



Maryland Education Coalition



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[HB0352](#) - SUPPORT

Concentration of Poverty School Grant Program—Personnel and Per Pupil Grants—Eligible Uses House Ways and Means Committee

Founded during 1980, the Maryland Education Coalition (MEC) has been advocating for adequate funding, equitable policies, and transparent accountability in Maryland for over 45 years. As major stakeholders, our members have extensive experience as advisors, advocates, and contributors for a wide range of public education issues and operations at the local, state, and national level. This has included membership of the Thornton and Kirwan Commission, and the Study of Adequacy of Funding for Education in the State Of Maryland and other MSDE committees to name a few.

Therefore, we have been highly active with the development, implementation and reviews of the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future and many other policies, regulations, and programs throughout Maryland. We also believe that the Concentration of Poverty School Grant Program is critical to meet the needs of students living in poverty who would not otherwise have adequate access to a well-rounded, high quality education.

House Bill 352 would repeal the limitation on the authorization to use personnel grants and per pupil grants under the Concentration of Poverty School Grant Program to provide certain fine arts instructional programs through fiscal year 2027. This limitation must be repealed in order to ensure all eligible students have adequate, equitable access to all core subject areas as defined within [Chapter 13A.04.16 - Programs in Fine Arts](#).

In Maryland, Core Academic Subjects are defined as [“one where students receive core content credit”](#) consistent with the goals of the Blueprint, and include the following subjects:

- **Art, music, dance, drama/theater**
- Social studies: civics and government, history, geography, economics
- English
- Reading or language arts
- Mathematics
- Science
- World Languages

The Arts are the only subject that has a direct correlation with all other subjects. Also, there is considerable evidence that [Arts education can help students](#):

- Engage with school and reduce stress.
- Develop social-emotional and interpersonal skills.
- Enrich their experiences.
- Handle constructive criticism.
- Bolster academic achievement.
- Improve focus.

Another study found that *“Teenagers and young adults of low socioeconomic status (SES) who have a history of in-depth arts involvement show better academic outcomes than do low-SES youth who have less arts involvement. They earn better grades and demonstrate higher rates of college enrollment and attainment.”* (SOURCE [HERE](#))

So, denying 300,000 to 450,000 lower income students enrolled in statewide in schools that may be eligible for the Concentration of Poverty School Grant Program would also deny them adequate access to all core subject areas accessible to others, especially those that are also a graduation requirement.

Therefore, the Maryland Education Coalition urges the members of the House Ways and Means Committee to issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 289.