

TO: Budget and Taxation Committee

BILL: Senate Bill (SB) 289 – Concentration of Poverty School Grant Program – Personnel and Per Pupil Grants – Eligible Uses

DATE: February 3, 2026

POSITION: Support

The Maryland State Board of Education (State Board) and the State Department of Education (MSDE) provide this Letter of Support regarding **Senate Bill (SB) 289 – Concentration of Poverty School Grant Program – Personnel and Per Pupil Grants – Eligible Uses**.

Senate Bill 289 removes the Fiscal Year 2027 sunset date for an existing allowable expenditure of Concentration of Poverty Funds. Under current law, if a community school receives the Concentration of Poverty Personnel and/or Per Pupil grant (Education Article § 5-223), and the amount of grant funding exceeds the costs to employ the staffing positions required by the program, then the excess funds may be used to support programs required under [COMAR Title 13A, Subtitle 04, including 13A.04.16.01, Programs for Fine Arts](#).

The State Board and MSDE support continuing this option and removing the sunset date for Maryland’s Community Schools. All Community Schools complete a comprehensive needs assessment and implementation plan that guides the school in deploying Concentration of Poverty funding. Continuing this flexibility ensures that local education agencies retain the ability to respond to identified student and community needs, including sustaining access to high-quality arts and world language programming that supports a well-rounded education.

MSDE respectfully requests consideration of these comments as **SB289** is discussed and deliberated. For further information, please contact Laurel Cratsley at 443-571-5461, or laurel.cratsley@maryland.gov.