



**Board of Education of Howard County
Testimony Submitted to the Maryland House of Delegates
Appropriations Committee
April 7, 2026**

**Board of Education
of Howard County**

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**SB0170: FAVORABLE with AMENDMENTS
Task Force on Education Funding and Student Population Growth**

The Board of Education of Howard County (the Board) supports **Task Force on Education Funding and Student Population Growth** with amendments to ensure the resulting study takes into account more than just student growth when reviewing factors that influence education funding.

With representation from several elected officials and education stakeholder, SB0170 creates a task force charged with analyzing challenges related to the delay in student enrollment counts and its effect on school funding, the connection between growing student populations and the provision of school funding, and making recommendations regarding improvements to the provision of school funding. A report would be due from the task force by December 15, 2026.

In recent years various bills have attempted to alter the per pupil enrollment count methodology currently used in Maryland. As a lagging indicator, Foundation Aid funding for education is currently based on the count of student enrollment as of September 30 of the prior school year under Education Article § 5-201. An update during the consideration of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, and given unexpected drops in enrollment during the COVID-19 pandemic, amended this area of law to define "enrollment count" as the greater of the full-time equivalent enrollment (enrollment as of September 30 of the prior year) or the three-year moving average enrollment (average of the three prior years enrollment as of September 30). Most of these bills, however, in attempting to address concerns with using a snapshot in time as the basis for school system funding, have proposed solutions that create a different variation of the current problem of funding based on a lagging indicator.

Given the variance in bills introduced to date to address per pupil enrollment calculation, as a legislative priority the Board supports research and analysis to determine what measures may more accurately reflect future school system enrollment and the subsequent funding needs.

The Board recommends the following improvements to SB0170:

- Include requirements for research of alternative funding models beyond those that solely rely on enrollment counts.
- Have the Task Force analyze the impacts of both growing and declining student populations.



- Ensuring education funding formulas meet the funding needs of growing student populations is a need, specifically for differentiated specialized enrollment counts such as Multilingual Learners, Special Education, and Compensatory Education. An equally great need is ensuring funding formulas are responsive to the increasing costs to deliver education regardless of increases or decreases in enrollment.
- Add representation from local school system budget and finance experts to the Task Force – including one from a required local funding county and one from a maintenance of effort county.
- Ensure that future funding formulas more accurately reflect the increased costs of educating students, regardless of the broader jurisdiction's wealth metrics.

With these changes, we urge a FAVORABLE report on SB0170 from this Committee.