

ADVOCATES



FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

To: Chair Kaiser and members of the Ways and Means Committee
From: Shamoyia Gardiner, Education Policy Director
Re: House Bill 256: Maryland Estate Tax – Unified Credit
Date: February 12, 2020
Position: Support

Advocates for Children and Youth (ACY) is a member organization of the Maryland Fair Funding Coalition. ACY generally supports the policy recommendations offered by the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education, including but not limited to: each of the Blueprint's four guiding principles; early supports and interventions for young children and their families; college and career readiness; additional supports and services for students who need them; additional resources, supports, and services for children living in high-need communities; equitable learning outcomes; and equitable distribution of funding across and within jurisdictions.

For years, Maryland has funded public education in a regressive manner, allocating resources to jurisdictions inequitably. This has resulted in some jurisdictions with students who face significant non-academic and academic barriers to learning being underfunded while jurisdictions with less severe student need receiving funds above and beyond what they require.¹ Disturbingly, this regressive funding model has racialized implications, with the three jurisdictions serving half of the students of color in Maryland being the most persistently underfunded: Caroline and Prince George's counties, as well as Baltimore City.²

Students, families, and communities in every jurisdiction of Maryland stand to benefit from the passage of the Commission's recommendations into law, **provided that they are accompanied by a sustainable, dedicated funding source.** The Blueprint for Maryland's Future Fund is integral to ushering in a new era of public education in Maryland; one which starts with a world-class system of public education and ensures equitable access to opportunities so all students thrive.

House Bill 256 alter the methodology for calculating the state's estate tax, generating more than \$116.5 million in new revenue by FY2022. With the expectation that this new revenue will be directed in large part to the Blueprint for Maryland's Future Fund, ACY strongly urges a favorable report on HB 256.

¹ The Urban Institute. "Do Poor Kids Get Their Fair Share of School Funding?"

https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/90586/school_funding_brief.pdf May 2017.

² The Education Trust, 2017.

Advocates for Children and Youth builds a strong Maryland by advancing policies and programs to ensure children of every race, ethnicity, and place of birth can achieve their full potential.

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