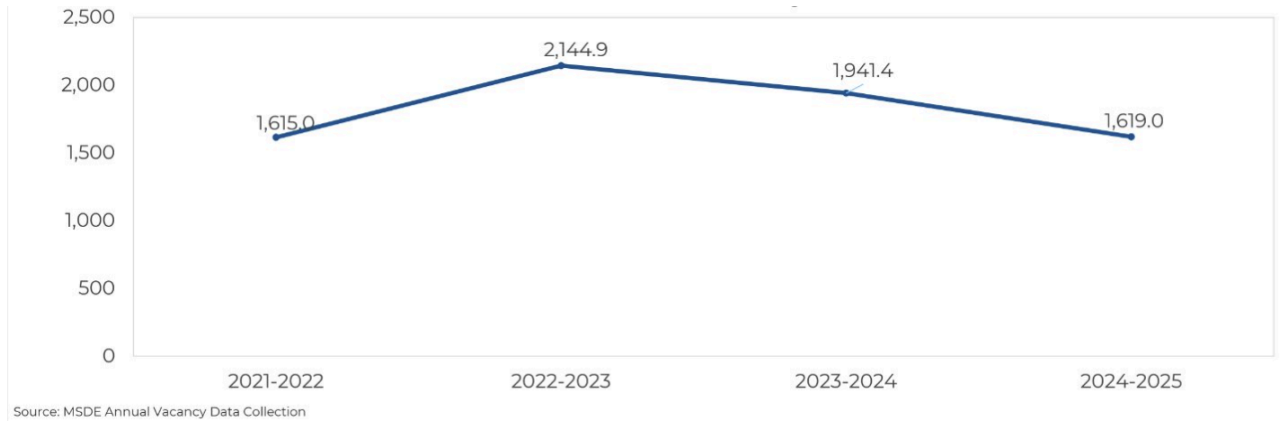


Joshua L. Michael, Ph.D
President
Maryland State Board of Education

Teacher Shortage

Districts across the country face widespread teacher shortages, including those in Maryland. According to the Learning Policy Institute State Teacher Shortage 2024 Update, estimates indicate that, at a minimum, 406,964 positions nationally were either unfilled or filled by teachers not fully certified for their assignments, representing about 1 in 8 of all teaching positions.¹ At the start of this school year, there were 1,619 unfilled teaching positions and 6,074 positions filled by conditionally licensed educators.² While the number of teacher vacancies has declined 25% over the past three years, one in ten Maryland classrooms remains either staffed by a substitute teacher or an unlicensed teacher. And one in three new teachers hired in Maryland is not a licensed teacher before entering the classroom.

Figure 1: Teacher Vacancies on the First Day of School



Furthermore, the teacher shortage disproportionately impacts our students in high-poverty schools. Inexperienced teachers, teachers teaching outside of their field, and teachers who hold emergency and provisional licenses are placed in high-poverty schools at higher percentage rates than in low-poverty schools.³ Despite incentives to recruit more Nationally Board Certified teachers to low-performing schools, only 12%, or 264, of Maryland’s distinguished teachers opt to teach in our schools that need the most support. Further, NBC teachers are underrepresented in community schools, schools serving our highest-poverty communities.

¹ Tan, T. S., Arellano, I., & Patrick, S. K. (2024). State teacher shortages 2024 update: Teaching positions left vacant or filled by teachers without full certification. Learning Policy Institute. <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/state-teacher-shortages-vacancy-2024>

²Teacher Recruitment, Development, and Retention Report to AIB and MSBOE, January 25, 2025

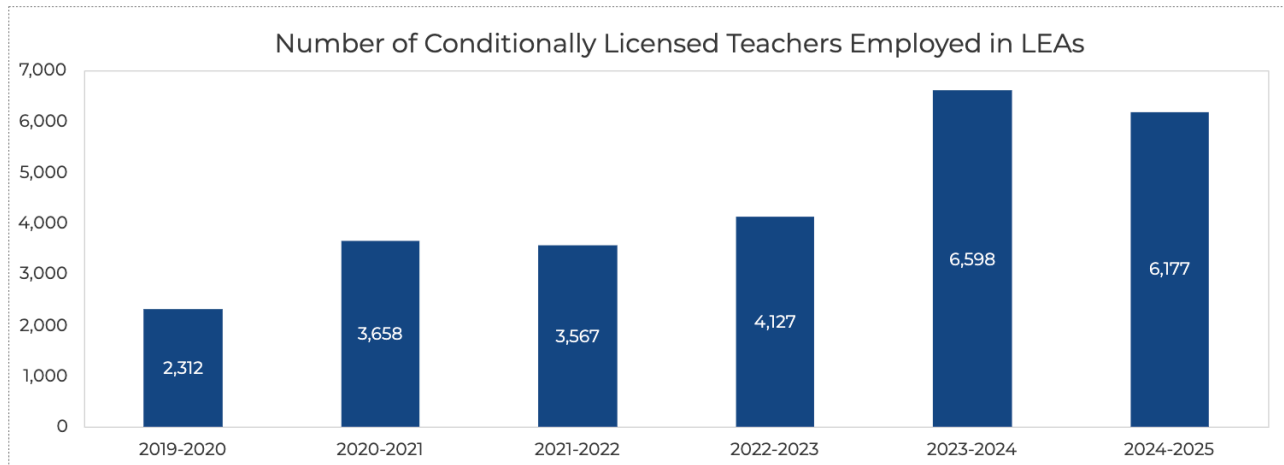
³ 2023-2024 LEA Staff Data collected through the 2024-2025 MSDE Annual Staff Data Collection

Table 1: Teacher Qualifications - High and Low Poverty Schools, SY 2023-2024

Category	All Schools	High Poverty Schools	Low Poverty Schools	Difference (Percentage Points)
Inexperienced Teachers	17.8%	22.7%	12.8%	9.9
Out-of-Field Teachers	11.2%	15.8%	6.2%	9.6
Teachers with Emergency or Provisional Licenses	9.9%	14.6%	5.1%	9.5

Like many other states, Maryland allows local education agencies (LEAs) to issue a conditional teacher license to an individual who has not yet met the requirements for professional certification if the position cannot be filled with a licensed teacher. The issuance of conditional teacher licenses in Maryland increased significantly from 2019 to 2023 (Figure 2).⁴

Figure 2: Number of Conditionally Licensed Teachers Statewide

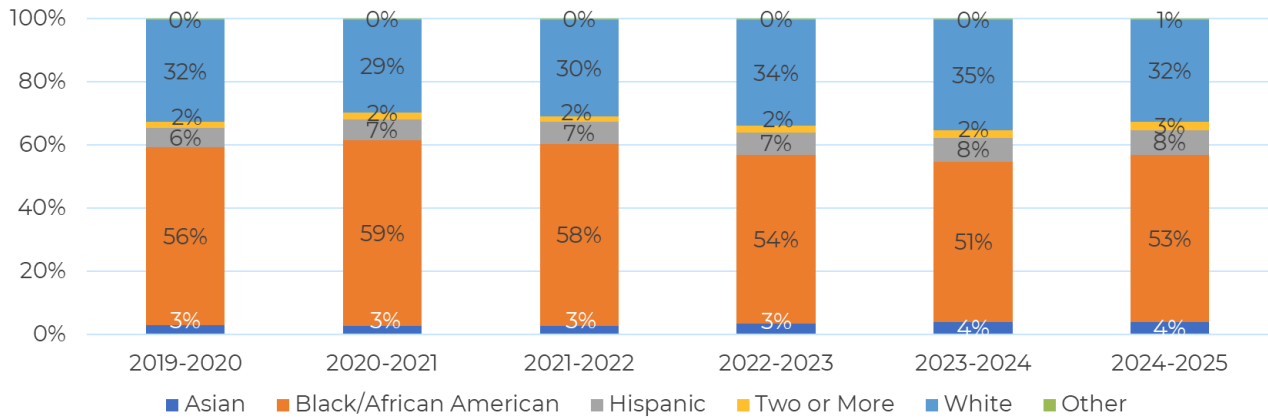


Source: MSDE Staff Data Collection and MSDE Educator Licensure System.

Of critical importance is the fact that conditionally licensed teachers are significantly more diverse than traditionally prepared teachers and more closely mirror Maryland’s student population. Over 60% of our conditionally licensed teachers are Black and Brown educators (Figure 3) and are more often from the community of the students they serve. This presents an opportunity to support and develop leaders from your neighborhoods who have stepped up to serve students in our public schools in your districts.

⁴ MSDE Annual Staff Data Collection.

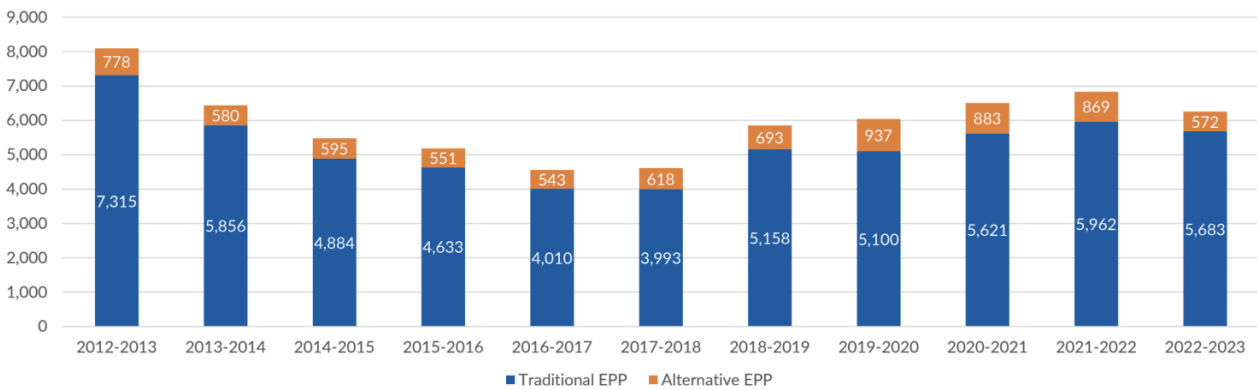
Figure 3: Maryland Conditional Licensure Demographic Trends



For many years, conditional licensure was predominantly limited to a subset of hard-to-staff districts and to specialized licensure areas such as CTE instructors and certain STEM disciplines. Today, conditional licensure has proliferated across the state. As the number of imported teachers has declined due to the expanding national teacher shortage, over 60% of our conditionally licensed teachers are Black and Brown educators and are more often from the community of the students they serve. These community leaders have answered the call to serve in our public schools.

Enrollment in Maryland educator preparation programs has increased since 2016-2017, reversing a trend, but our programs are not yet producing more graduates (Figure 4). To date, no more than 1 in 5 of our teacher vacancies is filled with graduates from one of Maryland’s traditional educator preparation programs. We continue to be a net importer of teachers from other states, but we are importing fewer licensed educators than in past years.

