

# **SB170; Task Force on Education Funding and Student**

Uploaded by: Jason Lee

Position: FAV

Gayon M.  
Sampson  
Chief of Staff

Allen W. Etzler, III  
Deputy Chief of Staff



**FREDERICK**  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Michael C.  
O'Connor  
Mayor

January 19, 2026

The Honorable Guy Guzzone  
Maryland State Senate  
3 West Miller Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Senator Guzzone,

I am writing to you today to express my support for [SB170](#): Task Force on Education Funding and Student Population Growth, sponsored by Senator Lewis Young and Senator Ready. This bill takes a thoughtful and data driven approach to addressing school funding concerns in fast-growing communities such as the City of Frederick.

Throughout the State, municipalities and counties such as Frederick are experiencing rapid student population growth driven by new housing production, economic development, and demographic shifts, whereas education funding formulas unfortunately lag behind these realities. Local governments consistently approve housing, invest in infrastructure, and attract families, which immediately increases school capacity needs and operating costs, but state funding mechanisms often respond slowly and inconsistently compared to the pace of local growth. This is fundamentally a structural issue in how enrollment and funding are aligned, not a matter of individual or partisan decisions, and SB170 offers a constructive way to examine that structure.

SB170 takes a very calculated and reasonable approach to this issue by not raising taxes, rewriting formulas, or mandating specific funding outcomes, but rather establishes a time-limited Task Force on Education Funding and Student Population Growth to study the problem comprehensively. By bringing together representatives from the General Assembly, State Department of Education, school boards, educators, parents, counties, superintendents, the Comptroller's Office, and the general public, SB170 ensures that any future proposals are grounded in shared data and experience. This approach allows for alignment in school funding policies with current enrollment and growth patterns before making any major fiscal or statutory changes.

Fast-growing municipalities such as Frederick are already seeing new school buildings fill to capacity as soon as they open, accompanied by rising class sizes and heightened staffing needs.

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Michael C.  
O'Connor  
Mayor

Local governments are often forced to close gaps through capital investments, mitigation measures, or short-term fixes when state funding does not fully capture rapid enrollment growth. Even as the state manages a budget deficit under this administration and legislature, growth in Frederick and similar communities is a success story, but the current funding model has not kept pace with the demands generated by that success.

Local comprehensive plans, housing targets, and economic development strategies are based on calculated long-term projections, yet uncertainty around how student population growth will translate into school funding undermines this coordinated planning effort. When funding and enrollment projections do not reflect real-time growth, it becomes more difficult to organize land use decisions, capital budgets, and school construction schedules. The task force created by SB170 would help bridge this disconnect by examining how education finance can better support Maryland's growth management and planning goals.

The City of Frederick raises this issue as a constructive partner to the State, not as a critic. Local governments are helping drive Maryland's progress by approving new housing, investing in infrastructure, and supporting economic growth that strengthens communities statewide. SB170 offers Maryland a chance to update its education funding approach, in order for it to better match growth patterns. This allows for State and Local efforts to be aligned in support of students, families, and communities across the state.

Sincerely,

Michael O'Connor  
Mayor, City of Frederick

# **Jerry Donald SB170 Testimony 2026.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jerry Donald

Position: FAV



The Honorable Guy Guzzone, Chair  
The Honorable Jim Rosapepe, Vice Chair  
Budget and Taxation Committee  
Maryland Senate  
Annapolis, MD 21401

January 21st, 2026

Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and honorable members of this committee,

As a member of the Frederick County Council and a teacher for 35 years, I fully support Senate Bill 170: Task Force on Education Funding and Student Population Growth, and I encourage the committee to give this important legislation a favorable report.

During my career as a high school educator, unplanned increases to the school's student body were a regular obstacle. Before each school year began, I would be informed of how many students to expect in my classes, usually around 30 to 32, and prepare accordingly. Then, when the school year actually began, and I received my student roster, the actual number of students would be closer to 40 than to 30.

In theory, adding a few extra students to each existing course doesn't sound too demanding — but logistically, it can severely impact resource scarcity. Over a dozen times throughout my career, I would intend for students to be assigned a textbook, which they would then take home and use during homework or to study. Then, due to an unplanned increase in the class size, there wouldn't be enough books for each student. Instead, we would have to share the books during class, and I would have to print out sections of the book for assignments and reading. Not only did this slow the process and make it more difficult for the students to study and check their facts, but printing the assignments further increased the school's operational cost in printing paper and ink. Across an entire school for the entire year, that is thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of expensive and otherwise unnecessary paper waste.

