



Maryland Education Coalition

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Oppose Cuts to Next Generation Scholars & Public Schools Opportunity Enhancement Grant Programs

The Maryland Education Coalition (MEC) is made up of individuals and statewide organizations, who represent parents, civil rights, and special population groups. We advocate for adequate, equitable funding and systematic accountability for the nearly 900,000 public school students in Maryland’s public schools regardless of their academic, cultural, economic, geographic, racial or other demographic status.

MEC supports the formula funding for education in the FY19 budget as mandated by the Bridge to Education Act, as revised. In this year’s Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act, MEC is requesting the budget committees reject the Governor’s cuts to K-12 education aid. We ask that you:

- Oppose repealing the mandate for Next Generation Scholars of Maryland Program-- \$5 million
- Oppose the reduction in the Public School Opportunities Enhancement Program-- \$5 million.

The Next Generation Scholars programs targets a critical missing link by providing individualized supports for students living in concentrated poverty to better access and succeed in career and college pathways. **The American School Counselor’s Association recommends that there be a no higher than 250:1 caseload for guidance counselors; however statewide in Maryland our average is 371:1 and in Baltimore City that ratio is 980:1.** Programs funded by the Next Generation Scholars program are helping to address the gap and going further to provide intensive, positive intervention to address the barriers students experience in awareness about career and college option, preparedness and planning for accessing those options, technical assistance in navigating complex system and support networks for succeeding

The Public School Opportunities Enhancement grant program supports high quality afterschool and summer learning opportunities in addition to expanding access to additional enrichment and teacher-training in schools. Maryland is currently in the **bottom ten states** for access to afterschool learning opportunities. Just sixteen percent of young people have access to programs and another 280,000 school age students would participate if a program were available (America After 3 PM, Afterschool Alliance 2014). Participation in afterschool programs can address both opportunity and achievement gaps. Research indicates regular participation in afterschool programs in grades K-5 can close the income-based math achievement gap (Vandell, 2013).

Each of these programs are part of a larger solution for addressing inequities in opportunities for students experiencing poverty and help reduce the barriers for success on their academic and career paths and should be included in Maryland’s Fiscal Year 19 Budget. MEC looks forward to additional and systemic approaches to these issues in the future implementation of the Kirwan Commission recommendations.