

UNFAVORABLE
Senate Bill 350
Public Schools - Open Enrollment - Policies and Funding

Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment
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The Maryland State Education Association opposes Senate Bill 350, which would authorize a county board of education to adopt an open enrollment policy that authorizes students to attend a public school in a county other than the county where the student lives with their parent or guardian. It would also require county boards to include out-of-county students in full-time equivalent enrollment counts and direct funding to the enrolling county.

MSEA represents 76,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA also represents 44 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3-million-member National Education Association (NEA).

Local education agencies allocate resources based on the number of students enrolled in their schools, which includes decisions about building capacity and staffing levels. We are concerned about the destabilizing effect the policies proposed in this bill could have on school enrollment and resource allocation. The school choice dynamic created by this bill has the potential to perpetuate inequities and introduce complex funding variations that are made more complicated by the involvement of multiple boards of education, superintendents, and school systems. This approach is not conducive to the ongoing implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future nor the State's aim of ensuring that all schools and students have the resources they need to thrive.

We urge the committee to issue an unfavorable report.