Books were far from the only example. Last year, my wife, a fellow teacher, saw the school she worked at **run out of desks**. At the start of the year, the school had to scramble to find a desk for every student.

On a very practical level, the lag in education funding for growing counties is holding students back. The taskforce created by this legislation will ensure Maryland knows how to match school funding to the student populace, so that no student has to go without the tools for a quality education.

Sincerely,

Jerry Donald  
Frederick County Council

**SB 0170 FAV FCG OCE LS26 FINAL.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jessica Fitzwater

Position: FAV



**FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT**  
**OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE**

Jessica Fitzwater  
County Executive

**SB 170 – Task Force on Education Funding and Student Population Growth**

**DATE:** January 21, 2026  
**COMMITTEE:** Senate Budget and Taxation 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 **SB 170 – 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 30<sup>th</sup> 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 – SB 170 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 SB 170 and I urge a favorable report.

  
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Jessica Fitzwater, County Executive  
Frederick County, MD

# **Testimony in support of SB0170 Task Force on Educa**

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

01/21/2026

Richard Keith Kaplowitz  
Frederick, MD 21703

**TESTIMONY ON SB#/0170- POSITION: FAVORABLE**

**Task Force on Education Funding and Student Population Growth**

**TO:** Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and members of the Budget & Taxation 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 SB#0170, 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?**”<sup>1</sup> 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%.<sup>2</sup> . 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.<sup>3</sup>

**I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB#0170.**

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

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

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

# **SB 170 - Support - Task Force on Education Funding**

Uploaded by: Sam Mathias

Position: FAV

**BILL:** Senate Bill 170  
**TITLE:** Task Force on Education Funding and Student Population Growth  
**HEARING DATE:** January 21, 2026  
**POSITION:** SUPPORT  
**COMMITTEE:** Budget & Taxation  
**CONTACT:** Sam Mathias, Legal & Policy Director ([smathias@mabe.org](mailto:smathias@mabe.org))

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all of the State's local boards of education, **supports Senate Bill 170, Task Force on Education Funding and Student Population Growth**, and appreciates the General Assembly's continued focus on ensuring Maryland's education funding system remains responsive, sustainable, and aligned with the goals of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

As proposed, the bill would establish a Task Force to examine the timing and mechanics of student enrollment data, analyze how changes in student populations impact school funding, and develop recommendations to improve the delivery of education funding statewide. These are timely and necessary areas of study as Maryland navigates one of the most challenging fiscal environments in decades while the Blueprint continues to scale up. MABE welcomes the opportunity to designate a member to serve on the Task Force and contribute to this important work.

Senate Bill 170 also aligns with one of MABE's core legislative priorities: supporting policies that promote school district budget stability and provide practical, workable relief for local education agencies during periods of fiscal constraint. As school systems manage rising costs and expanded expectations as we continue to implement Blueprint reforms, thoughtful examination of funding structures, formula design, and fiscal responsiveness can help sustain progress without undermining existing programs or student supports.

The Task Force established by Senate Bill 170 would provide a constructive forum to advance these objectives and to help ensure Maryland's education funding system continues to improve, and remains stable, predictable, and capable of supporting long-term reform. **MABE thus supports SB 170 and urges a favorable report.**

**SB170 - FAV - MSEA.pdf**

Uploaded by: Sean Johnson

Position: FAV

**SUPPORT**  
**Task Force on Education Funding and Student Population Growth**  
**Senate Bill 170**

**Senate Budget and Taxation Committee**  
**January 21, 2026**

**Sean Johnson**  
**Executive Director**

The Maryland State Education Association supports Senate Bill 170, which would create a task force to examine changing the way student enrollment is calculated for the purposes of education funding.

MSEA represents 76,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools and community colleges, teaching and supporting our almost 900,000 K-12 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA represents more than 40 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3-million-member National Education Association (NEA).

MSEA supports passage of adequate, sustainable, predictable funding that supports the operating costs of our public schools. A great public school for every child means our students have updated technology, small manageable classes, safe and modern schools, proper healthcare and nutrition, and have highly qualified and highly effective educators.

