



January 24, 2025

Chair Feldman and Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committees:

On behalf of College Board, I am providing written testimony to SB 283 (McCray), regarding prohibiting collection of exam fees for low-income students' rigorous coursework. Specifically, this testimony focuses on Advanced Placement opportunities for students.

College Board, a mission-driven not-for-profit that helps connect students to college and career success through programs like Advanced Placement and the SAT, has a long and productive history of collaborating with Maryland districts.

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future has provided an "extraordinary opportunity and a pledge that all — and all means all — Maryland students receive an excellent and equitable education, especially those who have been historically underserved." We share your ambitions.

Pillar 3 of the Blueprint allows for a College and Career Readiness pathway for students, calling on College Board to provide a "competitive entry college preparatory program, chosen by the county board, consisting of...Advanced Placement (AP) courses specified by the College Board." The legislation also funds the cost of AP Exam fees for students in 11th and 12th grades once students meet a CCR benchmark.

Our research shows that starting college and career pathways early in high school changes students' trajectories and introduces and hones skills prized in the workplace: research, oral presentation, and teamwork. We have found that taking one AP course in 10th grade increases students' opportunities for the rest of high school, whether that path is AP, dual enrollment, or Career and Technical Education.

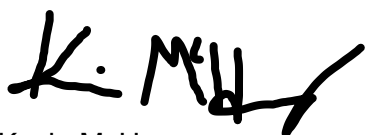
SB 283 is necessary because:

- Since most four-year colleges give students credit, placement, or both in subsequent coursework on the basis of AP Exam scores, the estimated potential tuition savings for low-income Maryland students scoring a 3 or higher on an AP Exam in 2023 was \$11 million (based on average in-state tuition and fees per credit hour at public four-year institutions in 2022-23).

- Students are already taking AP classes and performing well on AP Exams before 11th grade. In 2024, more than 25,000 9th and 10th graders in Maryland public high schools took AP exams— 39% of all AP examinees and an 11% year-over-year increase—and more than 18,000 of those students scored a 3 or higher on more than 25,000 AP Exams.
- Closing the equity gap in AP participation for low-income students is vital to ensuring all students can experience the benefits of challenging coursework, from preparing them for career success to making college more affordable. Funding support plays a significant role in this work—particularly when engaging students earlier with foundational advanced courses.
- Rigorous courses already are taken in 10th grade and can provide a foundation for the rest of high school and beyond.
 - AP Seminar, in particular, teaches workforce skills that employers require. It is a project-based course—which includes research, presentations, and a performance-based essay exam—that teaches students how to solve problems, work in teams, manage complex projects, and communicate findings. The course framework provides flexibility for students to align projects to their own interests, giving students an opportunity to explore future careers while potentially earning college credit.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. We remain committed to our work with Maryland and its school districts to measurably deliver on the transformative and equitable promise of the Blueprint's historic scale and ambition. We look forward to working with Sen. McCray and committee members on this legislation throughout the legislative session to meet the requirements of the legislature as well as students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. McHenry", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kevin McHenry
Government Relations Director