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of Howard County**

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**Board of Education of Howard County
Testimony Submitted to the Maryland Senate,
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
March 7, 2025**

SB0879: UNFAVORABLE

Institutions of Higher Education - Dually Enrolled Students – Alterations

The Board of Education of Howard County (the Board) opposes **Institutions of Higher Education - Dually Enrolled Students - Alterations** as an unclear bill that has the potential to become an unfunded mandate for local school systems to divert public resources to private and home-schooled students.

SB0879 expands the definition of “dually enrolled student” to include a nonpublic secondary school student or a home school student so that these students are eligible to apply for the Part-time Grant Program and the Early College Access Grant. Further, by expanding the definition of dually enrolled student, the bill specifies that a public institution of higher education may not charge a nonpublic secondary school student or a home school student tuition.

The [fiscal and policy note on this bill from 2024](#) indicated “local community college revenues may decrease due to the expansion of the definition of ‘dually enrolled student’ and the existing prohibition against charging a dually enrolled student tuition. It is unclear if a local school system is responsible for the cost of tuition for a dually enrolled private or home school student. To the extent a local school system is responsible, local school system expenditures increase.” Although the bill doesn’t expressly state local school systems would pay these costs, testimony by sponsors of the bill in 2024 indicated that was the intent. Additionally, to the extent the grant programs noted under SB0879 are awarded to private or home-schooled students, less funds would be available for dually enrolled public school students. Currently, verification of dual enrollment participation for billing purposes lives in the HCPSS student information system, as are course outcomes for students that determine eligibility for future cost coverage. It would be impossible for HCPSS to track and verify enrollment and course outcomes for students not enrolled in HCPSS, providing additional challenges in effectively stewarding HCPSS fiscal resources.

As a legislative platform, the Board opposes legislation mandating that public schools accommodate private or home-schooled students in academic or extracurricular programs offered in the public schools. With total resources for education limited, diversion of public funds for dual enrollment to private and home-schooled students reduces resources available for public schools, while eroding direct responsibility for tax funded educational programs.

For these reasons, we urge an UNFAVORABLE report on SB0879 from this Committee.