

Full Funding for the Geographic Cost of Education Index (GCEI) Is Critical for Maryland Students

GCEI helps fund schools in 13 Maryland counties with 80% of the state's student population.

While the heaviest cuts fall in urban areas like Baltimore City, Montgomery County, and Prince George's County, GCEI is an important component of local education resources in rural counties like Carroll, Kent, and Queen Anne's. Nine counties of the 13 GCEI counties voted for Gov. Hogan in 2014—perhaps explaining why every Republican senator joined their Democratic colleagues in passing a bipartisan budget to restore full funding of GCEI.

GCEI makes a big difference for students in those 13 counties.

Gov. Hogan's refusal to release \$68.1 million in education funding that the General Assembly fenced off for him to fund GCEI would harm Maryland students and their schools. Local school districts would be forced to reduce both teacher and educational support staff positions, leading to larger class sizes and less individualized instruction.

COUNTY	GOV. HOGAN'S GCEI CUTS	TEACHER JOBS IN JEOPARDY	SUPPORT STAFF JOBS IN JEOPARDY	PER CLASSROOM FUNDING CUT	PER SCHOOL FUNDING CUT
Anne Arundel	-\$4,836,646	-86	-143	-\$1,301.65	-\$39,972.28
Baltimore City	-\$11,610,141	-191	-318	-\$4,631.71	-\$61,429.32
Baltimore	-\$2,945,833	-54	-89	-\$576.67	-\$17,027.94
Calvert	-\$1,138,627	-20	-33	-\$1,349.50	-\$43,793.35
Carroll	-\$1,241,508	-24	-40	-\$988.26	-\$26,415.06
Charles	-\$1,767,220	-32	-53	-\$1,352.77	-\$47,762.70
Frederick	-\$3,309,089	-64	-106	-\$1,736.42	-\$49,389.39
Howard	-\$2,736,808	-47	-78	-\$1,034.87	-\$36,490.77
Kent	-\$68,497	-1	-2	-\$712.29	-\$9,785.29
Montgomery	-\$17,744,167	-299	-498	-\$2,447.31	-\$85,720.61
Prince George's	-\$20,297,767	-354	-590	-\$3,691.20	-\$97,118.50
Queen Anne's	-\$286,002	-5	-8	-\$899.77	-\$20,428.71
St. Mary's	-\$117,933	-2	-3	-\$137.14	-\$4,066.66
STATEWIDE	-\$68,100,238	-1231	-2052	-\$1,712.91	-\$47,556.03

GCEI has been fully funded for the last six fiscal years. With consistent funding in recent years, school districts have come to rely upon those resources when making their annual budgets. Failing to fund GCEI will lead to program cuts and a barrier to progress in classrooms across Maryland.

School districts have already been forced to make tough budget decisions while Gov. Hogan has been holding school funding hostage. We can expect more to follow if he doesn't stop playing political games with our children's education.

The Prince George's Sentinel, "School System Facing Sting of Budget Cuts" (February 4):

- "Prince George's County Public Schools CEO Kevin Maxwell, said cuts could equate to more than 500 teachers' jobs."
- "'We have not made final decisions because we are hoping some of this can be resolved in the legislative session in Annapolis. We are hoping to remediate some of this, all of it maybe,' Maxwell said."

The Washington Post, "Republican Howard County executive lobbies Hogan on education funds" (February 11):

- "Howard County Executive Allan H. Kittleman (R) asked Hogan to provide an additional \$5.7 million to his jurisdiction, arguing that 'proposed budget cuts in education funding would severely hamper Howard County's ability to provide the outstanding student experience that is expected by our residents.'"

The Frederick News-Post, "Effort underway to prevent funding cuts to Frederick County schools" (February 14):

- "Delegates from Frederick County say they will work to restore state funding for the local public school system, where budget shortfalls have already forced officials to increase class sizes."
- "This week, the Frederick County Board of Education voted to increase class size by 1 student across all grades. The decision will mean the loss of about 80 teaching positions."

The Washington Post, "Montgomery superintendent calls for reduction of 370 school positions" (March 11):

- "Montgomery County's interim superintendent has told principals to plan for 370 fewer school-based positions next year than previously projected as the school system anticipates a budget shortfall, a move that could increase some class sizes."
- "If a final budget is better than projected, some or all of the positions could be restored, officials said."