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Superintendent

February 11, 2026

Chair Jheanelle Wilkins, Vice Chair Jessica Feldmark and Members of the Ways and Means Committee

**Concentration of Poverty School Grant Program – Personnel and Per Pupil Grants - Eligible Uses**

**Position: SUPPORT**

**Contact:** Dr. Phelton Moss, Chair, Policy and Governance Committee  
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Dear Chair Wilkins and esteemed members of the Ways and Means Committee,

Thank you for the work you all do on behalf of our students, educators, and staff across the state and in the Prince George's County Public Schools community. On behalf of the Prince George's County Board of Education, representing over 130,000 students, we are writing to respectfully urge a favorable report on HB352.

This legislation removes the FY27 sunset on flexible uses of the grant program to ensure that eligible schools can continue to use CPG personnel and per pupil grants for critical programs including fine arts, science, mathematics, social studies, career and technical education, English and world languages, and environmental education. Programs that serve as accelerants of learning for our highest-need students.

**Fiscal Context: Budget Discipline During Financial Challenge**

PGCPS is currently managing a \$150 million budget gap for Fiscal Year 2027, driven by:

- Operational costs rising at 6.5%+ while Blueprint revenue grows at only ~4.3%
- Declining enrollment reducing per-pupil Blueprint revenue
- Mandates that are not fully funded by the state, but require county partnership

Despite these unprecedented financial pressures, Interim Superintendent Dr. Shawn Joseph has demonstrated remarkable operational discipline through a dramatic reduction in teacher and bus driver vacancies, cutting them in half. He has restored \$20 million in attendance funding through reduced immunization non-compliance, and has identified \$76.8 million in potential budget reductions (51% of target) by focusing primarily on non-instructional and Central Office spending.

**Why Flexibility Matters Now More Than Ever**

In a time of constrained resources, CPG funding flexibility is not a luxury, it is a necessity. As we work to close our budget gap, we cannot afford to have our hands tied on how we deploy one of our most important funding streams for high-poverty schools.



## PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

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Our focus at PGCPs is acceleration. Our students are showing growth—evidenced by recent MCAP results and the Maryland Report Card—but we need to accelerate that growth. Programs funded through CPG flexibility, including fine arts and enrichment programs, are proven accelerants that:

- Engage students in multiple learning modalities
- Provide pathways to college and career readiness
- Address the whole child, not just test scores
- Build the confidence and cultural capital students need to succeed

If we only close our budget gap through cuts, we are simply implementing a plan to survive. To transform our district and move from "pockets of excellence" to "excellence everywhere," we need strategic flexibility in how we invest every available dollar.

### **The Alternative: A Funding Cliff**

Without HB 352, beginning in fiscal year 2028, PGCPs would lose the ability to use CPG funds for these critical programs, which could force us to choose between cutting or eliminating fine arts and enrichment programs in our highest-poverty schools. Both outcomes would be devastating to student achievement and would undermine the very goals of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

PGCPs has demonstrated our commitment to fiscal discipline and operational excellence under Dr. Joseph's leadership. We have shown that we can reduce costs, improve efficiency, and deliver results for students simultaneously.

What we need now is the continued flexibility to deploy our resources strategically in service of student acceleration and achievement. HB 352 provides that flexibility by ensuring that CPG funding can continue to support the full range of programs our highest-need students require.

We respectfully request a favorable report on House Bill 352.

Sincerely,

Prince George's County Board of Education