



Maryland Education Coalition



INSPIRES ACTION & POSITIVE CHANGE SO MARYLAND'S STUDENTS SUCCEED

Rick Tyler, Jr., Chair

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Date: March 3, 2021

BILL: HB0589- Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2021

POSITION: Support with amendment

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 always been on the front lines of Maryland public education policies and funding issues in Annapolis, Baltimore, and our local school systems for over 40 years. We believe a 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 much of the contents of House Bill 589, including holding school system enrollment harmless by ensuring that each receives an increase over FY 2021, but we believe the precedent of using funding originally intended to be allocated for the Blueprint to be the wrong method.

We remain concern that there may not be sufficient additional funding to address growing concerns with behavioral and mental health, especially if school systems are required to decrease or eliminate their school security and safety personnel. We estimate, that based on national standards, school systems may need as many as 2,800 additional school counselors, school psychologist and school social workers to meet current and future needs! *(estimated additional \$250 million plus)*

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

Respectfully yours,

Rick Tyler, Jr., Chair
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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