

**Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 289:
Concentration of Poverty School Grant Program –
Personnel and Per Pupil Grants – Eligible Uses**

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
February 3, 2026

The Baltimore City Public School System (City Schools) supports Senate Bill 289, which seeks to repeal the FY27 sunset on the authorization regarding use of Concentrations of Poverty (CPG) funds to meet fine arts instructional program requirements, as per COMAR 13A.04.16.01. Since the initial passage of the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future (Blueprint), this provision has proved critical in providing a vital funding stream to ensure equitable access to comprehensive arts education for students in high-need schools.

In Baltimore City, Blueprint CPG funds have supported the creation of new fine arts positions, expanding student access to a wider variety of fine arts disciplines and experiences and allowing for arts programming that previously did not exist. As a result of this investment, City Schools has increased the number of fine art teachers from 174 in 2017-18 to 328 in 2025-26.

The benefits of arts education have long been well-documented as essential for student success, including enhanced critical thinking and improved social-emotional well-being. Elimination of the sunset, as proposed in Senate Bill 289, is crucial to ensuring all students, particularly those in historically under-resourced schools, have access to mandated arts education such as dance, music, theatre, and visual arts.

Passage of this legislation will mean preserving support for equitable, comprehensive arts pathways, while improving student attendance and engagement. City Schools respectfully requests a favorable committee report of Senate Bill 289.