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 psychologists 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
Maryland Education Coalition