

C. Day- Testimony Favorable HB0064 2026.pdf

Uploaded by: Cassandra Day

Position: FAV



January 30, 2026

Appropriations Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
120 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the committee:

My name is Casey Day. I am a public school educator with more than 30 years of classroom experience, and I am from Frederick County. I am here today to urge a favorable report on House Bill 0064.

From the classroom perspective, foundational funding is not theoretical. It determines what teaching and learning actually look like every day.

In Frederick County, for many years, enrollment counts based on the prior year have left our schools underfunded by roughly 500 to 1,000 students annually. Those students are in our classrooms now, but the funding to serve them lags behind. Because counties do not receive foundational funding for the actual students sitting in classrooms, schools are forced to absorb those gaps through staffing cuts, larger class sizes, and reduced course offerings.

At my high school, some classes now exceed 40 students. I teach a computer science class with 36 brand-new programmers. This is a hands-on course that relies on frequent one-on-one support, which becomes increasingly difficult as class sizes grow.

Underfunding also creates inequities in course access. To ensure my seniors could complete required career pathway courses, I taught five different courses across just three class periods, including teaching AP Computer Science alongside beginning students in the same class. In other schools, programs simply disappear altogether. One school in our district lost its choral program entirely.

These are not issues of efficiency or effort. Educators are skilled and deeply committed, but we are not miracle workers. A funding model that lags behind enrollment and understates real classroom needs limits what even excellent teaching can accomplish.

House Bill 0064 is a responsible step to examine whether Maryland's foundational funding formula reflects the real cost of educating today's students. I respectfully urge a favorable report.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,

Casey Day

Casey Day

HB 0064 FAV FCG OCE LS26 FINAL.pdf

Uploaded by: Jessica Fitzwater

Position: FAV



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Jessica Fitzwater
County Executive

HB 64 – Task Force on Education Funding and Student Population Growth

DATE: February 3, 2026
COMMITTEE: House Appropriations Committee
POSITION: Favorable
FROM: The Office of Frederick County Executive Jessica Fitzwater

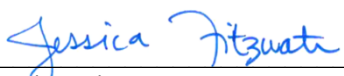
As the County Executive of Frederick County, I urge the committee to give **HB 64 – Task Force on Education Funding and Student Population Growth** a favorable report.

As you may know, Frederick County is the fastest-growing jurisdiction in Maryland, and that trend is particularly apparent in our public-school enrollment. Over the last decade, Frederick County Public Schools has consistently seen the highest enrollment growth rate in the state. While this growth is a great endorsement of Frederick County and FCPS, a lack of adequate funding to keep up with this enrollment brings challenges and costs to the County.

The current foundation formula that determines state aid uses outdated local enrollment numbers, resulting in unfunded students in jurisdictions with enrollment growth. Local enrollment is measured on September 30th of the prior school year, which means the State share of per-pupil funding does not reach school systems until the following school year. This delay puts a significant burden on jurisdictions like Frederick County that are seeing high rates of enrollment growth without matching state investment. While Frederick County is one of the few jurisdictions that has recently experienced enrollment growth, student enrollment often fluctuates and other jurisdictions may face this challenge in the future as we work to expand housing availability statewide.

The General Assembly passed legislation in 2024 to create the Frederick County School Construction Workgroup, which convened over the interim prior to the 2025 session. The bi-partisan workgroup consisted of local elected officials, school board representatives, IAC representatives, and General Assembly members. One of the recommendations from this workgroup was for the State to reevaluate the funding formula – HB 64 would implement this recommendation by bringing together the key stakeholders to evaluate this formula. This task force is a crucial step to ensuring that state funding formulas fairly and adequately account for enrollment changes.

Thank you for your consideration of HB 64 and I urge a favorable report.



Jessica Fitzwater, County Executive
Frederick County, MD

Del Kris Fair HB 64 Written Sponsor Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Kris Fair

Position: FAV

KRIS FAIR
Legislative District 3
Frederick County

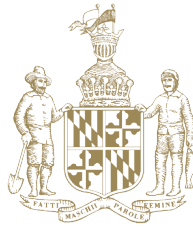
Government, Labor, and
Elections Committee

Subcommittees

Chair, Election Law

Local Government/Bi-County
Agencies and Administration

Chair, Maryland Legislative
LGBTQ+ Caucus



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SPONSOR TESTIMONY

HB 64 - Task Force on Education Funding and Student Population Growth

The Honorable Ben Barnes, Chair
Appropriations Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 131
Annapolis, MD 21401

Chair Barnes, Vice-Chair Kaiser, and Esteemed Members of the Appropriations Committee:

House Bill 64 creates a task force to study the State's current spending formula for Local School Systems (LSS). The Task Force will comprise members of the General Assembly, state agencies, teachers' organizations, and local education institutions to examine the challenges related to the timing of student enrollment counts and the related apportionment of state funds to LSS experiencing growing populations. My office has heard repeatedly from students, educators, and administrators that the current methodology for apportioning is not equitable—especially for growing systems. **This bill passed the Senate last year unanimously but did not advance in the House.**

Current Allocation Methods Leave Some Students Out: Currently, school funding is calculated on student enrollment counts conducted once a year, with additional funding for specific demographic enrollments, such as students experiencing poverty or who need special education supports. The formula uses actual enrollment counts conducted in the fall of the prior fiscal year. For growing jurisdictions, this timing leads to perpetual underfunding. By studying the effect of delayed enrollment counts, the Task Force will provide insights and recommendations for the funding formula.

