



## COUNTY COUNCIL OF TALBOT COUNTY

COURT HOUSE  
11 N. WASHINGTON STREET  
EASTON, MARYLAND 21601-3178  
PHONE: 410-770-8001  
FAX: 410-770-8007  
TTY: 410-822-8735  
[www.talbotcountymd.gov](http://www.talbotcountymd.gov)

CHUCK F. CALLAHAN, President  
PETE LESHER, Vice President

KEASHA N. HAYTHE  
LYNN L. MIELKE  
DAVE STEPP

February 15, 2024

The Honorable Bill Ferguson  
President, Maryland State Senate  
H-107 State House  
100 State Circle  
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Adrienne Jones  
Speaker, Maryland House of Delegates  
H-101 State House  
100 State Circle  
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Guy Guzzone  
Chair, Budget and Taxation Committee  
Maryland State Senate  
3 West Miller Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Ben Barnes  
Chair, Appropriations Committee  
Maryland House of Delegates  
121 Taylor House Office Building  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear President Ferguson, Speaker Jones, Chair Guzzone, and Chair Barnes:

On behalf of the Talbot County Council, I am writing to advocate for complete restoration of Cade funding which has been severely impacted by the Governor's Department of Budget and Management's proposed 2025 budget.

The Governor's Budget and Management Office has issued the proposed 2025 budget, which includes historic cuts to community college funding with the Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act (BRFA). As introduced, the bill would rebase the Cade formula funding to 26.5%, a historic cut from the full 29%, which was only fully reached within the past two years.

The rationale for these funding cuts was neither based on good policy nor the most recent enrollment data, and in fact, will cripple community college efforts to restore enrollment and to restore programs for workforce development. These cuts come at a time when Maryland community colleges have made great progress in increasing enrollment and student success rates, even as we have been called upon to (1) help support the K-12 system through expanding dual enrollment; (2) to address the workforce skills gap by expanding trades-based certifications and producing work-ready graduates; and (3) to mitigate student debt by more efficiently transferring students to four-year schools.

The Cade funding formula established an equitable distribution of funding by linking funding to Maryland's four-year institutions in an attempt to assure quality of community college facilities and

programming and adequate staffing for the students they serve. The proposed cuts instituted in this BRFA bill are absolutely devastating and particularly impact rural colleges—especially those on the Eastern Shore—with Cecil College, Chesapeake College, and Wor-Wic Community College all incurring double digit declines in State funding under this budget proposal. They represent the fourth largest funding cuts in the history of the Cade formula after those of the Great Recession and the COVID-19 pandemic.

For your information and to provide context, I share these additional points:

- The BRFA disproportionately targets community colleges in reducing their percentage tie to the four-year public universities, despite the large population community colleges serve and the unique and vital role these institutions play in localized economic development.
- Due to two prior years of fully funding the Cade Formula, community college enrollment is increasing. Community colleges are leading higher education enrollment with an 8.3% increase; by contrast, public four-year institution enrollment increases are at about 2%.
- Reducing the Cade formula in a time of enrollment growth stretches funding even more, with less support for all students and for the structures in place that help ensure their success.
- Despite previous enrollment declines, community colleges have continued to produce more graduates annually, with a 28% increase from the 2009-2010 academic year, the baseline for the beginning of enrollment decline, to the 2021-2022 academic year, the most current year for which data are available.
- Strong and consistent State funding provides the necessary support services to help students compete.
- Community colleges have been asked to close the skills gap in workforce shortages.
- Community colleges have been tasked by Blueprint for Maryland's Future legislation to develop College and Career Readiness (CCR) pathways, which by law must be offered at a 25% tuition discount.
- Community colleges provide unmatched opportunities and support for our state's diverse and underserved populations. Therefore, the proposed BRFA cuts disproportionately affect our state's most vulnerable individuals and families.
- BRFA reductions would require students to pay more in tuition, which, according to research, reduces the chance that recent high school students will enroll at all.
- Affordability remains the biggest barrier to student success, BRFA cuts requiring tuition increases make postsecondary education further out of reach.
- Community colleges compete in a tight academic labor market for skilled faculty and staff; increasing funding for public four-year institutions while reducing the community college Cade calculation harms our ability to compete, directly impacting our ability to attract and retain talent, especially in a time when Collective Bargaining is being implemented for our segment.

The County Council appreciates your strong consideration to fully restore Cade funding for the benefit of our students and the communities we serve.

The Honorable Bill Ferguson  
The Honorable Adrienne Jones  
The Honorable Guy Guzzone  
The Honorable Ben Barnes  
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Thank you for your attention to this vitally important issue.

Sincerely,  
COUNTY COUNCIL OF TALBOT COUNTY



Chuck F. Callahan  
President

CFC/swm

cc: The Honorable Wes Moore, Governor of Maryland  
The Honorable Johnny Mautz, Maryland State Senate  
The Honorable Christopher Adams, Maryland House of Delegates  
The Honorable Tom Hutchinson, Maryland House of Delegates  
Clifford P. Coppersmith, Ph. D., President, Chesapeake College  
Reza Jafari, Chair, Chesapeake College Board of Trustees  
Blenda Armistead, Ph.D., Member, Chesapeake College Board of Trustees