

TO: House Appropriations Committee

BILL: House Bill (HB) 64 – Task Force on Education Funding and Student Population Growth

DATE: February 3, 2026

POSITION: Letter of Information

The Maryland State Board of Education (State Board) and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) respectfully submit this letter of information regarding **HB 64**, which would establish a Task Force to study Education Funding and Student Population Growth.

While the State Board and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) are supportive of the fundamental principle outlined in the requirements of the bill, the current enrollment trend between 2023 and 2028 anticipates nominal enrollment growth of .2%. While the projected enrollment trend for 2028-2033 estimates enrollment growth in 17 of 24 counties, the total statewide increase is expected to be 1.2%.

The General Assembly has supported enrollment studies in the past, although not since the enactment of the Bridge to Excellence Act in 2002. That study looked at enrollment trends in Maryland, a survey of enrollment-based funding formulas in all 50 states, and a review of states that used other enrollment count mechanisms such as average daily attendance (ADA) and average daily membership (ADM). The budget cycles in states play a large role in determining enrollment count mechanisms used to fund State and local education aid. The report found that changing the enrollment collection mechanism would redistribute education funding among counties and affect the State's and local governments' ability to budget and plan for education funding in future years. The conclusion from the report was that changing the enrollment collection mechanism did not provide sufficient long-term benefits when compared to the complexities a change would add to State and local budgeting practices. The conclusion of this study was similar to one conducted in the mid-1990s.

At this time, given the State's current fiscal status, both the State Board and MSDE are concerned about the potential implications of a study of this kind, particularly how its findings could affect the distribution of resources among districts, as well as the timeline for the Task Force to complete its work as required by the legislation.

The State Board and the Department request that the committee consider this information on **HB 64**. Please contact Laurel Cratsley, Interim Executive Director of Government Affairs, at laurel.cratsley@maryland.gov or at 443-571-5461 or Zach Hands, Executive Director of the State Board, at Zachary.hands1@maryland.gov or at 443-915-6094, if you would like any additional information.