

SUPPORT: House Bill 352
Concentration of Poverty School Grant Program
Personnel and Per Pupil Grants - Eligible Uses
Senate Budget & Taxation Committee
February 3, 2026

My name is Serigne Seck, A Baltimore City Public Schools student at Baltimore City College and I am writing **in strong support of House Bill 352**, Concentration of Poverty School Grant Program - Personnel and Per Pupil Grants - Eligible Uses.

Fine arts is more than just a hobby, it's the gateway to success. It directly correlates to creative thinking, which is the blueprint that allows for humans to constantly grow and create new inventions that progressively build our futures. Another benefit of fine arts is the flexibility it contains that allows students to freely express themselves which builds early communication in young children.

Currently, the Blueprint for Maryland's Future states that **concentration of poverty funds from the personnel and per pupil grant** may be used through fiscal year 2027 to provide the programs required under COMAR 13A.04 ([2022, HB1450, §5-223\(c\)\(9\), Pg. 3](#), repeated in [2025, HB504§5-223\(c\)\(9\)](#), Pg. 16) for core subject areas, including the fine arts. By supporting HB352 and eliminating the sunset timeline in law, you will help ensure that arts education, along with other core subjects, continues to be an allowable use of funding to cultivate the minds of the students of tomorrow.

It was around kindergarten when I really started engaging myself in the arts. I wasn't the most vocal kid. I was incredibly shy and wasn't the best at expressing myself. I felt as if I didn't have a voice at times and bottled up a lot of emotions, that was until my first art class. We made a mini project of a family of penguins. I spent quite a bit of time on this project since I was thinking of my family while making it. My art teacher recognized my effort and along with other students from other select schools and our projects were put on display at the Baltimore Museum of Art. My family and I got all dressed up to go and then went to a restaurant to celebrate. This was one of my fondest memories from childhood. Art allowed me to find a voice through my own creations. Ever since that day I began exploring other forms of art. From instruments, to sculpting, and even theater, I found myself through all of these experiences. It gave me a broader view of my everyday life and even raised my sociability. I found friends that shared the same interest as me and was able to learn and grow from them as they did from me. The bonds I've built through art in the past are bonds I still hold onto and the broad perspective I've achieved is what has been leading me throughout my school and personal life.

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I believe that art is fundamental in every Baltimore City Public School as it gives the students of today and tomorrow a broader and more creative perspective. This will ultimately lead to a more advanced, well rounded, and brighter society.

By supporting this bill and eliminating the sunset language, school communities will **continue having the option** to invest their CPG funding in the arts in response to community need.

I urge the committee to provide a **favorable report on HB 352**. Thank you for supporting the future of public schools throughout Maryland.

Sincerely,

Serigne Seck

Baltimore City Public Schools student at Baltimore City College