



APRIL 1, 2026

Maryland's Future Depends on Effective Education Policies

Position Statement in Support of Senate Bill 311 with Amendment

Given before the House Ways and Means and Appropriations Committees

Educating Maryland's children is one of the most important responsibilities of our state government, and one of the strongest tools available to support long-term economic growth. The 2021 Blueprint for Maryland's Future represents a commitment by Maryland lawmakers to provide the support Maryland's public schools need to provide an excellent education. Senate Bill 311, as amended, takes important steps to keep the Blueprint reforms on track, but leaves two key issues unaddressed. **For these reasons, the Maryland Center on Economic Policy supports Senate Bill 311 with an amendment strengthening the language related to poverty measures.**

Counting Low-Income Students

While Senate Bill 311 takes the positive step of temporarily extending the current system for counting low-income students, we must make progress toward an effective permanent solution. **The Maryland Center on Economic Policy supports the language the House included in HB 490** to require the Maryland State Department of Education, in consultation with the Accountability and Implementation Board, to submit a report on updating the compensatory education enrollment methodology by October 1, 2027. It is key that this process satisfy several standards:

- The process must be transparent and inclusive, with regular public updates and input from all stakeholders, including public hearings.
- All methodologies considered should include an equity analysis disaggregated by race, ethnicity, income, disability status, and language status.
- A new counting methodology must not serve as an excuse to cut funding. The current compensatory education and concentration of poverty funding formulas were developed with the existing counting methodology in mind. A change in measurement does not automatically result in a change in need. Any new methodology that reduces the total students identified as having low family incomes must be accompanied by a corresponding increase in funding weights to ensure that schools and students do not unfairly lose resources.

While both versions of the bill call for such a report, the longer timeline in the House bill and more robust parameters around the process will support a more effective review.

For these reasons, the Maryland Center on Economic Policy respectfully requests that the Committees make a **favorable report on Senate Bill 311 with amendment.**

Equity Impact Analysis: Senate Bill 311

Bill summary

Senate Bill 311 as amended makes multiple adjustments to the Blueprint for Maryland's Future public school policy package. Notable provisions include extending the current approach to counting low-income students, a temporary stand-in that under current law would expire in FY 2026.

Background

Chapter 36 of 2021 established the Blueprint for Maryland's Future school funding reform. Lawmakers have altered the Blueprint several times since then, most recently through Chapter 237 of 2025, which cut education funding by \$546 million cumulatively between FY 2026 and FY 2030.

Equity Implications

As amended, Senate Bill 311 prevents inadvertent cuts to compensatory education and concentration of poverty funding due to expiration of a temporary counting methodology.

Improving compensatory education and concentration of poverty funding by definition benefits students in low-income families and high-poverty neighborhoods. These provisions also disproportionately benefit Black students and other students of color, who are more likely than their white counterparts to have low family income and more likely to live in a high-poverty neighborhood regardless of family income.

For the same reasons, amending Senate Bill 311 to require a transparent, inclusive process for recommending a permanent student poverty measure would benefit students in low-income families, students in high-poverty neighborhoods, and students of color.

Impact

In its current form, Senate Bill 311 would likely **improve racial and economic equity** in Maryland.

The proposed amendments would likely **further improve racial, economic, and disability equity** in Maryland.