



Maryland Education Coalition

The Maryland Education Coalition is dedicated to raising the academic achievement of students in Maryland public schools by promoting adequate funding and systemic accountability for improving results.

Board of Directors:

David Beard, Co-Chair
Rick Tyler, Co-Chair
Charlie Cooper, Secretary
American Association of University Women
Advocates for Children and Youth
American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland
League of Women Voters
Maryland Disability Law Center
Maryland PTA
Laura Carr, Individual Member
Sharon Rubinstein, Individual Member
Carl Stokes, Individual Member

Organizational Members

ABC Schools
Arts Education in Maryland Schools
Casa de Maryland
Maryland Out of School Time Network
Public Justice Center

Testimony before the Ways and Means Committee In Support of House Bill 114 – Geographic Cost of Education - Requirement February 5, 2014

The Maryland Education Coalition (MEC) fights for adequate, equitable funding and systemic accountability because every child deserves a quality education and because achievement gaps must be closed.

Maryland's Constitution requires only one specific service – free and adequate public education. The quality of schools should not depend on race, class, wealth, or jurisdiction. Maryland's historic commitment to equitable and adequate funding of public schools has improved learning generally, reduced disparities, and brought national recognition, but inadequacies remain within and among school districts.

Fairness requires that the State aid formula is adjusted for the true cost of education. That is why the Thornton Commission went to great pains to calculate the additional cost to educate an economically disadvantaged student or a student who needs to learn English. The additional cost of education in higher cost jurisdictions of the State is no less real than those child-related types of factors and should have no less recognition in the mandated formula. To help alleviate this issue, the Geographic Cost of Education Index (GCEI) was created to provide additional support to jurisdictions with higher educational costs.

The fiscal note recognizes that GCEI has been fully funded for several consecutive years. Any future failure to fund it would not be fair to the children who attend school in higher-cost counties. In years when the budget faced great strain, GCEI was often put up for elimination. HB 114 would solidify the importance and purpose of GCEI and help ensure all Maryland students receive a quality education regardless of location.

The Maryland Education Coalition encourages a favorable report of House Bill 114.