

SB283 - Students with Financial Need - College Pre

Uploaded by: Dawana Sterrette

Position: FAV

**The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners
In Support of Senate Bill 283
Students with Financial Need – College Preparatory Programs –
Exam Fee Prohibition**

January 29, 2025

The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners supports Senate Bill 283. This legislation would require that beginning in the 2025-2026 school year a school board may not charge a student who is eligible for free or reduced price meals any exams related to the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program; the Cambridge AICE Diploma Program or a program consisting of advanced placement courses offered by the College Board.

Baltimore City School System supports the named programs within the legislation and recognizes the need for students with financial need to be offered exam fees free of charge. Currently, the Board does not charge its students any fees and finds this legislation consistent with the Board's current policy, as well as knowing that certain students do not have the financial means for the exams or AP courses and therefore need financial assistance.

Should the legislation pass, the Board would be remiss to determine if there would be any additional funding that could be used exclusively for the exam fees that school districts can access to help offset costs.

For the foregoing reasons, the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners supports Senate Bil 283 and urges a favorable report.

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College Board_MD SB283_Testimony FINAL.pdf

Uploaded by: Kevin McHenry

Position: FAV



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.

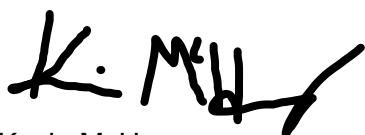
SB 283 is necessary because:

- 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

SB0283.pdf

Uploaded by: Gabrielle Moore Brooks

Position: FWA



SB0283

Students With Financial Need - College Preparatory Programs - Exam Fee Prohibition

Whereas AP students are more likely to enroll in a four-year college compared to academically similar students who did not take AP in high school¹; and

Whereas AP classes allow for students to gain college credit and stand out on college applications; and

Whereas college preparatory programs such as Advanced Placement classes and International Baccalaureate programs can be highly expensive and inaccessible for students; and

Whereas in Harford County Public Schools only 23.5% of students enrolled in AP classes are FARMs compared to roughly 36.6% of the students in HCPS being FARMs²; however

Whereas this bill would require the local school board to pay for this without the any support from the state government; and

Whereas this would require a substantial part of the local school system's budget;

Be it therefore resolved that HCRASC supports SB0082 with an amendment stating that the state government will provide the funds necessary to implement this program.

¹AP Program Results: Class of 2022 – Reports | College Board.

<https://reports.collegeboard.org/ap-program-results/class-of-2022>.

²Presentation of Harford County Public Schools Academic Performance Data: National Assessments and College and Career Readiness.

<https://hcps.org/boe/BoeAgendaExhibits.aspx?MeetingID=3755>

Resolution: 24/25 Authored by Gabrielle Moore Brooks, HCRASC Student Legislative Affairs Coordinator

HCRASC President

HCRASC Advisor

SB0283- State Board- LOI.pdf

Uploaded by: Mary Gable

Position: INFO

TO: Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and Environment

BILL: SB0283- Students With Financial Need - College Preparatory Programs - Exam Fee Prohibition

Date: January 29, 2025

Position: Information

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) is providing information for consideration regarding Senate Bill (SB) 0283 which proposes prohibiting the charging of exam fees for college preparatory programs to students demonstrating financial need.

Under the current universal criteria, students qualify for free admission and fee reductions for advanced exams, including AP exams, if they demonstrate financial need through specific factors. These factors include enrollment in Free or Reduced-Price Meals (FARMS), participation in federal assistance programs such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), or meeting federal poverty guidelines, which are defined as having a household income at or below 150% of the federal poverty level. Additionally, students who are unhoused, live in federally subsidized public housing, are in foster care or are wards of the state are also eligible. These policies ensure that many low-income students can access advanced academic tests at little or no cost, promoting equitable educational opportunities. Furthermore, the Blueprint for Maryland's Future requires that all students have access to post-College and Career Readiness (CCR) pathways without any cost to them or their families, reinforcing the principle that financial barriers should not prevent students from pursuing rigorous coursework.

Currently, Maryland public schools do not offer the Cambridge Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) diploma; however, this could change in the future. We are actively monitoring potential developments that may lead to the implementation of Cambridge programs in the state, providing students with a broader range of post-CCR pathways. As the Blueprint's implementation progresses, any introduction of the Cambridge AICE option will align with the mandate to ensure that eligible students have free or reduced exam fees, thereby maintaining equitable access.

Regarding the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma, waivers and exam fee coverage are determined locally by each local education agency (LEA) in collaboration with IB Coordinators in their region. In many instances, LEAs already work to reduce or eliminate costs for IB Diploma students who demonstrate financial need, although practices may vary by jurisdiction. Because the Blueprint for Maryland's Future calls for no-cost post-CCR pathways, LEAs will need to ensure that fee barriers for IB exams do not impede eligible students' ability to pursue IB coursework or the Diploma.



Carey M. Wright, Ed.D.

State Superintendent of Schools

Joshua L. Michael, Ph.D.

President, State Board of Education

We respectfully request that you consider this information as you deliberate SB 0283. For further information, please contact Dr. Akilah Alleyne (Executive Director of Government Affairs) at akilah.alleyne@maryland.gov.