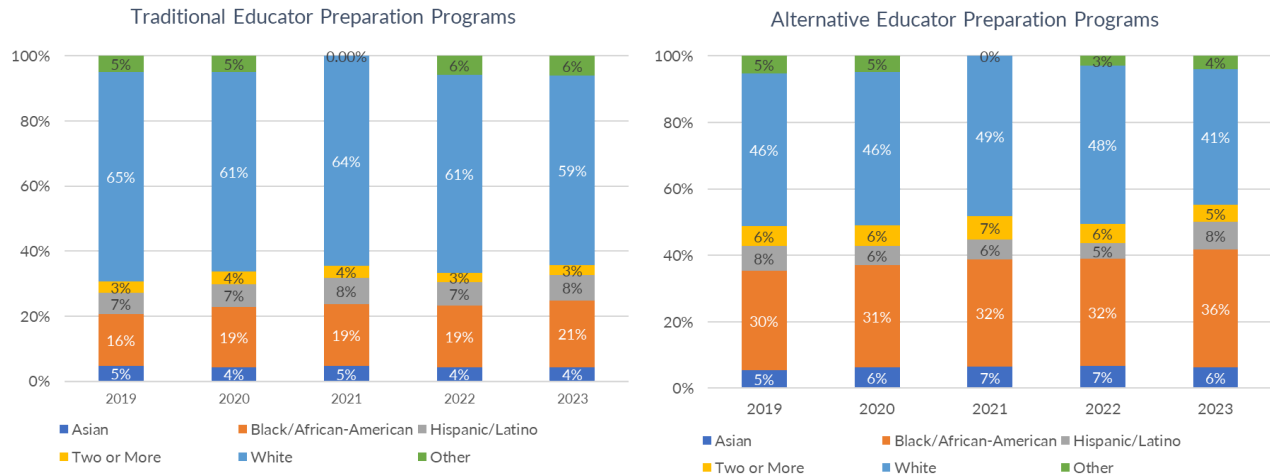
Figure 4: Teacher Preparation Enrollment Trends



Source: Title II Reports (title2.ed.gov)

While Maryland’s student population is diverse, the Maryland traditional educator preparation program pipeline and overall teacher workforce is predominantly white and female. Research shows that teachers of color contribute to better outcomes for all students, including improved social-emotional, behavioral, and academic results. One randomized control trial found that teachers of color positively impact 4th and 5th grade students in these areas⁵.

Figure 5: Maryland Teacher Preparation Enrollment Demographics⁶



In Maryland, enrollment in alternative Resident Teacher preparation programs is more diverse than in traditional educator preparation programs (Figure 5). Resident Teachers spend a minimum of one year in the classroom employed on a Resident Teacher License while they receive on-the-job training, support, and mentorship from the educator preparation provider. These differ from traditional programs in that alternative preparation leads to teacher licensure, but not necessarily to a degree. Resident Teacher programs allow an individual to begin teaching and receive a salary much earlier in the program, and they usually cost much less than traditional routes. While Resident Teacher programs are a cost-effective way to diversify the teacher workforce, there are currently only 13 programs - all located within the central corridor of the State. The percentage of completers from Resident Teacher programs is relatively small. For example, during the 2022-2023 school year, only 199 of the 1,768 teacher graduates were from Resident Teacher programs (see Figure 6).

As we work to achieve the Blueprint’s vision for high-quality and diverse teachers in every school, we must prepare our conditionally licensed teachers to become fully licensed.

We also need to provide opportunities for others who are dedicated to serving students, including our educational support professionals (ESPs). In 2024, MSDE partnered with LEAs, the Maryland

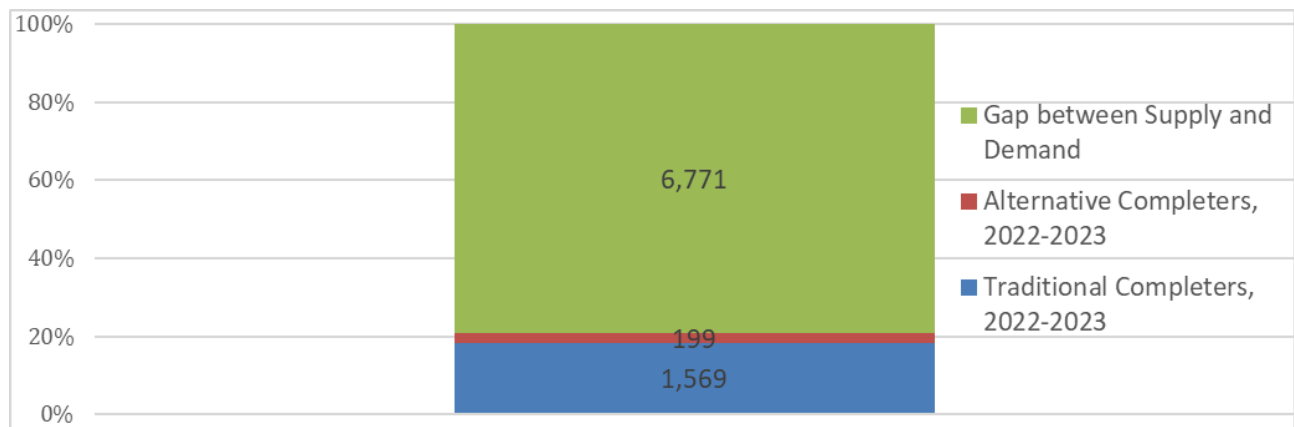
⁵ Blazar, D. (2021). Teachers of Color, Culturally Responsive Teaching, and Student Outcomes: Experimental Evidence from the Random Assignment of Teachers to Classes. EdWorkingPaper No. 21-501. Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University.

⁶ Title II Annual Teacher Preparation State Report

State Education Association (MSEA), the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), and the Public School Superintendents’ Association of Maryland (PSSAM) to distribute and encourage the completion of a survey for ESPs across Maryland. When asked the question, “Would you like to pursue a career in teaching or another certificated role in your local school system,” 3,576 ESPs responded “yes” and an additional 2,256 were unsure⁷. Paraprofessionals (teaching aides, library/media center aides, and other aides) make up 13,423 of the ESP population in Maryland. Their average salary is \$36,139.93, and their median salary is \$34,207⁸. Although paraprofessionals are primed for recruitment into the teaching profession, most are not able to take a leave of absence from their job to complete a student teaching experience.

While enrollment in teacher preparation programs has increased since 2017, Maryland programs are not producing enough graduates to meet teacher demand. Maryland programs produced 1,768 teacher candidates in 2023⁹; however, at the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year, there were 8,539 teaching positions left unfilled or filled with unqualified individuals¹⁰. Assuming every 2023 Maryland graduate chose to work in Maryland public schools the following year, the state would still have a gap of 6,771 qualified teachers.

Figure 6: Maryland Supply of Teachers vs. Demand for Teachers



⁷ Noncertificated Education Support Professionals Joint Chairman’s Report pg. 182, December 2024

⁸ Noncertificated Education Support Professionals Joint Chairman’s Report pg. 182, December 2024

⁹ 2022-2023 Title II Teacher Preparation Report

¹⁰ 2023-2024 MSDE Vacancy Collection; 2023-2024 MSDE Staff Data Collection

Collaborative Time

The Blueprint emphasizes the need for more time for educators to focus on instructional planning, coaching, and student engagement outside of the classroom through a policy provision referred to as "collaborative time". Also known as the "60/40 rule", the policy seeks to alter the typical ratio of 80% a teacher's time classroom teaching and other 20% professional responsibilities. This approach provides educators with more dedicated time to collaborate, enhance their skills, and more effectively support students by creating additional opportunities for professional development, small group instruction, co-teaching, and family involvement.

We believe more collaborative time and professional learning is critical to improving the working conditions for the educators we hope to attract into teaching and retain. Evidence shows effective, job-embedded professional development is a critical strategy for improving teacher effectiveness.¹¹

Yet, the teacher shortage makes the implementation of collaborative time, as first envisioned by the Blueprint, impossible to implement without sacrificing instruction for students and risking negative impacts on student achievement. The Blueprint calls for hiring over 2,000 new teachers this coming year and 13,000 more teachers across the state over the 8 year phase-in of the policy provision. Absent a legislative remedy this year, LEAs must begin negotiating terms to adjust teacher workload for the upcoming school year.

We must ensure that the collaborative time policy does not unintentionally decrease instructional time for students or negatively impact academic performance. To reduce teacher instructional time to 60% from 80%, while holding constant the number of teachers in Maryland, can only be achieved by covering more classes with unlicensed teachers or increasing class size. Additionally, as the demand for teachers rises, we must be cautious that efforts to fill vacancies do not unfairly pull educators from districts and schools who serve students living in poverty. Lower-income schools already experience higher teacher turnover than more affluent schools, and increased competition for teachers could exacerbate this disparity. While some districts have expressed readiness to implement collaborative time, these districts are our highest-income communities.

Reversing the teacher shortage is a national problem that could take years, and we cannot wait to improve collaborative time for teachers. Senate Bill 429 / House Bill 504 includes grants for schools to develop their own models for collaborative time, such as more paid teacher collaborative time after school. This type of approach could be implemented now with the teachers we have. Therefore, we support the implementation of pilot programs enabling schools to develop innovative collaborative time models while we invest in Grow Your Own programs and expand state and local professional development for teachers.

¹¹ Taylor, J. A., Getty, S. R., Kowalski, S. M., Wilson, C. D., Carlson, J., & Van Scotter, P. (2015). An Efficacy Trial of Research-Based Curriculum Materials With Curriculum-Based Professional Development. *American Educational Research Journal*, 52(5), 984-1017. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831215585962>

Teacher Recruitment and Grow Your Own Programs

Grow Your Own (GYO) programs are focused on recruiting and preparing community-based candidates to teach in their local schools. These programs increase retention and promote strong connections between teachers and the students and families they serve. This involves recruiting teacher candidates from nontraditional populations who are more likely to reflect the diversity of students in the district. Senate Bill 429 / House Bill 504 expands and fully funds the existing Grow Your Own Grant Program at a scale that we believe will have a sizable impact on the teacher shortage in the next five to ten years.

The amendments to the existing program allow for more flexibility and prioritize programs that emphasize paid, on-the-job training such as teacher apprenticeships and teacher residencies. A registered teacher apprenticeship is an "earn and learn" model that provides structured, paid, on-the-job learning experiences combined with related instruction. Teacher residency programs integrate teacher preparation coursework with training in the classroom as part of their curriculum. Both models require a partnership between the local education agency and the educator preparation program and emphasize clinical experience under the guidance of a mentor teacher.

