

**TO:** House Appropriations Committee

**BILL:** Senate Bill (SB) 170 – Task Force on Education Funding and Student Population Growth

**DATE:** April 7, 2026

**POSITION:** Letter of Information

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The Maryland State Board of Education (State Board) and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) respectfully submit this letter of information regarding SB 170, which would establish a Task Force to study Education Funding and Student Population Growth.

The State Board and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) are supportive of the fundamental principle outlined in the requirements of the bill and note that 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).

Given this history, the State Board and MSDE have concerns about both the structure and feasibility of the proposed Task Force. As drafted, the bill leaves key questions regarding staffing and analytical capacity unspecified. A study of this nature requires a high level of technical expertise and data analysis. The Department believes this work is best supplemented by an independent, third-party research entity with the appropriate resources and experience to take Maryland's current enrollment data and develop actionable findings that show the result of any proposed change in school enrollment counts.

Additionally, the timeline outlined in the legislation may present challenges for the Task Force. Ensuring adequate capacity and time will be important to support findings that can effectively inform policy decisions.

The State Board and MSDE respectfully request that the committee consider this information when deliberating SB 170. The Department remains available to provide additional context or technical assistance as needed. Please contact Laurel Cratsley, Interim Executive Director of Government Affairs, at [laurel.cratsley@maryland.gov](mailto:laurel.cratsley@maryland.gov) or Zach Hands, Executive Director of the State Board, at [Zachary.hands1@maryland.gov](mailto:Zachary.hands1@maryland.gov), if you would like any additional information.