Schools Need the Right Resources to Support Their Students: Underfunding due to inaccurate student counts creates significant difficulties for appropriate school staffing and ancillary resources, leading to lower-quality services for all students. Schools with growing populations often face cash flow issues due to the undercount and then must rely on county and local reserve funds until state funding is received. The challenge is compounded when intersected with English as a Second Language (ESL) and special needs education.

There is a Precedent for Updating the Formula—Especially to Deliver for our Students: The current formula has been amended previously to account for student enrollment decline—but critically, not for student enrollment growth. Insights from the Task Force’s report will enable the General Assembly to improve the funding formula, so we meet the current and future needs of LSS regardless of their population trends.

The Task Force will examine the connection between growing student populations and the necessary funding and make recommendations for improving the allocation of school funds. By establishing a Task Force to study these issues, House Bill 64 will guide careful thought and consideration to ensure that funding is equitably distributed; students are appropriately supported, and school systems can thrive across the state.

For these reasons, I urge your support for House Bill 64 and respectfully request a favorable report.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kris Fair". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Delegate Kris Fair
District 3, Frederick County

Testimony in support of HB0064 Task Force on Educa

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

02/03/2026

Richard Keith Kaplowitz
Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON HB#/0064- POSITION: FAVORABLE

Task Force on Education Funding and Student Population Growth

TO: Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Kaiser, and members of the Appropriations Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB#/0064, Task Force on Education Funding and Student Population Growth

Data from the Maryland Association of Counties report “**Why Does the State’s School Enrollment Count Matter?**”¹ and the high growth rates some counties like Frederick are undergoing means the formula for calculating student population and funding for those students lags a year behind the actual uncompensated growth in student populations.

The intent of this bill is to establish a Task Force on Education Funding and Student Population Growth to analyze the challenges related to the delay in student enrollment counts and its effect on school funding and the connection between growing student populations and the provision of school funding. The report from the Task Force with its findings and recommendations would be due to the Governor and the General Assembly by December 15, 2025.

FCPS is currently the fastest growing public school system in Maryland. FCPS enrollment has increased by nearly 10% over the past 5 years, while 18 other school systems saw decreases during the same period. The total number of students is anticipated to increase by 5,990 students between 2022 and 2032. Between 2020 and 2024 the population of Frederick County grew by 9.7%.² . The State Board of Education has acknowledged this growth in student populations in Frederick County. It is clear the state strategic plan for school funding needs to adjust to consider the student population growth and this task force will assist in modification to the plan to adjust to real world conditions.³

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB#/0064.

¹ <https://conduitstreet.mdcounties.org/2022/10/06/whats-up-with-the-states-school-enrollment-count-and-why-does-it-matter/>

² <https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-counties/maryland/fastest-growing>

³ <https://strategicplan.marylandpublicschools.org/maryland-at-a-glance/>

BTU Testimony HB64 2026.pdf

Uploaded by: Cristina E Duncan Evans

Position: FWA



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House Bill 64 – Task Force on Education Funding and Student Population Growth
Appropriations Committee
February 3, 2026, 1pm
Favorable with Amendments

Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Kaiser, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Baltimore Teachers Union, which represents thousands of educators serving students in Maryland’s most complex school system, we strongly support HB64, which establishes a Task Force on Education Funding and Student Population Growth. We appreciate the General Assembly’s leadership in recognizing the urgent challenges facing school systems as enrollment patterns shift and funding mechanisms lag behind student needs.

The Task Force’s charge to analyze the effects of delayed enrollment counts on school funding, examine the relationship between growing student populations and resource allocation, and recommend improvements to school funding, is both timely and necessary. In Baltimore City, educators experience firsthand the consequences of outdated enrollment projections and funding formulas: overcrowded classrooms, insufficient staffing, and delayed access to services for students who need them most. This bill is an important step toward aligning funding systems with real-time student needs.

