



Maryland Education Coalition



INSPIRES ACTION & POSITIVE CHANGE SO MARYLAND'S STUDENTS SUCCEED

Rick Tyler, Jr., Chair

Web site - www.marylandeducationcoalition.org

Email – md.education.coalition@gmail.com

Date: March 1, 2021

BILL: HB0588 & Supplemental Budget I

POSITION: Informational

TITLE: [MSDE Aid to Education](#)

COMMITTEE: Senate Budget & Taxation and
House Appropriations

MEC is made up of twenty statewide organizations and several individuals with decades of experience and expertise. We have advocated for adequate, equitable funding and policies as well as systematic accountability. MEC has a long history of being on the front lines of Maryland public education policies and funding issues in Annapolis, and our local school systems for over 40 years. We believe public education is a constitutional right allowing all students equitable access to a quality public education so each may graduate college or career-ready. We also believe it is a civil right.

MEC is generally pleased with the additional public education funding in Supplemental Budget I for FY 21 and FY 22 thanks to the significant contributions from the federal government with additional support from the state. These funds appear to have adequately and equitably addressed some of our concerns related to the safe, healthy reopening of schools and learning recovery, but we remain concerned that there may not be sufficient additional funding to address the increased need for behavioral and mental health services.

According to recent data provided by MSDE, school systems would need to hire about 2,800 additional staff (*est. 1,050 school counselors, 65 school psychologists and 2,750 school social workers*) to meet the additional student service needs based on national standards for staff to student ratios!

MEC is also concerned that the additional funding for Concentration of Poverty may not be sufficient to provide the full amount of the per pupil grant for each student in each school that is at the 80% threshold of poverty. We also understand that schools with high poverty percentages that include high numbers of students from immigrant families are less likely to file for federal poverty programs and under-counted for the purposes of calculating poverty. While HB1300 includes a solution for counting these students it seems that the FY22 budget does not currently accurately capture these students. . Given the ongoing gap between low-wealth districts and the adequacy gap we would encourage the legislature to consider ways in which the timeline for concentrated poverty funding for Community School Coordinators, School health and per pupil funding be sped up. This would allow a greater number of schools to qualify sooner with the additional per pupil allocations.

MEC urges the General Assembly to restrict the funding for students enrolled in the BOOST program to those students currently enrolled with a plan to eliminate this funding and transfer the balance of all remaining funds for public education poverty grants. We also ask for additional language to be placed in the law requiring that any supplemental budget funds allocated to nonpublic schools to support their reopening is reported and reviewed comparable to what is required of all public school systems.

In summary, we again thank the General Assembly leadership, the committee members, and their staffs who oversee public education issues for listening and the hard work done so far on the public education budget and we are committed to follow this process through approval, implementation and reporting of outcomes.

Advocates for Children and Youth, American Civil Liberties Union of MD, Arts Education in Maryland Schools, Arts Every Day, Attendance Works, CASA, Decoding Dyslexia of MD, Disability Rights Maryland, League of Women Voters of MD, Let Them See Clearly, Right to Read Maryland, Maryland PTA, Maryland Coalition for Community Schools, Maryland Coalition for Gifted & Talented Ed, Maryland Out of School Time Network, MSC-NAACP, Maryland School Psychologists' Association, Parent Advocacy Consortium, Public Justice Center, School Social Workers of MD, Barbara Dezmon, Kalam Hettleman, David Hornbeck, Rick Tyler, Jr., Shamoyia Gardiner, Sharon Rubinstein