

SUPPORT: Senate Bill 289
Concentration of Poverty School Grant Program
Personnel and Per Pupil Grants - Eligible Uses
Senate Budget & Taxation Committee
February 3, 2026

My name is Naia Chase, a Baltimore City Public Schools student at Baltimore Design School and I am writing **in strong support of Senate Bill 289**, Concentration of Poverty School Grant Program - Personnel and Per Pupil Grants - Eligible Uses.

I am an eleventh grader pursuing graphic design at my school. I've always had an interest in art since it played a big role in my life ever since I was a child. Having access to an art class since pre-school really opened my eyes to more interesting and creative ways to learn in other subjects including ways to remember certain things in my classes.

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future admirably intends to transform Maryland's public education system into a world-class system. To help us get there, we must be diligent to ensure that all critical and core content areas, including the arts, are upheld and supported through this transformation. Specifically schools that serve concentrations of students experiencing poverty, communities should have the opportunity to help fund things that will help their students. SB289 further the goals of the Blueprint for Maryland's Education in delivering this world class education by ensuring uninterrupted allowable usage of funds established at the outset of the Blueprint's implementation.

Currently, the Blueprint for Maryland's Future states that **concentration of poverty funds from the personnel and per pupil grant** may be used through fiscal year 2027 to provide the programs required under COMAR 13A.04 ([2022, HB1450, §5-223\(c\)\(9\), Pg. 3](#), repeated in [2025, HB504§5-223\(c\)\(9\)](#), Pg. 16) for core subject areas, including the fine arts. By supporting SB289 and eliminating the sunset timeline in law, you will help ensure that arts education, along with other core subjects, continues to be an allowable use of funding to help support the class education that every student deserves to have.

Arts education is important and inspiring for our students. The arts offer unique ways to connect and engage with the world around us, which often leads to a strong sense of belonging and care. The arts support social-emotional skill development that helps the children thrive in all aspects of their lives. Learning that arts discipline boosts neuroplasticity, producing long-lasting impacts on the brain. The arts are also very essential for college and career readiness or even success, strengthening a student's knowledge for problem solving and critical thinking skills that are applicable to any path, including collegiate or professional pathways in the arts.

Sunsetting this allowable use of funding would make it very difficult to continue supporting arts education at the levels that are currently provided. To continue this investment in our children and students that we know is needed, we believe that school communities should

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continue having the option to invest their CPG funding in the arts in response to community need.

By supporting this bill and eliminating the sunset language, school communities will **continue having the option** to invest their CPG funding in the arts in response to community need.

I urge the committee to provide a **favorable report on SB 289**. Thank you kindly for investing in the future of Maryland's public school students. With this we'll help make the future of our state bright.

Sincerely,

Naia I. Chase

[Baltimore City Public Schools student at Baltimore Design School