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**TO:** Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment

**BILL:** Senate Bill (SB) 343 - County Boards of Education - Post College and Career Readiness Pathways - Payment of Costs

**DATE:** February 18, 2026

**POSITION:** Letter of Information

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The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) is providing information regarding Senate Bill 343, which outlines financial responsibilities for Post-College and Career Readiness (Post-CCR) Pathways between the state and local county boards under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. By giving local boards the ability to limit Post-CCR funding for students whose families earn above 400% of the federal poverty level (\$132,000 for a family of 4), the bill seeks to prioritize resources for students with the greatest economic need.

Under SB343, the state provides a defined level of education funding, and any costs exceeding that amount would become the responsibility of local county boards. The bill permits county boards to develop income eligibility guidelines and procedures for covering costs associated with competitive college preparatory programs, including International Baccalaureate (IB), Cambridge, or Advanced Placement (AP) courses. Each local education agency (LEA) would be responsible for determining and implementing these guidelines.

While SB343 represents a shift from the current Blueprint model, which provides universal access to Post-College and Career Readiness (Post-CCR) Pathways for all students who meet the College and Career Readiness standard, MSDE recognizes the bill's intent to support the long-term sustainability of Post-CCR funding. The bill introduces additional local flexibility by allowing county boards to establish income eligibility guidelines and cost-sharing structures for certain advanced coursework opportunities.

Implementation of this approach raises considerations that may benefit from further discussion, including potential variability across local education agencies and the practical challenges associated with income determination, as most LEAs do not currently collect actual family income data. The Department believes that reform to Post-CCR Pathways could benefit from additional stakeholder engagement, and its team stands ready to support this community outreach. Consideration of how State guidance could support consistent implementation may help ensure continued alignment with the Blueprint's goals for college and career readiness.

For further information, please contact Laurel Cratsley, Interim Executive Director of Government Affairs, at 443-571-5461 or [Laurel.Cratsley@maryland.gov](mailto:Laurel.Cratsley@maryland.gov).