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Senate Bill 712 – Primary and Secondary Education - Funding Accuracy and Full-Time Equivalent Enrollment Count - Alterations and Report (Education Funding Accuracy Act)
Budget and Taxation Committee
March 3, 2026, 1pm

UNFAVORABLE

The BTU proudly represents thousands of educators, school support staff, and education professionals working in Baltimore City Public Schools.

We respectfully request an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 712, which would change the state’s education funding formula to base allocations on the average of two enrollment count days — one at the beginning of the school year and one at the end. While this proposal may appear to be a neutral technical adjustment, in practice it would disproportionately harm districts serving students experiencing poverty and high mobility — including Baltimore City.

Our students face significant housing instability, family relocation, foster care transitions, immigration-related moves, and other circumstances beyond their control. As a result, Baltimore City Schools serves a substantial number of students who enroll after the start of the year or who may not be present on a late-year count date. Under this proposal, districts would lose funding for students they educated for months simply because those students were not present on one of the two snapshot days.

The costs of educating those students, however, are real and immediate. Schools hire teachers, open classrooms, assign paraprofessionals, schedule special education services, and provide wraparound supports at the start of the year. These are not flexible expenses that can be reversed in April or May. If enrollment declines late in the year, districts cannot “un-hire” educators or dismantle services without causing disruption and harm to students.

This proposal would effectively require districts to educate 100 percent of the students who walk through their doors while funding them for fewer than 100 percent. Districts serving concentrations of poverty — and particularly those benefiting from targeted supports under the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future — would be especially vulnerable. The Blueprint was designed to stabilize and strengthen educational opportunity in communities facing systemic disadvantage. A two-count average system introduces volatility and uncertainty that undermines that goal.

Predictable funding is essential for responsible planning. School systems must negotiate contracts, staff classrooms, and design multi-year academic interventions based on stable revenue projections. Tying funding to an end-of-year enrollment count injects uncertainty late in the fiscal cycle, increasing the likelihood of budget shortfalls, staffing instability, and future program cuts.

We are also concerned that basing funding on a late-year count could create perverse incentives — discouraging appropriate student transfers or reassignments because of their fiscal impact. Funding mechanisms should never create tension between doing what is best for students and protecting district finances.

In short, this bill shifts financial risk onto districts serving the most vulnerable students, penalizes mobility tied to poverty and instability, and weakens the fiscal foundation necessary to sustain long-term reform.

For these reasons, the Baltimore Teachers Union respectfully urges an unfavorable report on SB712.