Maryland must invest in teacher recruitment initiatives and flexible GYO teacher preparation programs that allow local education agencies to develop recruitment pathways for nontraditional populations like ESPs, career changers, and community members to ensure Maryland students have access to diverse and highly qualified teachers. Having GYO programs that leverage flexible models of teacher preparation is critical to the success of recruiting ESPs into the teaching profession.

MSDE supports the expansion of GYO teacher preparation programs that allow individuals who are committed to Maryland's children and families to earn an income while they prepare for teacher licensure.

In addition to expanding GYO programs, MSDE believes that a national marketing campaign can help Maryland to meet the moment, recruiting a diverse pool of highly qualified teachers who are passionate about working in a state that supports public education. Identifying individuals interested in teaching through digital marketing, public service announcements, and direct outreach is a beginning; however, to ensure a return on investment, prospective teachers must be cultivated with one-on-one mentoring, inspirational multi-media, informational guides, events, and experiences. Prospective teachers need assistance and support as they navigate the process of being trained, licensed, and hired. Senate Bill 429 / House Bill 504 supports this by allocating funding for a teacher recruitment campaign. Partnering with a national education nonprofit with experience in guiding state education agencies is critical to the success of the initiative.

While Maryland has historically been dependent on educators prepared out of state to staff its classrooms, the number of licenses issued to applicants from other states peaked at 63% in 2022¹². Bringing teachers from other states into Maryland is likely to continue to be key to our teacher workforce. Given this, we need to consider policy options that streamline the process of highly-qualified, experienced teachers obtaining their Maryland teaching license.

The Council of State Governments (CSG), in partnership with the Department of Defense (DoD) and the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) developed an interstate occupational licensure compact called the Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact (ITMC). Interstate compacts are constitutionally authorized, legislatively enacted, legally binding agreements among states.¹³ The ITMC allows teachers to use an eligible license held in a compact member state to be granted an equivalent license in another compact member state.

The ITMC utilizes a model different from that of other interstate teacher licensure compacts. Compact Member states submit licenses that are eligible for the compact and meet a set of criteria outlined in the legislation. To be eligible, a license must require a bachelor's degree and completion of a state-approved program for teacher licensure like a teacher preparation program at a college or university. Furthermore, for a license to be eligible under the compact it must be unencumbered (i.e., not restricted, probationary, provisional, substitute, or temporary). Teachers holding a compact-eligible license can apply for licensure in another member state and receive the closest equivalent license without submitting additional materials, taking state-specific exams, or completing additional coursework.

The compact does not alter member states' ability to regulate the teaching profession or teacher licensure; however, member states do take on the responsibility of granting licenses to out-of-state teachers who hold an eligible license. While reciprocity is granted for initial certification requirements, Maryland's standards apply upon application of renewal requirements and the educator career ladder.

The ITMC is governed by an intergovernmental agency known as the Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact Commission (The Commission). The Commission is composed of one commissioner from each member state who is the principal administrative officer of the state licensing authority or their designee. The Commission holds regular, public meetings and has the ability to create rules and bylaws to effectuate the compact. Maryland would be the 13th state to join. Several other states are considering legislation to join the Compact. It is critical for Maryland to not be left behind.

¹² Maryland Educator Certification Systems

¹³ National Center for Interstate Compacts: <https://compacts.csg.org/our-work/ics/>

Eligibility to participate in the ITMC requires enacting the model legislation¹⁴ developed by the Council for State Governments National Center for Interstate Compacts. Senate Bill 429 / House Bill 504 paves the way for Maryland to enter the ITMC by codifying the model legislation and amending the laws that would prevent Maryland from participating in the compact.

¹⁴ [Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact Model Legislation](#), National Center for Interstate Compacts.

Community Schools

A community school is a public school that serves as a hub for students, families, and the broader community by integrating academics, health and social services, youth and community development, and community engagement. These schools adopt a whole-child approach to education, ensuring that students receive comprehensive support to succeed both inside and outside the classroom¹⁵. Wraparound services - including extended learning time, healthcare, mental health support, and family engagement - address barriers to learning and create environments where students thrive. Through the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, Maryland has emerged as a national leader in implementing community schools.

Maryland is beginning to show academic progress; 4th grade reading scores now rank 20th in the nation, up from 40th just two years prior. However, we must ensure our efforts to support students living in poverty improve outcomes; our economically disadvantaged students rank 42nd in 4th grade reading when compared to like peers nationally. We believe the policy provisions pertaining to community schools in Senate Bill 429 / House Bill 504 will further efforts to ensure efficacy of this initiative.

Nationally, research consistently indicates that community schools contribute to improved student achievement, attendance, graduation rates, and family engagement while reducing disciplinary issues and addressing chronic absenteeism. A synthesis of 143 studies confirmed that community schools showed statistically significant improvements in test scores, GPA, and high school graduation rates.¹⁶

A RAND Corporation study on the New York City Community Schools Initiative found that community schools reduced chronic absenteeism by 5.6 percentage points in the first year, leading later to measurable gains in math and ELA scores.¹⁷ Research conducted by the Annenberg Institute at Brown University confirmed that attendance improvements in community schools often precede and predict long-term academic gains, underscoring the importance of holistic interventions.¹⁸ Community schools may help close opportunity gaps for marginalized students. Some models, such as City Connects in Boston, have successfully reduced disparities for low-income families, dual-language learners, and students with disabilities.¹⁹

¹⁵ Coalition for Community Schools. (2021). *What is a Community School?* Institute for Educational Leadership. Retrieved from <https://www.communityschools.org>.

¹⁶ Goldman, B., Gracie, J., & Porter, S. R. (2023, October). *Can individualized student supports improve economic outcomes for children in high-poverty schools?* Harvard University.

¹⁷ Johnston, W. R., Engberg, J., Opper, I. M., Sontag-Padilla, L., & Xenakis, L. (2020). *Illustrating the Promise of Community Schools: An Assessment of the Impact of the New York City Community Schools Initiative*. RAND Corporation.

¹⁸ Covelli, L., Engberg, J., & Opper, I. M. (2022). *Leading Indicators of Long-Term Success in Community Schools: Evidence from New York City*. EdWorkingPaper No. 22-669. Annenberg Institute at Brown University.

¹⁹ Bohannon, A., Owusu, I., Ilamaran, A., & Hernandez, M. (2025). *Community Schools: An Overview of the Evidence*. NORC at the University of Chicago.

Community schools provide a strong return on investment, with estimates suggesting a \$3 to \$15 social return for every dollar invested.²⁰ These benefits extend beyond students to their families and communities, improving economic stability, access to healthcare, and overall well-being.

Community schools have demonstrated positive economic returns by increasing student earnings in adulthood, as found in studies conducted by Harvard University.²¹

In Maryland, we are beginning to see positive impacts of the community school model. Analysis indicates that community schools operating for five or more years have statistically significantly higher attendance rates than non-community schools.²² Surveys conducted by the Maryland Center for Community Schools at Towson University shows that students in community schools feel more engaged, supported, and safe; have stronger staff-student relationships; receive more academic and behavioral supports; and show greater respect for diversity - when compared to non-community schools.²³

A recent analysis of Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP) data shows that schools with a poverty level greater than 80%, which have been implementing the community school strategy for a longer period of time, experienced an increase of 6 percentage points in literacy performance between 2022 and 2024. In contrast, schools with a poverty level below 40% saw an increase of only 3 percentage points.

Table 2: MCAP Literacy Proficiency by School Poverty Level

School Poverty Level	ELA 2022	ELA 2023	ELA 2024	Change (in percentage points)
Low (0-39%)	60.3%	62.5%	63.1%	+2.8
Modest (40-59%)	37.3%	39.1%	39.2%	+2.0
Concentrated Poverty (60-79%)	25.0%	27.5%	27.9%	+2.9
Highly Concentrated Poverty (80-100%)	13.0%	16.6%	19.4%	+6.4

School poverty categories are defined using 2024 data with the same schools included in each category in all three years. Low poverty schools are defined as 0-40% economically disadvantaged students, Modest schools are 40-<60%, Concentration of Poverty schools are 60-80%, and High Concentration of Poverty schools are 80-100%.

²⁰ Goldman, B., Gracie, J., & Porter, S. R. (2023, October). *Can individualized student supports improve economic outcomes for children in high-poverty schools?* Harvard University.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Durham, R., & Connolly, F. *Baltimore Community Schools Evaluation Report*. (2017).

²³ Durham, R., Shiller, J., & McDowell, J. (2024). *Building Better Learning Environments: The Positive Impact of Community Schools on School Climate*. Maryland Coalition for Community Schools. Winter 2024-25 Research Brief.

One community school that started implementing the community school strategy over the past four years had a chronic absenteeism rate of 51.4% at the end of the 2020-2021 school year. By the end of the 2023-2024 school year, this percentage decreased to 20.8%. Another community school recorded a chronic absenteeism rate of 52.8% in the 2020-2021 school year, which fell to 22.5% by the end of the 2023-2024 school year. During the 2023-2024 school year, 10 community schools in Wicomico County provided over 54,000 pounds of food to students and families through food pantries.

The Office of Community Schools at MSDE plays a pivotal role in advancing this work by:

- Developing tools and resources for community school leaders to ensure consistency and effectiveness in implementation;
- Providing continuous technical assistance and professional learning opportunities for community school coordinators;
- Partnering with national experts and leveraging partnerships with local leaders to facilitate capacity-building opportunities and offer level-setting meetings that align stakeholders' understanding of the strategy; and
- Working alongside the Governor's Office of Children to identify opportunities to strengthen community schools by connecting them with state agency resources.

Partnerships with the Maryland State Education Association (MSEA) and the National Education Association (NEA) provide structured support through the *Virtual Community School Implementation Institute* and other professional learning programs tailored to the needs of community school coordinators and stakeholders.

Since the inception of the Concentration of Poverty Grants in Fiscal Year 2020, the number of eligible schools has dramatically increased from 193 to 617 community schools across 23 out of 24 LEAs statewide, now representing over 45% of Maryland's public schools. By fiscal year 2026, 715 schools are projected to be designated as community schools, with now more than half of Maryland's public schools receiving this designation.

Table 3: New Community Schools by School Year

School Year	Number of New Community Schools
2019-2020	207
2020-2021	40
2021-2022	45
2022-2023	54
2023-2024	101
2024-2025	170

The expansion of community schools by LEA can be found in the Appendix C. The number of community schools at each poverty level, by LEA, can be found in Appendix D (Fiscal Year 2025) and Appendix E (Fiscal Year 2026). Appendix F outlines the level of funding allocated for community schools each year, broken down by grant type (personnel grant and per-pupil grant).

