

Senate Education, Energy & the Environment Committee

SB 343 Education - County Boards of Education - Post College and Career Readiness

Pathways - Payment of Costs

Bill Hearing Date February 18th, 2026

Position: Opposed

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and other Members of the Education, Energy & Environment Committee,

The Associated Student Congress of Baltimore City (ASCBC) opposes SB 343, which would allow county boards to create income eligibility guidelines and payment plans for students who are taking Post-CCR programs, which currently must be offered to students free of cost.

While this program could help school districts have the funding to expand CCR programs by allowing them to raise more funds, it would do so at the expense of reducing access to them and widening disparities between wealthy and non-wealthy school districts.

The sponsor of this bill claimed that individuals over 400% of the federal poverty line could afford CCR programs, and therefore it would not limit access. Payment could still be a deterrent to families, particularly large middle-income families near the 400% cutoff. The cost of living in Baltimore, according to the Economic Policy Institute<sup>1</sup>, is around 110,000\$ per year for a family of 4, and 400% of the Federal Poverty line is 128,600. For families near this cutoff – especially those facing high costs for housing, healthcare, or transportation – even modest fees could discourage participation.

---

<sup>1</sup> Family budget map. (n.d.). Economic Policy Institute. Retrieved February 12, 2026, from <https://www.epi.org/resources/budget/budget-map/>

Not only will limiting access to students be an issue, but also it could promote funding inequity between wealthy counties and un-wealthy counties. While districts can choose whether or not to enact this plan, school districts with a significantly higher amount of students above the threshold will have better funding for their schools, while districts with a much smaller amount of higher income students (such as Baltimore City), won't be able to raise funding by charging for CTE programs, and therefore will not have as much educational funding as school districts with higher income districts (such as Montgomery County).

Baltimore City Public schools students care about equity in educational access, which is one of the Issues ASCBC has included on our Issues Platform this year based on data collected from students. Based on recent data we collected from students, 90.4% of students claimed that having equitable resources in all schools was either a very widely held concern or a somewhat widely held concern. This bill, while it may help support CCR programs in certain districts, undermines educational equity as a whole. For all these reasons, ASCBC requests an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 343.

Thank you for considering my testimony,

Benjamin H. Grimaldi

Legislative Affairs Director at ASCBC

[Benjamin.h.grimaldi@gmail.com](mailto:Benjamin.h.grimaldi@gmail.com)

+1 (443) 226-9150