



The SEED School of Maryland: Annual Report

Education Article § 8-701

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Overview

Education Article §8-701 established the Residential Boarding Education Program for At-Risk Youth. The operator of the Maryland Residential Boarding Program for At-Risk Youth is the SEED School of Maryland. The SEED School is designed to provide a rigorous college preparatory education. The preliminary enrollment count for the 2024-2025 school year is 411 students enrolled in grades six to 12 from 11 local education agencies (LEAs).

The SEED School has been in operation since fall 2008. In July 2023, the Maryland Board of Public Works approved a contract renewal for the SEED School for a five-year term through July 2028. In the renewed contract, updates were made to reporting requirements and to academic and operational benchmarks.

Education Article §8-708 directs the Board of Trustees of the designated operator of the Maryland Residential Boarding Education Program for At-Risk Youth to report to the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) detailed information on the number, grades, and jurisdictions of students enrolled in the program in the current and preceding years. On or before December 1st of each year, MSDE is required to report this information to the Governor and the Maryland General Assembly, along with a recommendation regarding whether funds for the residential education program should be increased or decreased. This report does not include student names, so the report may be made available to the public.

The following information is included in this report: (1) projected student enrollment summary by grade and sending LEA for the 2024-2025 school year for all 411 students in grades 6-12; (2) student enrollment summary by grade and sending LEA for the 397 students in grades 6-12 who attended the SEED School in the 2023-2024 school year; (3) actual expenditures for fiscal year (FY) 2024 and the projected budget for FY 2025; and (4) whether funds appropriated under §8-708 should be increased or decreased. As per §8-702, the program is operated under the supervision of MSDE. Ms. Carol Beck, Director, Office of School Innovations, is the contract monitor and meets at least monthly with the SEED School leadership team to review student progress, address program concerns, and identify areas where MSDE can provide technical assistance to the school. Ms. Beck also facilitates informal meetings, structured visits, and contact with others in the Department, as appropriate. Ms. Beck is supported by key MSDE staff including Mary Gable, Assistant State Superintendent for the Division of Student Support and Federal Programs, and Walter Sallee, Director of Student Services and Strategic Planning. The MSDE staff facilitates communications between SEED School staff, local Directors of Student Support, and other LEA staff members.

School Administration

Kirk Sykes is the Head of the SEED School of Maryland and begins his fifth year leading the school. Mr. Sykes brings over 20 years of experience in educational leadership to SEED. Throughout his career, he has worked to balance tradition and innovation to benefit students

and their families. He holds a B.A. from Morgan State University, an M. Ed. in Education from Coppin State University, and is completing doctoral studies at Seton Hall University.

Mr. Sykes directs a leadership team including the Chief of Staff, Director of Academics, and the Director of Student Life. A 20 member Board of Trustees includes five appointees of the Governor of Maryland. The SEED Foundation, Inc. provides guidance and support to the SEED School of Maryland, and three sister programs in Washington DC, Miami, FL, and Los Angeles, CA. The SEED Foundation founded the school and continues to provide direction in administration, strategic planning, programming, and fundraising.

Staff at the SEED School with leadership roles in reading, mathematics, library/media, science, social studies, physical education, Title I, and special education receive content-related information from MSDE. SEED School staff members are also invited to attend training sponsored by MSDE when the content is relevant. This includes professional development provided by the Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services, the Division of Assessment, Accountability, and Performance Reporting and Research, and the Division of Student Support and Federal Programs.

Enrollment

As specified by statute, the September 30th enrollment is the official count used to determine billing for enrollment for each LEA.

Table 1 includes the number of students by grade and LEA for the 2024-2025 school year. In the 2024-2025 school year, the preliminary enrollment includes students from 11 counties and Baltimore City. The enrollment for the 2024-2025 school year is preliminary and will be verified as of the official September 30 enrollment count. Table 2 includes the number of students by grade and LEA for the 2023-2024 school year. In the 2023-2024 school year, students represented 13 counties and Baltimore City.