Maryland’s ambitious expansion of the community schools strategy has outpaced the infrastructure needed for full and effective implementation. We have seen uneven implementation across the state. A 2023 review of Maryland’s community schools conducted by the National Center for Community Schools²⁴ found that school and district staff lacked sufficient knowledge of the community school model and the State’s vision for implementation.

Some community schools were not able to spend down all of their CPG funds. An audit²⁵ involving eight LEAs by the Maryland Office of the Inspector General for Education revealed that clear policies were not provided and that there was insufficient training on the management of CPG funds. According to the audit report, this resulted in \$12.3 million in unused funds from Fiscal Year 2020 to Fiscal Year 2022, with LEAs facing challenges in determining allowable expenditures.

A 2024 Community Schools Legislative Report²⁶ recommends additional support to establish school steering committees, target interventions for absenteeism, and leverage data collection tools for improved accountability and impact analysis starting in August 2025.

²⁴ [Maryland Community Schools Technical Assistance Assets and Needs Assessment](#) (2024), National Center for Community Schools.

²⁵ [Investigative Audit 23-0001-A: Management and Oversight of the Concentration of Poverty Grant](#) (2024), Office of the Inspector General for Education.

²⁶ [Community Schools Legislative Report](#) (2024), Maryland State Department of Education.

Senate Bill 429 / House Bill 504 makes amendments that address implementation challenges, further develop and promote evidence-based practices amongst community school leaders, and ensure funding is used effectively and strategically to meet community needs.

Additional funding alone will not drive effective implementation. As proposed, Senate Bill 429 / House Bill 504 includes policies that would strengthen our community schools program:

- **Evaluation:** Invests in conducting a multi-year process of evaluating the outcomes of implementing the community schools model across the state.
- **Technical Assistance:** Provide community school practitioners with robust learning opportunities and on-the-ground implementation support. Builds on existing partnerships with Maryland institutions of higher education and brings on national partners to provide tiered support in implementing best practices.
- **Expanded Ability for District-Level Coordination:** Enables LEAs with at least two community schools to utilize a portion of their funding for district-level coordination in collaboration with the eligible schools while simultaneously increasing accountability through MSDE approval of CPG budgets.
- **Broadened Funds Usage:** Grants MSDE the authority to adjust the kinds of expenditures that are allowable based on evidence-based practices and demonstrated needs.
- **Additional Staffing:** Expands beyond the current two-person MSDE Community Schools team to enable differentiated support across districts.

The Blueprint's expansion of the community school model is evidence-based and being implemented with intention across the State. A program evaluation will improve the efficacy of implementation, assessing where the model is being used effectively and where implementation adjustments are needed. While much of the existing research on Maryland's community school strategy has focused on Baltimore City, a statewide evaluation is essential to understand its impact across diverse geographic and demographic contexts fully. Maryland's LEAs are implementing community schools in urban settings like Baltimore City, suburban communities like Howard County, and rural areas like Caroline County, each with unique challenges and opportunities.

A comprehensive evaluation will provide critical insights into how the community school model operates in these distinct settings, ensuring that policies and funding strategies are tailored to the specific needs of each region. By assessing implementation across urban, suburban, and rural districts, Maryland can develop data-driven solutions that maximize impact, enhance best practices, and ensure equitable access to resources for all students, regardless of where they live. A statewide approach will position Maryland as a national leader in evidence-based, adaptable community school implementation, demonstrating how this strategy can thrive in any setting when adequately supported.

Senate Bill 429 / House Bill 504 calls for a statewide evaluation and the launch of a technical assistance network that would enhance the ability of schools to track progress, refine their

approaches, and continuously improve outcomes for students and families. These measures would help Maryland fully capitalize on the substantial investments already being made into community schools, maximizing their impact on student achievement, attendance, and family engagement.

Another challenge that LEAs have is under current law, only LEAs with 40 or more community schools are permitted to coordinate services and pool resources at the district level. This allows these LEAs to negotiate better service agreements, streamline implementation, and drive sustainable improvement in student outcomes. Some examples of district-wide uses of CPG funding from Baltimore City Public Schools include:

- Ensuring that all traditional schools have at least one full-time social worker;
- Funding one of two staff positions at the pre-kindergarten Judy Centers;
- Supporting attendance and positive school climates by funding district-level attendance positions, school-based wholeness specialists, and vendors providing mentoring support; and
- Supporting community schools with filling teacher vacancies by funding the Teach for America and Baltimore City Teacher Residency programs.

Senate Bill 429 / House Bill 504 extends this same ability to offer district-level community school support to LEAs with between 2 and 39 eligible schools. Senate Bill 429/House Bill 504 allows these LEAs to use Concentration of Poverty Grant (CPG) funding for contracted services and providing resources and supports more efficiently.

Furthermore, Senate Bill 429 / House Bill 504 requires MSDE to collaborate with LEAs to develop, review, and approve comprehensive implementation plans, reinforcing the use of a clear and sound strategy across the state. Community schools would establish annual measurable goals aligned with the priorities identified in their assets and needs assessments. This accountability measure ensures that each school remains focused on targeted improvements that address student and community needs. Additionally, community school coordinators and principals would be responsible for monitoring progress and utilizing data-driven approaches to continuously refine their strategies. This will ensure greater accountability, stronger oversight, and long-term sustainability while maintaining flexibility to address local needs.

Additionally, Senate Bill 429 / House Bill 504 expands the allowable use of CPG funds to include early literacy and numeracy tutoring, incentives for experienced teachers, and initiatives to address chronic absenteeism - providing targeted interventions that directly impact student success.

By expanding MSDE's capacity to support community schools through additional staffing and regulatory authority, the state will be well-positioned to implement best practices, tailor strategies to the unique needs of each community, and provide national leadership in this transformative educational model. With these enhancements, Maryland is poised to set the gold standard for community schools nationwide, demonstrating how a well-resourced, data-driven, and

equity-focused strategy can drive meaningful improvements in education and community well-being.

Maryland's diverse educational landscape also necessitates expanded staffing beyond the current two-person team at the MSDE Office of Community Schools. Increased personnel within MSDE would enhance the agency's ability to provide differentiated support tailored to the varying needs of community schools across different districts.

The community school provisions outlined in Senate Bill 429 / House Bill 504 will strengthen Maryland's commitment to equitable education by fostering deep, systemic collaboration between schools, families, and communities. By increasing support for this proven strategy, MSDE will be better positioned to cultivate relationships with community partners, facilitate resource-sharing, and ensure the continued success of students in Maryland's community schools.

Educator Development and Retention

Pillar 3 of the Blueprint, focused on College and Career Readiness, is built on an aligned PreK-12 instructional system, starting with a strong foundation in early literacy and numeracy. Similarly, Pillar 2 calls for High Quality and Diverse Teachers and Leaders including systemic professional development that helps teachers improve the performance of their students. We support policy proposals embedded within Senate Bill 429 / House Bill 504 that accelerate progress within these key pillars of the Blueprint.

Academic Excellence Program

Academic outcomes in Maryland reveal substantial gaps in literacy and mathematics proficiency, especially for students from historically disadvantaged backgrounds. The 2023-24 school year data on the Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP) highlight these disparities:

- **Literacy:** Elementary school students had an English Language Arts (ELA) proficiency rate of only 47.2%, with stark gaps between student groups. Students with disabilities had a proficiency rate of 12.7%, multilingual learners showed 23.8% proficiency, and economically disadvantaged students had a 29.5% proficiency rate.
- **Mathematics:** Elementary students displayed a 34.8% proficiency rate. Middle school proficiency was lower, with only 21% of students demonstrating proficiency. The gaps were even more pronounced for multilingual learners (6.3% proficiency), students with disabilities (6.8% proficiency), and economically disadvantaged students (10.9% proficiency).

Another important measure of student achievement is the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), better known as the Nation's Report Card. NAEP is a congressionally mandated assessment of fourth and eighth grade reading and math performance given every two years. NAEP is the only test administered nationwide that allows direct comparison of student achievement across states because all students take the same test. Maryland NAEP scores have dropped dramatically over the last decade. In 2013, Maryland was among the top two highest-performing states on NAEP. By 2022, our ranking had fallen to 40th. From 2022 to 2024, Maryland students demonstrated real progress in reading and modest improvement in math. Our 4th grade reading scores now rank 20th in the nation, up from 40th just two years prior. This is a promising indicator of improvement in early literacy.

Table 4: NAEP State Rankings, 2013-2024

Maryland	Rank (out of 50 states)					
	2013	2015	2017	2019	2022	2024
Grade 4 Reading	2	26	12	25	40	20
Grade 8 Reading	6	18	22	17	25	21
Grade 4 Math	16	29	23	33	42	39
Grade 8 Math	20	25	31	29	42	38
Grade 4 Reading	2	26	12	25	40	20

Figure 7 shows proficiency has declined in all grades and subject areas from 2013 to 2024, and proficiency rates in 2024 are still well below historical performance levels.

