

# **Poll shows increased support for BOOST funding**

A poll released March 13 showed a support for an increase in funding for the State of Maryland's Broadening Options and Opportunities for Students Today (BOOST) Scholarship Program.

The BOOST program provides scholarships to eligible students from low-income families to afford the primary and secondary educations that best fit their needs. The program was the result of the collaboration of bi-partisan legislators in 2016.

For the 2018-19 school year, Governor Larry Hogan proposed that the funding for BOOST increase to \$9 million, and the Maryland Senate Budget and Taxation Committee approved the increase March 8.

Conducted by Mason-Dixon Polling and Strategy, the poll consisted of respondents who are registered Maryland voters and regular voters in elections.

Baltimore City residents showed the highest percentage of support at 82 percent, followed by Prince George's County (74 percent) and Baltimore County (70 percent); 79 percent of African-Americans support the increase in funding, along with 68 percent of democrats.

Recipients of BOOST scholarships are from 21 of Maryland's 24 counties, and households report an average yearly income of \$25,123. They are primarily members of minority ethnic groups (63 percent) – 40 percent African-American, 14 percent Latino and 9 percent other ethnic minorities. One-third of recipients are English Language Learners (ELL).

Most scholarships support students who were previously enrolled in a public school.

The release of the poll's results coincided with Nonpublic Schools Advocacy Day in Annapolis, where more than 1,100 students met with and encouraged legislators to support nonpublic schools in Maryland.

When asked whether they support or oppose increasing funding for the BOOST program in order to continue to expand educational options for lower-income Maryland families, likely voters responded in support as follows:

Baltimore City: 82%

Baltimore County: 70%

Prince George's County: 74%

Montgomery County: 62%

Central Maryland: 64%

Eastern Shore/Southern Maryland: 56%

Male voters: 62%

Female voters: 67%

Voters under 50 years of age: 70%

African-American voters: 79%

Democrats: 68%

Republicans: 59%