TABLE 1. PREMININARY ENROLLMENT BY GRADE AND LEA PROJECTED FOR 2024-2025

County	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	Total
Allegany				1			1	2
Anne Arundel	1	2	3	4	3	2	1	16
Baltimore City	16	22	16	55	41	35	19	204
Baltimore County	10	9	12	22	18	8	7	86
Charles			1	2				3
Frederick	1	1	1			1		4
Harford	1		1	1			1	4
Howard		1	1	2	1		2	7
Montgomery	1	1	2		1		2	7
Prince George's	9	12	10	16	10	8	11	76

County	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	Total
Wicomico						1	1	2
Total	39	48	47	103	74	55	45	411

TABLE 2. ENROLLMENT BY GRADE AND LEA FOR 2023-2024

County	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	Total
Allegany			1			1		2
Anne Arundel	3	3	1	5	3	1	5	21
Baltimore City	24	20	13	50	38	20	17	182
Baltimore County	10	12	13	16	14	8	11	84
Cecil				1		1		2
Charles	1	2			1			4
Frederick					1			1
Harford		1				2		3
Howard	4	1	2	2	1	2	2	14
Montgomery	1	2				3		6
Prince George's	13	12	9	12	11	12	4	73
St. Mary's	1							1
Wicomico					1	2	1	4
Total	57	53	39	86	70	52	40	397

Finances

Each year, the Governor and Maryland General Assembly appropriate funding for the SEED School in two parts. An appropriation of state general funds provides funding for the boarding program, administration, and transportation. In addition, there is a special fund appropriation. This amount estimates the contribution that will be made by LEAs, based on enrollment of SEED School students from each county or Baltimore City. MSDE invoices the LEA an amount that equals 85% of the local cost of education times the number of students enrolled.

In FY 2024, the Governor and Maryland General Assembly appropriated from general funds \$12,782,839 to the SEED School and \$13,000,274 for Fiscal Year (FY) 2025. The Special Fund appropriation was \$5,295,514 in FY 2024. Additional revenue is provided through federal and state grants for which the school is eligible. The SEED School raises private funds to support enhancements to the program. Table 3 reports SEED school expenditures for FY 2024 and the budget for FY 2025. The SEED School reported operating expenditures for FY 2024 of \$20,267,360. The projected operating budget for FY 2025 totals \$19,299,189.

TABLE 3. SEED SCHOOL OF MARYLAND BUDGET SUMMARY

Revenue:

Revenue Source	FY 2024 Actual (Unaudited)	FY 2025 Projected Approved Budget
State and Local Per Pupil Funding	5,295,516	\$5,388,646
State Special Fund for Boarding program	\$12,732,840	\$13,000,274
FARMS (Nat'l Food Program) and State	\$81,709	\$0
Federal Grants	\$1,612,493	\$1,919,044
Special Education	\$0	\$0
COVID Relief Fund	\$3,442,786	\$0
Other State grants	\$0	\$0
E rate	\$114,808	\$0
Medicare	\$0	\$0
Private contributions	\$1,203,657	\$750,000
Other	\$188,897	\$688,855
Total Revenue	\$24,672,706	\$21,746,819

Expenses:

Expense	FY 2024 Actual (Unaudited)	FY 2025 Projected Approved Budget
Salaries	\$9,740,301	\$9,567,106
Benefits and Taxes	\$2,229,629	\$2,501,798
Other Staff Expense	\$423,148	\$275,700
Occupancy	\$2,153,749	\$2,142,201
Direct Student	\$3,274,544	\$2,681,725
Technology	\$133,079	\$140,750
Development	\$181,920	\$104,750
General and Administrative	\$2,130,990	\$1,885,160
Total Operating Expense	\$20,267,360	\$19,299,190

Change In Net Assets:

Summary	FY 2024 Actual (Unaudited)	FY 2025 Projected Budget
Revenue Minus Operating Expenses	\$4,405,346	\$2,447,629
Depreciation and Amortization	-\$1,606,205	-\$1,750,000
Interest Expense	-\$429,320	-\$405,000
Change in Net Assets	\$2,369,821	\$292,629
Beginning Net Assets	\$26,227,407	\$28,597,228
Ending Net Assets	\$28,597,228	\$28,889,857

Recommendation Regarding Appropriation of Funds

Education Article § 8-708(2)(ii) requires MSDE to determine, “whether the funds appropriated under §8-710 of this subtitle should be increased or decreased.” The SEED School, a Residential Boarding Education Program for At-Risk Youth, continues to remain a priority. SEED is serving 411 students from 11 LEAs in grades six through 12 in the 2024-2025 school year. MSDE appreciates the ability to continue to serve these students and future Maryland students.