Figure 7: NAEP Proficiency Rates, 2013-2024

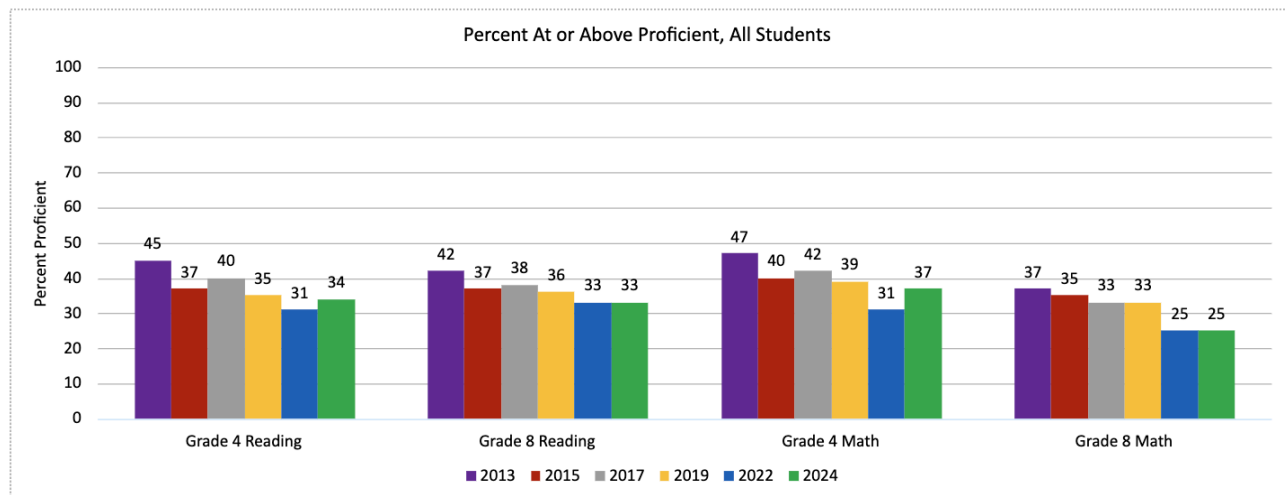
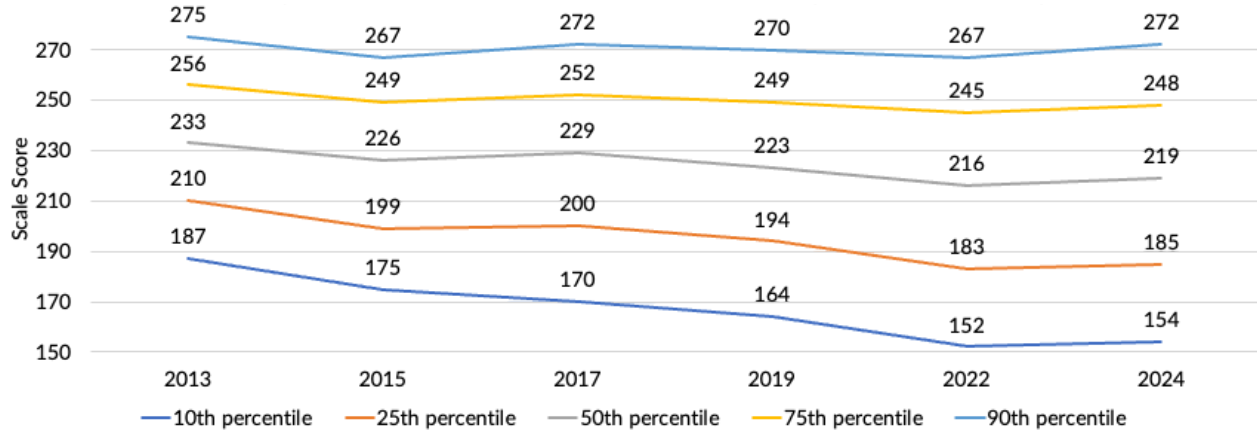


Figure 8 shows the scale score for NAEP in 4th grade reading at each of the benchmark percentile rankings. Each line represents the scale score for the 10th, 25th, 50th, 75th, and 90th percentile in terms of their performance. From 2013 to 2024, the gap between our highest- and lowest-performing students has widened over time. The scale score for our lowest-performing students (at the 10th percentile) has decreased over time. The same is true in 8th grade reading, 4th grade math, and 8th grade math. It will be important for us to monitor this and ensure that we are supporting our teachers to ensure they are prepared to deliver the high-quality core instruction and additional interventions needed to cultivate academic excellence among all learners.

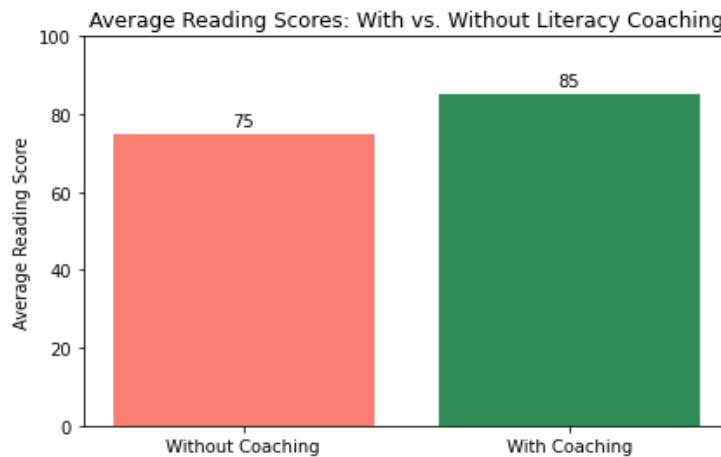
Figure 8: Average Maryland NAEP Scores by Percentile Grouping for Grade 4 Reading



These gaps underscore the need for additional support to improve student outcomes in both literacy and mathematics, particularly for underserved communities. The rising number of teachers on conditional licenses presents a challenge to ensuring high-quality instruction in our classrooms. Many teachers are underqualified or assigned to teach subjects outside their area of expertise. Local school systems need instructional coaches to support these teachers and their students.

In models such as Mississippi’s structured literacy coaching initiative, research has indicated that students in schools with literacy coaches achieved higher reading scores than those without such support. For example, one might see an approximate increase from an average score of 75 (without coaching) to 85 (with coaching).²⁷

Figure 9: Average Reading Scores in Mississippi’s Literacy Coaching Model²⁸

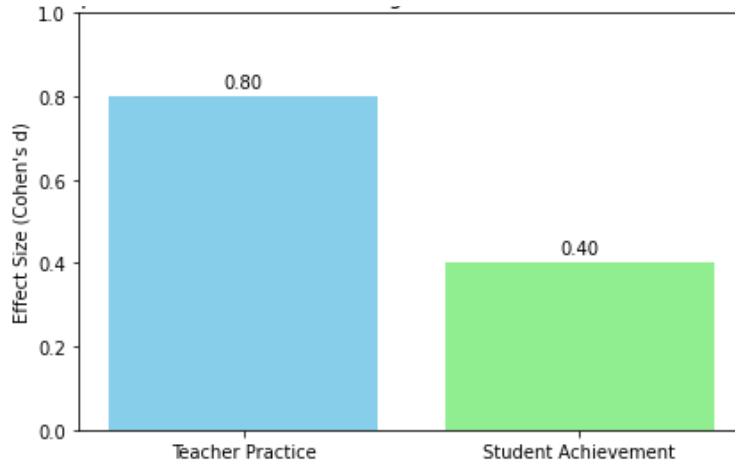


²⁷Folsom, J., Smith, K., Burk, K., & Oakley, N. (2016). Educator outcomes associated with implementation of Mississippi’s K–3 early literacy professional development initiative (NCEE 2016 0018). National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

²⁸Folsom, J., Smith, K., Burk, K., & Oakley, N. (2016). Educator outcomes associated with implementation of Mississippi’s K–3 early literacy professional development initiative (NCEE 2016 0018). National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

In addition, a meta-analysis by Kraft, Blazar, & Hogan (2018) found that instructional coaching has a *large positive effect* on teacher practices (often reflected as a higher effect size) and a *moderate positive effect* on student achievement.²⁹

Figure 10: Impact of Instructional Coaching on Teacher Practices and Student Achievement



Folsom, et al. (2016) found that literacy coaching, when based on a strong model (such as the Science of Reading), leads to improvements in teacher instructional strategies and increased student literacy outcomes because it provides ongoing, professional development that is deeply embedded in teachers' classroom work with students, specific to grade levels or academic content, and focused on research-based practices.

Jim Knight, a leading expert in instructional coaching, emphasizes that effective coaching is built on partnership, active listening, and evidence-based practices. His research highlights the importance of collaborative goal setting, where coaches and educators work as equals to identify areas for growth. Knight advocates for an approach grounded in principles such as equality, choice, voice, reflection, dialogue, and reciprocity. This approach ensures that coaching is not top-down but rather a collaborative process that values teacher expertise and fosters mutual learning. Knight stresses that coaching should be non-evaluative, creating a safe and supportive environment where teachers feel empowered to take risks, reflect honestly, and make meaningful improvements to their practice. By prioritizing teacher autonomy, trust, and continuous dialogue, effective coaching empowers educators to refine their practice and enhance student learning.³⁰

Traditional one-time workshops often fail to drive long-term instructional improvements. Research has consistently shown that professional development initiatives must be sustained and integrated into classroom practices to have lasting effects. Coaching, particularly when embedded in professional learning, has proven to be an effective method for ensuring continuous improvement among educators.

²⁹ Kraft, M. A., Blazar, D., & Hogan, D. (2018). *The effect of teacher coaching on instruction and achievement: A meta-analysis of the coaching literature*. *Review of Educational Research*, 88(4), 547–588. DOI: 10.3102/0034654318774303

³⁰ Knight, J. (2007). *Instructional Coaching: A Partnership Approach to Improving Instruction*. Corwin Press.

High-quality professional development is an investment in both student achievement and in our teacher workforce. It enhances teacher working conditions by fostering a sense of support, collaboration, and professional growth. Research from the Learning Policy Institute highlights that effective professional development improves instructional practices, leading to greater job satisfaction and lower attrition rates. Sustained learning opportunities allow teachers to refine their skills, adapt to evolving educational demands, and feel more confident in their roles. A study by Kraft & Papay (2014) found that teachers working in schools with strong professional learning environments showed greater long-term improvement in effectiveness and were more likely to remain in the profession.³¹ By prioritizing meaningful professional learning, schools can create a culture of continuous growth, reducing burnout and turnover while improving student outcomes.

Learning Forward’s Standards for Professional Learning provides a strong framework for instructional coaching.³² A meta-analysis conducted by the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders at the American Institutes for Research found that nearly all 2022 Standards had substantial positive effects on teacher instruction. Among the significant findings, improvements in instruction ranged from 0.42 standard deviations for Equity Foundations to 0.98 standard deviations for Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction. Similar trends were observed in student achievement, with positive average effects across all standards, as shown in the charts below.

³¹ Kraft, M. A., & Papay, J. P. (2014). Can Professional Environments in Schools Promote Teacher Development? Explaining Heterogeneity in Returns to Teaching Experience. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 36(4), 476–500. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0162373713519496>

³² Garrett, R., Zhang, Q., Citkowitz, M., & Burr, L. (2021). How Learning Forward’s Standards for Professional Learning Are Associated With Teacher Instruction and Student Achievement: A Meta-Analysis. https://www.air.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/Learning-Forward-Standards-for-Professional-Learning-Meta-Analysis-Report-December-2021_0.pdf

Figure 11: Average Effect Sizes of Teacher Instruction for Each 2022 Learning Forward Professional Learning Standard