Our school funding model is based on enrollment counts from the previous year. This does not adequately account for major shifts in the current year, particularly in terms of significant enrollment growth that puts pressure on facilities and best practices in educator to student ratios. Some counties, like Frederick County, are experiencing explosive growth which has led to overcrowding in the schools. With a lag in funding due to lagging enrollment counts there is no additional funding for those new students, yet school systems and educators still must serve all students enrolled. This gap affects students and the services that educators can provide to them.

A task force is welcomed to ensure that school funding matches the students in our classrooms. We appreciate the sponsor including MSEA as a representative on the task force along with the other organizations.

**MSEA urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 170.**

# **SB170 Education Funding Formula Cover Letter (Wri**

Uploaded by: Senator Karen Lewis Young

Position: FAV

KAREN LEWIS YOUNG  
Legislative District 3  
Frederick County

Budget and Taxation Committee



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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The Honorable Guy Guzzone, Chair  
The Honorable Jim Rosapepe, Vice Chair  
Budget and Taxation Committee  
Maryland Senate  
Annapolis, MD 21401

January 21st, 2026

**SB170: Task Force on Education Funding and Student Population Growth**

Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and esteemed members of this committee,

This bill, SB170 Task Force on Education Funding and Student Population Growth, will establish a task force to study the gaps in funding that occur in school systems across the state due to the growth in their enrollment rates. Every year, the attendance snapshot is taken on September 30th but the funding due each school system, based on that snapshot, is not disbursed until July 1st the following year. The problem is that some school systems are growing at rates that leave counties fully responsible to absorb the difference.

In Frederick County, our school system's growth has far exceeded any other public school system in the State. In FY23, this left 804 children in Frederick without state funding — but Frederick is not the only county impacted by this phenomenon. In that same time frame, more than 2,000 students throughout Maryland went without education funding for the entire school year.

This is far from just a Frederick issue. Many counties, including Anne Arundel, Carroll, Charles, Prince George's and Wicomico are also experiencing this funding shortfall. Moreover, recent data shows that this problem could begin to impact the majority of Maryland schools. Between 2023 and 2024, 22 out of 24 counties in Maryland experienced population growth, including our four largest counties and Baltimore City.

The task force will study this pressing issue and share a report before next session on how best to address the growth some counties are facing in relation to the school funding formula. We will consult best practices around the country. I urge a favorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Karen Lewis Young". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "K" and a long, sweeping underline.

Senator Karen Lewis Young

# **Testimony SB170 Task Force on Educaiton Funding an**

Uploaded by: Dawana Sterrette

Position: INFO

**Testimony of the  
Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners  
For Information Only  
Senate Bill 170  
Task Force on Education Funding and Student Population Growth**

**January 21, 2026**

We would like to thank the sponsor for introducing this legislation. However, there should be a broader view taken. The task force that would be constituted under this bill would:

1. Analyze challenges related to the delay in student enrollment counts and its effect on school funding;
2. Analyze the connection between growing student populations and the provision of school funding; and
3. Make recommendations regarding improvements to the provision of school funding.

While this seems like a simple bill, it is not. The Board would caution any task force from simply looking at enrollment counts, but to also look at the rising costs of education and the amount of funding required to educate students in growing and declining enrollment school districts. The Board would also request that any task force that looks at enrollment also look at how students of poverty, multilingual and special education are properly counted and funded under the current education formulas.

Simply looking at numbers of students does not account for the variety of educational needs that students bring to the school building.

For the foregoing reasons, the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners provides this information to be reviewed and contemplated to be incorporated into the work of the task force to ensure that education funding is adequate.

Dawana Merritt Sterrette, Esq.  
Executive Director, Legislative and Government Affairs  
Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners  
443-250-0190

**MSDE SB00170 LOI.pdf**

Uploaded by: Laurel Cratsley

Position: INFO

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**TO:** Budget and Taxation Committee

**BILL:** Senate Bill (SB) 170 – Task Force on Education Funding and Student Population Growth

**DATE:** January 21, 2026

**POSITION:** Letter of Information

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**Chair Guzzone and Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee,**

The Maryland State Board of Education (State Board) and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) respectfully submit this letter of information regarding SB 170, 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 requests that the committee consider this information on **SB 170**. Please contact Laurel Cratsley, Interim Executive Director of Government Affairs, at [laurel.cratsley@maryland.gov](mailto:laurel.cratsley@maryland.gov) or at 443-571-5461 or Zach Hands, Executive Director of the State Board, at [Zachary.hands1@maryland.gov](mailto:Zachary.hands1@maryland.gov) or at 443-915-6094, if you would like any additional information.