



Senate Bill 461

Education - Prekindergarten Students - Funding

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**
WITH AMENDMENT

Date: February 24, 2016

To: Budget and Taxation Committee

From: Robin Clark Eilenberg, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 461 **WITH AMENDMENTS** to recognize current funding for pre-kindergarten students in Maryland. If the bill is to be considered, MACo urges a technical amendment to avoid a meaningful unintended consequence.

SB 461 alters education funding formulas for state and county governments by adding children enrolled in half-day and full-day pre-K into the count for purposes of calculating per-pupil aid.

Maryland's public pre-K programs currently receive funding through the State's compensatory aid formula, and state and federal grants dedicated to pre-K. This legislation would secure continued funding for pre-kindergarten students by including them in the general education funding distribution, factoring in half-day pre-kindergartners for ½ per pupil aid, and full-day pre-kindergartners as additional students in the per-pupil counts.

The bill has an unintended consequence, however. Altering the per-pupil counts to accommodate pre-kindergartners also inevitably alters required county per-pupil education funding. Maintenance of effort laws in education require counties to provide the same amount of aid or more to local schools on a per-pupil basis each year. Suddenly introducing these pre-K students into the enrollment counts creates an apples-to-oranges enrollment mismatch in FY 2018, the first year of effect.

To avoid SB 461's side effect on maintenance of effort, MACo proposes that the legislation be amended to account for students who are already receiving half-day and full-day prekindergarten services and requests a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report on HB 461.

Amendment suggested by MACo:

Add uncodified section:

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That to maintain funding consistency, a county's required funding under Section 5-202(d)(2) of the Education Article for FY 2018 shall be determined using a calculation of full-time equivalent enrollment for the prior fiscal year employing a student enrollment as would be determined under the provisions of this Act.