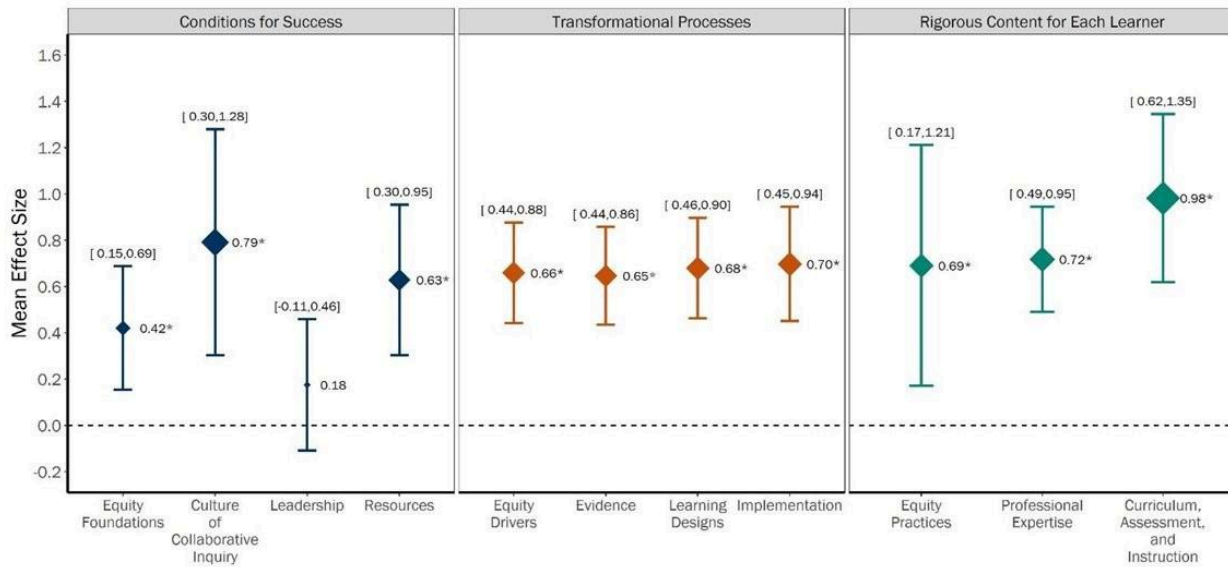
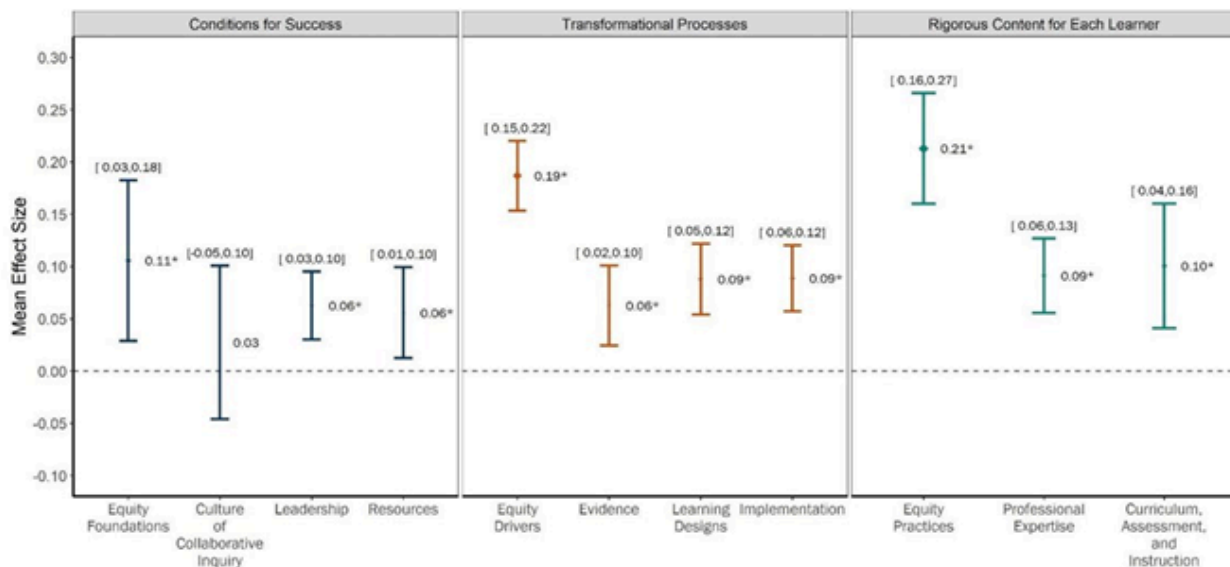


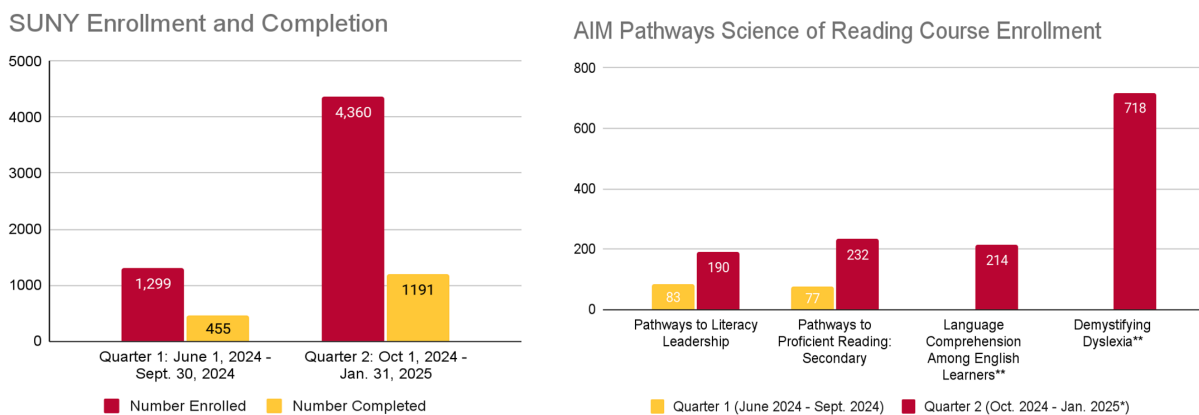
Figure 12: Average Effect Sizes of Student Achievement for Each 2022 Learning Forward Professional Learning Standard



MSDE has already begun addressing these challenges through strategic initiatives such as mentoring programs for conditionally licensed teachers and targeted professional learning for paraprofessionals seeking certification. These initiatives are designed to directly address the teacher shortage and ensure that all educators, especially those serving historically underserved student groups, receive the support needed to improve their practices and student outcomes.

MSDE is not only ready for this kind of investment, but we have already made significant strides in laying the foundation for success. Through the Science of Reading (SoR) micro-credentials, funded by a \$6.8 million grant from the IBIS Group, we are seeing positive feedback from teachers and LEAs, confirming that our efforts are already yielding results. As of January 2025, 4,360 Maryland educators have enrolled in the SoR coursework from SUNY, 1,354 educators have enrolled in the SoR coursework from the AIM Institute, and 90 participants from Maryland Institutes of Higher Learning have engaged in this offering. These courses are expanding due to strong demand. One teacher shared: “I loved this course and feel it is very meaningful to the work I do. I have taken many aspects of this course and applied them to my classroom and lessons.” This feedback underscores the real-world value and application of our professional development.

Figure 13: Science of Reading Course Enrollment and Completion



Historically, there has been a perception that MSDE does not deliver effective professional development. As such, the Department has made a clear shift in our approach, and results are promising. MSDE’s offerings, such as the Pathways to Literacy Leadership course, are fostering leadership development at the district level, and professional learning opportunities for literacy coaches continue to see growing participation and high levels of engagement. With a 3.87 out of 4.0 rating on key effectiveness indicators from participants, our professional development is resonating with educators. These efforts reflect our commitment to transforming professional learning for educators in Maryland, and the positive outcomes in early literacy and teacher development demonstrate that MSDE is poised for continued success in driving improvements in educational outcomes.

Senate Bill 429 / House Bill 504 proposes the creation of the Academic Excellence Program (AEP) to deploy instructional coaches and coordinators of professional learning (CPL) to schools that need them. Similar programs in other states have driven significant increases in student achievement³³.

³³ Slungaard Mumma, K., & Winters, M. A. (2023). The effect of retention under Mississippi's test-based promotion policy.

The program's goals include:

1. **Student Outcomes:** Improving proficiency rates in literacy and mathematics, especially among historically underserved student groups.
2. **Educator Efficacy:** Building teacher confidence and competence in delivering high-quality, evidence-based instruction.
3. **Systemic Sustainability:** Creating coaching and professional learning structures that will continue to operate even after initial funding phases out.

Through the Academic Excellence Program, state instructional coaches will be hired and deployed to ensure that literacy and mathematics instruction improves across the state. Key components include:

- **Coaches for Literacy and Mathematics:** Coaches will support teachers in both core subjects, ensuring that educators have the tools and support to provide effective instruction aligned with the Science of Reading and mathematics standards.
- **Regional Project Managers:** Funded by philanthropy, these managers will hire and train the coaches and ensure fidelity to the research-based coaching mode. Through a regional structure, these managers will ensure alignment with local needs and provide guidance based on the unique needs of each LEA's literacy and mathematics programs.

Coaches will work directly with teachers, facilitating collaborative learning communities and providing personalized feedback. Coaches will focus on strengthening Tier 1 instruction and embedding research-based practices into daily instruction. The coaching cadre may include:

- Literacy coaches
- Mathematics coaches (hired through an RFP process)
- Data coaches
- Early childhood coaches
- Special education coaches

Coordinators of Professional Learning (CPLs) will be hired to lead targeted professional development in schools. The key responsibilities of CPLs will include:

- **Access to Professional Learning:** Ensuring that all educators, from paraprofessionals to principals, have access to high-quality professional development, including free services to build capacity in critical areas like literacy, mathematics, special education, and other content areas.
- **Learning Walks and Data Use:** CPLs will conduct learning walks in collaboration with school leaders, collecting data to inform professional learning plans tailored to the needs of individual schools.
- **Tailored Support:** Schools will be able to request specific professional learning sessions from CPLs to address their unique needs. CPLs will also provide asynchronous and synchronous learning opportunities for educators at all levels.

The Educators in Residence (EIR) model that is used in other states will be utilized to hire new coaches and coordinators, ensuring that schools have access to high-quality expertise while minimizing the need for additional state-allocated positions. This approach ensures that MSDE is not expanding its own staff but rather leveraging external support to build educator capacity within LEAs. The EIR model focuses on:

- **Building Educator Capacity:** Instead of adding more staff to MSDE, this initiative enhances the capacity of educators selected to serve as coaches by providing them with world-class training, a strong community of practice, and opportunities to hone and sharpen their content-specific coaching skills. This model emphasizes the development of educators who are not only equipped to coach but also to lead and innovate within their schools and districts.
- **Identification of High-Performing Educators:** Through collaboration with LEAs, high-performing educators with strong leadership and coaching potential will be selected to serve as Educators in Residence.
- **Tailored Support:** EIRs will collaborate with coaches and CPLs to implement evidence-based practices aligned with state and local priorities.

Some superintendents have noted that they already have instructional coaches at the LEA level. In fact, a survey conducted last summer confirmed that many LEAs do employ coaches. However, no school district has a coach in every school, and some have only a handful. The Academic Excellence Program (AEP) is designed to supplement and enhance the existing efforts of LEAs, not replace them.