As we recognize the bill’s importance to identifying solutions to meet student needs, we respectfully request an amendment to ensure that the unique conditions in Baltimore City are represented on the task force. As the exclusive bargaining representative for Baltimore City educators, the Baltimore Teachers Union, is formally represented in statewide contexts by AFT-Maryland. The bill currently designates task force representation for the Maryland State Education Association, which does not represent educators in Baltimore City, but rather is composed of affiliates of the remaining 23 school districts in Maryland. AFT-Maryland is the statewide organization representing Baltimore City educators that is most analogous to MSEA, and we ask that the bill be amended to include representation from both statewide organizations. The experiences and voices of Baltimore’s educators are a critical and distinct perspective grounded in the realities of educating students in the state’s largest urban district.

We request an amendment to the bill at line 19, page 1 that reads:

(iv) one representative from a statewide teachers’ organization representing teachers in at least one jurisdiction within the State for collective bargaining purposes other than the majority organization provided for in item iii of this item;

As this is how AFT-Maryland has been designated in similar situations where representation from both statewide groups is intended.

A comprehensive effort to examine enrollment growth and funding equity must include the voices of educators serving Baltimore's students. Including representation for Baltimore's educators will strengthen the Task Force's work by ensuring that its recommendations reflect the full diversity of Maryland's school systems and the lived experiences of educators in communities experiencing some of the most acute enrollment volatility and funding challenges. We urge the committee to adopt this amendment and move the bill forward favorably.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration.

HB64_FWA.pdf

Uploaded by: Donna Edwards

Position: FWA



MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

Affiliated with the National AFL-CIO

Donna S. Edwards
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HB 64 - Task Force on Education Funding and Student Population Growth

House Appropriations Committee

February 3, 2026

SUPPORT with AMENDMENTS

Donna S. Edwards

Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO

Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 64 if amended. On behalf of our 700 affiliated unions, I offer the following comments.

HB 64 establishes a Task Force on Education Funding and Student Population Growth, tasked with examining how delayed enrollment counts impact school funding, analyzing the relationship between student populations and resource allocation, and developing recommendations to strengthen Maryland's educational funding systems. This work contextualizes how our public schools are funded in a way that reflects real-time student needs.

However, as currently drafted, the task force does not include a representative of the educators in Baltimore City. This exclusion leaves a critical gap in the task force's expertise and limits its ability to fully study the issues. The Baltimore Teachers Union, AFT-MD, represents several thousand Baltimore City teachers and school staff. It is essential that their voices be included on the task force.

To fix this issue, we propose the following amendment:

Pg. 1, line 19: Insert the following after (iii), moving all subsequent text down

“(iv) one representative of the American Federation of Teachers Maryland;”

Baltimore City is home to Maryland's largest urban school district, serving students who face hardships every day. The educators who work in these schools bring firsthand knowledge of enrollment fluctuations, limited resources, and funding delays, impacting students' daily experiences and long-term outcomes. We strongly believe the quality of the conversation is significantly enhanced when we include the voices of those who are grounded in Baltimore City and directly impact our school systems and students.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable vote on HB 64 if amended.



unions@mddclabor.org



www.mddclabor.org



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instagram.com/md_dc_aflcio

HB64 FWA (Written).pdf

Uploaded by: Riya Gupta

Position: FWA



**Testimony in SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT of
House Bill 64: Task Force on Education Funding and Student Population Growth**

**Appropriations Committee
Position: Favorable with Amendment**

February 3, 2026

Strong Schools Maryland is a statewide network of parents, educators, and advocates committed to full funding and faithful implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. We support House Bill 64 and the creation of a Task Force on Education Funding and Student Population Growth as a necessary response to a critical flaw in Maryland's school funding system.

Maryland's education funding formulas rely on prior-year enrollment counts that fail to reflect the students actually enrolled in schools today. In fast-growing jurisdictions such as Frederick County, schools are absorbing significant numbers of new students without the funding required to serve them. This disconnect leads to overcrowded classrooms, staffing shortages, and diminished services for students and educators across the state.

While House Bill 64 is an important step forward, the task force will only succeed if it includes voices that reflect the students most affected by enrollment growth and funding delays. *Strong Schools Maryland urges an amendment to include one representative of students with disabilities, one representative of students who are Limited English or multilingual learners, and one representative of students who are eligible for FARMs or are from lower-income households.*

According to 2024 enrollment data, FARMs students comprise approximately 50% of Maryland's public school population, Multilingual learners represent 13.1%, and students with disabilities make up 12.7%. Each group has distinct needs, is defined in federal and state law and COMAR regulations, and is supported through targeted funding streams. Excluding their perspectives would undermine the task force's ability to develop equitable and effective recommendations.

Including knowledgeable representatives of these student groups is essential to ensuring the task force's work reflects classroom realities and aligns with the goals of the Blueprint. Without these voices, the task force risks producing recommendations that perpetuate existing inequities.

For these reasons, Strong Schools Maryland urges a favorable report on House Bill 64 with the proposed amendment.

For more information, contact Riya Gupta at riya@strongschoolsmaryland.org

HB64 - State Board & MSDE - LOI.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Laurel Cratsley

Position: INFO

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.