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of Howard County**

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**Board of Education of Howard County
Testimony Submitted to the Maryland House of Delegates,
Ways & Means Committee
March 5, 2025**

HB1262: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

County Boards of Education – Post College and Career Readiness Pathways – Payment of Costs

The Board of Education of Howard County (the Board) supports **County Boards of Education – Post College and Career Readiness Pathways – Payment of Costs** with amendments to align income eligibility to existing measures.

HB1262 allows local school systems to limit costs for post-College and Career Readiness (CCR) pathways if a local board develops guidelines and procedures for payments. The bill specifies that pathways must continue to be provided at no cost for students with a family income below 400 percent of the federal poverty level.

The current requirement to cover all post-CCR costs for students is one of the innovative approaches in the Blueprint for Maryland's Future to propel students forward by removing fiscal barriers. For that reason, it is also costly for local school systems. By giving the authority to develop income eligibility guidelines for post-CCR pathways to local boards of education, HB1262 addresses the fiscal impact of this one-size-fits-all requirement under the Blueprint.

While the Board recognizes the intent of HB1262 to increase the number of students with recognized financial hardships by setting the required threshold at 400 percent of the federal poverty level, it presents logistical challenges. Local school systems would need additional staff resources to develop a new process for identification of family income, which may be duplicative and thus burdensome on some families already identifying [Free and Reduced Meals \(FARMs\)](#) eligibility. For illustrative purposes, 400 percent currently equates to a [household income of \\$128,600 for a family of four](#).

With an amendment to align the required income eligibility measure to FARMs similar to SB0852/HB1245, we urge a FAVORABLE report on HB1262 from this Committee.