By deploying a statewide cadre of instructional coaches, we can ensure that coaching is grounded in consistent, high-quality training aligned with research-based best practices. Currently, instructional coaching varies widely across districts, despite clear research on what makes coaching effective. This initiative allows us to set a statewide standard for excellence in instructional coaching. State coaches will work collaboratively with LEA coaches, providing resources, professional learning, and structured support that strengthens local capacity. Additionally, many state coaches will eventually return to their home districts, bringing with them enhanced expertise and leadership skills that will further elevate instructional coaching at the LEA level. A key component of this initiative is joint training—LEA coaches will have the opportunity to participate in the same professional learning as state coaches. In fact, LEA coach training has already begun, ensuring alignment and coherence across districts.

Ultimately, this program is about long-term, systemic improvement—supporting teachers, building sustainable coaching models within LEAs, and ensuring that literacy and math instruction statewide is aligned to rigorous, evidence-based standards.

By creating an EIR model, MSDE provides a unique opportunity to strengthen pre-existing structures in LEAs. The Academic Excellence Program is designed to enhance and supplement

existing structures in LEAs, by deploying a cadre of coaches from the state to provide support and ensure consistency in coaching experiences. Although several LEAs have reported having coaches already staffed, instructional coaching from district to district varies, despite clear research on what effective coaching looks like. The deployment of state coaches allows MSDE to set high standards and norm expectations for LEA coaches by providing training and resources for all instructional coaches in Maryland. By streamlining training at the state level using an EIR model, many state coaches will, after a few years, return to their districts and serve as LEA coaches or in other key leadership roles within LEAs. The Academic Excellence Program is as much about the positive impacts on LEAs in the long run as it is about the positive impacts on the individual teachers who will work with the state coaches.

To ensure accountability and continuous improvement, the Academic Excellence Program will incorporate a robust evaluation framework. The evaluation will focus on:

1. **Student Outcomes:** Tracking literacy and mathematics proficiency gains, with an emphasis on closing achievement gaps.
2. **Implementation Fidelity:** Monitoring the execution of the program across schools and LEAs.
3. **Data Analysis:** Collecting and analyzing data on teacher practices, student outcomes, and program fidelity to inform decisions.
4. **Stakeholder Input:** Incorporating feedback from educators, school leaders, and families to refine program strategies.

The Academic Excellence Program proposed by Senate Bill 429 / House Bill 504 represents a comprehensive approach to addressing the critical needs in literacy and mathematics education in Maryland's schools. By investing in the professional development of educators, the program is well-positioned to bridge performance gaps and ensure all students have access to high-quality, evidence-based instruction.

Maryland School Leadership Academy

Research shows that effective school leadership has a significant impact on both teacher retention and student achievement. According to a study by the Wallace Foundation, schools led by strong leaders experience higher teacher satisfaction, increased teacher retention rates, and improved student performance. In fact, school leadership is one of the most significant in-school factors influencing teacher retention. Teachers are more likely to stay in schools where they feel supported by their leaders, with leadership providing clear expectations, professional development opportunities, and a culture of trust and collaboration³⁴. Leadership development is integral to the school improvement process.

³⁴Wallace Foundation, *The Role of School Leadership in Improving Student Achievement*, (2013). Available at: <https://www.wallacefoundation.org>.

It is critical that we not only develop strong school leadership, but we retain those leaders for a positive impact on teachers and students. Maryland school districts experience a 78% retention rate of school leaders in districts, losing nearly 1 in 5 administrators each year. This level of turnover causes instability in school systems, negatively impacting teachers and students. Research notes that inadequate preparation and professional development is a leading reason cited in principals' decisions to leave their jobs. The same study shows that better-prepared principals, including those who have had mentors, are less stressed and stay longer, even if they are in high-need schools. By providing appropriate support, principals feel more efficacious, and better about their work, making them more likely to stay. These findings suggest the importance of supporting principals in building their capacity to do the complex work required in their schools³⁵.

Since we know effective school leadership drives teacher retention and student outcomes, one of the highest-leverage investments Maryland can make is providing training and mentoring for our existing and future school leaders. Senate Bill 429 / House Bill 504 proposes the creation of a Maryland School Leader Academy designed to cultivate both sitting and aspiring school administrators' skills in two essential areas:

- **Instructional Leadership and Professional Learning:** Build teacher capacity through lesson observations, instructional coaching, and effective collaborative planning teams focused on internalizing academic standards and curriculum and using academic data from formative assessments to inform instruction.
- **Teacher Recruitment and Retention:** Use proven strategies for recruiting and retaining a high-quality and diverse teaching team, distribute leadership among administrators and teacher leaders, and prepare teachers who want to become school leaders in the future through training and on-the-job learning.

Drawing on the principles of the Strategic Education Research Partnership (SERP) Coherence Framework³⁶, this Academy would focus on aligning school leadership actions with broader educational goals. Strong, coherent leadership fosters a unified approach across all levels, from administrators to teachers, driving improvements in instructional practice and student outcomes.

The Maryland School Leader Academy, as proposed, would charge MSDE with offering a tuition-free, cohort-based training program designed to equip leaders with the tools to create such supportive school environments. This approach aligns with the SERP Coherence Framework's emphasis on building leadership capacity, fostering shared responsibility, and creating organizational structures that support continuous improvement in teaching, learning, and teacher retention.

³⁵ Levin, S. & Bradley, K. (2019). *Understanding and Addressing Principal Turnover: A Review of the Research*. Reston, VA: National Association of Secondary School Principals.

³⁶ Forman, M. L., Stosich, E. L., & Bocala, C. (2017). *The internal coherence framework: Creating the conditions for continuous improvement in schools*. Harvard Education Press.

Building upon the initial success of the 2024-2025 Blueprint Leadership Training program, the proposed Maryland Leadership Academy extends and improves upon the current training model. In January 2025, 892 school leaders representing all 24 local education agencies (LEAs) participated in the Blueprint Leadership Training across five regions. The training refreshed instrumental skills for instructional leaders, while leveraging a rare opportunity for principals and assistant principals to collaborate with other school leaders from across the state. Survey data from the Blueprint Leadership Training indicated positive results in all categories assessed. Participants rated the professional development at an average of 3.7 out of 4, including the relevance to their role and coherence with the larger vision and priorities of MSDE. Additional feedback from the training shared a sentiment of gratitude for a collaborative experience and a feeling of empowerment when returning to their respective schools. This Blueprint Leadership Training program is a strong start for growing the capacity of school leaders.

The creation of the Maryland Leadership Academy would allow the state to sustain this progress and build on it. An essential component of the Academy is the inclusion of mentorship for principals. Similar to other professions, research shows the benefits of providing school leaders with mentors³⁷. Research indicates that mentoring programs for school leaders can significantly enhance their effectiveness and positively impact school performance. A study published in the *School Leadership Review* highlights that mentoring is one of the most effective strategies to develop leadership skills in new principals. The study emphasizes the importance of effective mentoring strategies and the mentor-mentee relationship in fostering principals' growth, particularly in improving teacher quality and student achievement.³⁸ Additionally, a report by the Wallace Foundation titled "Good Principals Aren't Born — They're Mentored" discusses the critical role of mentoring in the development of effective school principals. The report provides insights into how structured mentoring programs can prepare principals to lead schools successfully, ultimately benefiting student outcomes.

The Maryland School Leader Academy's proposed activities include pairing participants with experienced mentors who have demonstrated success as school principals. MSDE, in collaboration with LEAs, would identify these mentors, who may receive stipends for supporting the development of Maryland's future school leaders.

As proposed, the Maryland School Leader Academy would play a critical role in strengthening leadership within Maryland's community schools and low-performing schools. To maximize its impact, the Academy would prioritize the selection of participants who are either currently serving in these schools or are committed to transitioning into them. By focusing on these high-need areas,

³⁷ The Wallace Foundation. (2007). Good principals aren't born—they're mentored: How leadership coaching can build stronger school leaders. The Wallace Foundation. Retrieved from <https://wallacefoundation.org/sites/default/files/2023-09/Good-Principals-Arent-Born-Theyre-Mentored.pdf>

³⁸ Bertrand, Lisa A.; Stader, David; and Copeland, Sherry (2018) "Supporting New School Leaders Through Mentoring," *School Leadership Review*: Vol. 13 : Iss. 2 , Article 7. Available at: <https://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/slr/vol13/iss2/7>

the program aims to cultivate a pipeline of highly skilled, equity-driven leaders who can address the unique challenges faced by these schools.

Through targeted professional development, mentorship from experienced principals, and access to research-based leadership strategies, Academy participants would be equipped to foster school cultures that promote academic excellence, student well-being, and community engagement. This policy-driven approach ensures that resources are strategically allocated to the schools where strong, effective leadership is most needed, ultimately driving sustainable improvements in student outcomes and school performance.

To ensure long-term sustainability and impact, the Academy would leverage existing funds from the Blueprint Leadership Academy along with new state commitments. The Blueprint laid the groundwork by allocating funds to provide training for superintendents, local school board leadership, and principals. This policy builds on this idea of aligning across components of the educational ecosystem - school leadership, district leadership, school board leadership, MSDE, and AIB - to ensure best practices are shared across all parts of our public school system.

Summary

We remain deeply committed to realizing the promise and vision of the Blueprint, building a world-class public education system for all of Maryland's students, and doing what it takes to get it right. The stakes are high – the Blueprint is truly a once-in-a-generation opportunity and represents our nation's biggest bet on public education.

We understand that achieving the goals of the Blueprint requires thoughtful, deliberate implementation focused on student outcomes. Our mission remains clear: deliver a world-class education for every child in Maryland. We look forward to partnering with the Maryland General Assembly and stakeholders across the state to ensure every child in Maryland receives the world-class education they deserve.

Appendix A: Teacher Vacancies and Conditional Licensure by LEA (FY 2025)

Local Education Agency	Fully Licensed Teachers	Conditionally Licensed Teachers	Vacancies	Total Teacher Positions	Percentage of Fully Licensed Teachers	Percentage of Conditionally Licensed Teachers	Vacancy Rate
Allegany	632	1	7	640	99%	0%	1%
Anne Arundel	5,498	714	67	6,279	88%	11%	1%
Baltimore City	4,416	917	188	5,521	80%	17%	3%
Baltimore	6,550	877	74	7,501	87%	12%	1%
Calvert	940	37	10	987	95%	4%	1%
Caroline	399	32	0	431	93%	7%	0%
Carroll	1,728	90	5	1,823	95%	5%	0%
Cecil	1,016	50	0	1,066	95%	5%	0%
Charles	1,624	334	62	2,020	80%	17%	3%
Dorchester	299	54	12	365	82%	15%	3%
Frederick	2,873	215	38	3,126	92%	7%	1%
Garrett	281	6	1	288	98%	2%	0%
Harford	2,479	176	2	2,657	93%	7%	0%
Howard	4,123	155	52	4,330	95%	4%	1%
Kent	141	17	4	162	87%	11%	2%
Montgomery	11,145	666	157	11,968	93%	6%	1%
Prince George's	7,795	1,582	901	10,278	76%	17%	9%
Queen Anne's	537	15	0	552	97%	3%	0%
Somerset	1,013	73	8	1,094	93%	7%	1%
St. Mary's	214	17	15	246	87%	7%	6%
Talbot	328	17	5	350	94%	5%	1%
Washington	1,534	42	3	1,579	97%	3%	0%
Wicomico	1,160	69	5	1,234	94%	6%	0%
Worcester	593	6	4	603	98%	1%	1%
Totals	57,318	6,162	1,620	65,100	88%	10%	2%

Appendix B: Teacher Vacancies and Conditional Licensure by Licensure Area (FY 2025)

Licensure Area	Fully Licensed Teachers	Conditionally Licensed Teachers	Vacancies	Total Teacher Positions	Percentage of Fully Licensed Teachers	Percentage of Conditionally Licensed Teachers	Vacancy Rate	Percentage of Positions Filled without a Fully Licensed Teacher
Arts	4,214	491	96	4,801	88%	10%	2%	12%
Career / Technology Education (7-12)	1,376	301	53	1,730	80%	18%	3%	20%
Computer Science	163	50	5	218	75%	23%	2%	25%
Early Childhood (PreK-3)	11,447	689	124	12,260	93%	6%	1%	7%
Elementary Education (1-6)	15,117	1,095	392	16,604	91%	7%	2%	9%
Environmental Education (PreK-12)	20	20	0	40	50%	50%	0%	50%
English (7-12)	3,868	420	39	4,327	89%	10%	1%	11%
ESOL (PreK-12)	1,273	190	104	1,567	81%	13%	7%	19%
Health (PreK-12)	1,015	48	14	1,077	94%	5%	1%	6%
Mathematics (7-12)	2,926	291	33	3,250	90%	9%	1%	10%
Middle School Areas (4-9)	533	55	139	727	73%	9%	19%	27%
Physical Education (PreK-12)	1,904	235	29	2,168	88%	11%	1%	12%
Science (7-12)	3,070	337	35	3,442	89%	10%	1%	11%
Social Studies (7-12)	3,387	306	24	3,717	91%	8%	1%	9%
Special Education	4,937	1,385	459	6,781	73%	22%	7%	27%
World Language (PreK-12)	1,370	231	69	1,670	82%	14%	4%	18%
Other Teaching Areas	698	18	5	721	97%	3%	1%	3%
Total	57,318	6,162	1,620	65,100	88%	10%	2%	12%

Appendix C: Number of Community Schools by Local Education Agency by Year

Local Education Agency	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026
Allegany	1	4	4	4	6	14	17
Anne Arundel	2	9	12	15	23	38	47
Baltimore City	126	112	117	117	148	150	150
Baltimore County	4	10	22	38	55	91	110
Calvert	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Caroline	0	1	1	2	3	8	9
Carroll	0	0	0	0	1	2	4
Cecil	1	3	3	4	4	9	11
Charles	0	0	1	2	5	10	14
Dorchester	5	5	5	5	6	11	10
Frederick	2	3	2	4	5	9	10
Garrett	0	0	0	0	1	5	5
Harford	3	3	7	7	10	16	17
Howard	0	0	0	0	1	8	12
Kent	0	0	2	2	2	3	5
Montgomery	8	16	19	26	34	53	77
Prince George's	45	63	75	92	107	129	148
Queen Anne's	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
St. Mary's	0	1	1	1	2	3	5
Somerset	4	4	4	5	6	7	7
Talbot	0	0	0	1	1	2	5
Washington	0	5	7	8	12	18	24
Wicomico	5	7	9	9	10	23	16
Worcester	0	0	0	3	4	6	7
SEED School	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Totals	207	247	292	346	447	617	715

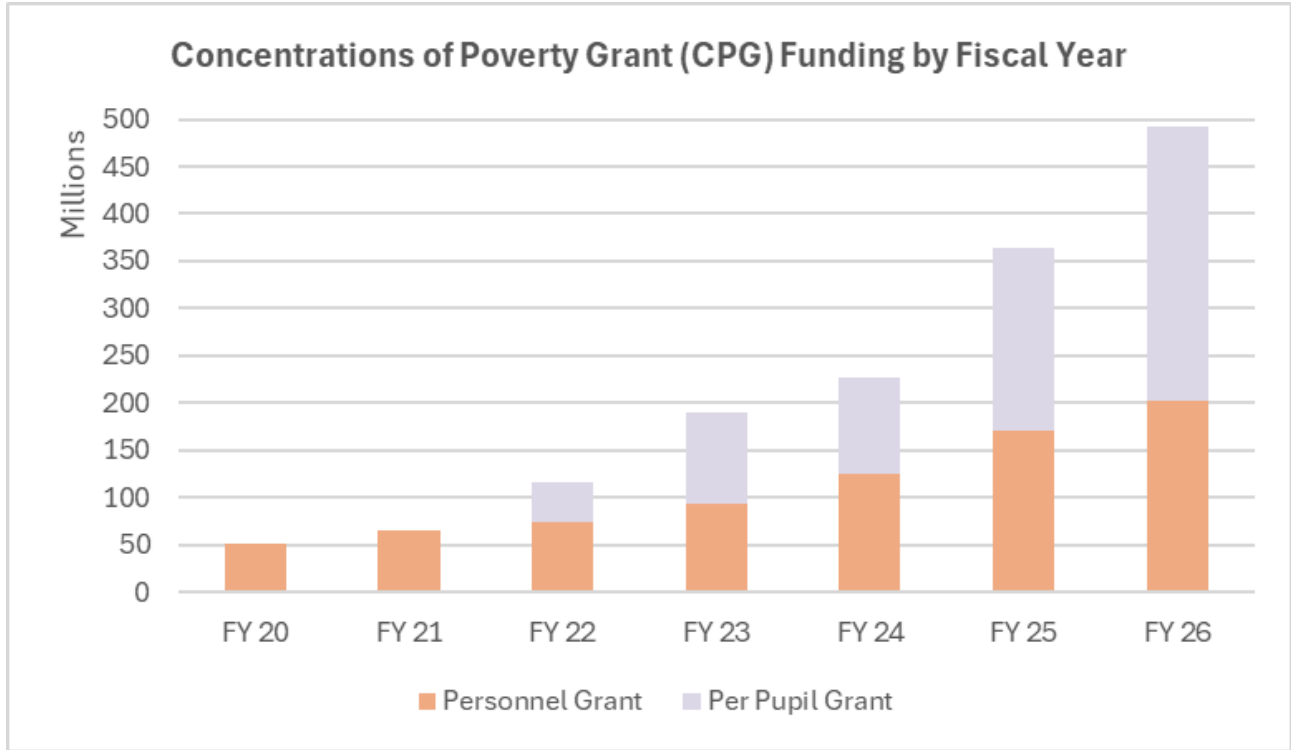
Appendix D: Fiscal Year 2025 Distribution of Community Schools by Poverty Level

Local Education Agency	55-59.4%	60-64.4%	65-69.4%	70-79.4%	>=80%	# Schools	% of State Total
Allegany	5	2	3	3	1	14	2%
Anne Arundel	10	4	6	8	10	38	6%
Baltimore City				1	149	150	24%
Baltimore County	17	27	21	20	6	91	15%
Calvert							0.0%
Caroline	1	4	1		2	8	1%
Carroll		1			1	2	0.3%
Cecil	1	4	2	2		9	1%
Charles	4	1	2	2	1	10	2%
Dorchester	1	1	2	5	2	11	2%
Frederick	3	1	1	1	3	9	1%
Garrett	1	3	1			5	0.8%
Harford	4	1	3	5	3	16	3%
Howard	4	4				8	1%
Kent	1			2		3	0.5%
Montgomery	5	12	15	16	5	53	9%
Prince George's	13	8	14	36	58	129	21%
Queen Anne's			1			1	0.2%
St. Mary's	1			2		3	0.5%
Somerset			1	6		7	1%
Talbot	1			1		2	0.3%
Washington	3	3	4	3	5	18	3%
Wicomico	12	5	6			23	4%
Worcester	2		1	3		6	1%
SEED School					1	1	0.2%
Grand Total	90	81	84	116	247	617	
Percent of Total	15%	13%	14%	19%	40%		

Appendix E: Fiscal Year 2026 Distribution of Community Schools by Poverty Level

Local Education Agency	55-59.4%	60-64.4%	65-69.4%	70-79.4%	>=80%	# Schools	% of State Total
Allegany	8	2	3	3	1	17	2%
Anne Arundel	17	6	6	8	10	47	6%
Baltimore City				1	149	150	21%
Baltimore County	31	33	21	20	6	111	15%
Calvert	1	1				2	0.4%
Caroline	2	4	1		2	9	1%
Carroll	2	1			1	4	1%
Cecil	1	6	2	2		11	2%
Charles	8	1	2	2	1	14	2%
Dorchester	1	1	2	5	2	11	2%
Frederick	3	2	1	1	3	10	1%
Garrett	1	3	1			5	1%
Harford	4	2	3	5	3	17	2%
Howard	7	5				12	2%
Kent	2	1		2		5	1%
Montgomery	16	24	16	16	5	77	11%
Prince George's	21	19	14	36	58	148	20%
Queen Anne's	1		1			2	0.3%
St. Mary's	2	1		2		5	1%
Somerset			1	6		7	1%
Talbot	3	1		1		5	1%
Washington	7	5	4	3	5	24	3%
Wicomico	12	5	6			23	3%
Worcester	3		1	3		7	1%
SEED School					1	1	0.1%
Grand Total	154	123	85	116	247	724	
Percent of Total	21%	17%	12%	16%	34%		

Appendix F: Concentrations of Poverty Grant (CPG) Funding by Fiscal Year



	FY 20	FY 21	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24	FY 25	FY 26
Number of Community Schools	207	247	292	346	447	617	715
80-100% Schools	Personnel	Personnel	Personnel Per-Pupil	Personnel Per-Pupil	Personnel Per-Pupil	Personnel Per-Pupil	Personnel Per-Pupil
75-79% Schools		Personnel	Personnel	Personnel Per-Pupil	Personnel Per-Pupil	Personnel Per-Pupil	Personnel Per-Pupil
70-74% Schools			Personnel	Personnel	Personnel Per-Pupil	Personnel Per-Pupil	Personnel Per-Pupil
65-69% Schools				Personnel	Personnel	Personnel Per-Pupil	Personnel Per-Pupil
60-64% Schools					Personnel	Personnel	Personnel Per-Pupil
55-59% Schools						Personnel	Personnel