

POSITION PAPER ON EDUCATION

Title: Bridging the Educational Pipeline to Civic Engagement

Issues: I. Evidence-Based Instruction for Children;

II. Encouraging Political Engagement in Young Adults;

III. Encouraging Social Justice and Civic Program Opportunities for Youth

Introduction:

In recent years, the widening political divide and declining youth voter turnout have raised urgent questions about the health of democratic participation. If democracy is to thrive, the next generation must be equipped and motivated to engage in civic life. This position paper explores the most effective ways to encourage education in children and political engagement in youth and young adults. It focuses on three key strategies: implementing evidence-based instruction for children to increase their educational attainment, encouraging political engagement in young adults, and providing social justice-oriented civic programs and opportunities for youth.

I. Evidence-Based Instruction for Children

In the ongoing quest to improve educational attainment, evidence-based instruction (EBI) stands out as a cornerstone for effective teaching and learning. By relying on strategies that are backed by rigorous research, schools can systematically address achievement gaps, raise overall student performance, and ensure that every learner has access to high-quality education. This paper argues that educational attainment is best advanced when schools prioritize three key elements: evidence-based teaching (EBT), Response to Intervention (RTI), and data-based decision making.

Evidence-Based Teaching (EBT)

Evidence-based teaching refers to instructional approaches that are proven through research to enhance student learning and achievement. Unlike traditional methods based on intuition or convention, EBT ensures that teaching practices are grounded in solid empirical findings. The impact of EBT on educational attainment is well-documented: it not only improves student outcomes but also helps close achievement gaps across diverse learner populations (see [IES](#)). For example, when teachers understand and apply effective evidence-based practices, they are better able to support student achievement and raise performance levels for all learners ([Stephen Gaynor School](#)). These practices have transformative results, creating lasting impacts on schools and students alike ([Spark Curriculum](#)).

Response to Intervention (RTI)

Response to Intervention (RTI) is a multi-tiered approach that identifies and supports students with learning and behavior needs. At its core, RTI uses ongoing data collection to inform

instructional adjustments and provide targeted interventions. It is widely recognized in educational literature that RTI frameworks, when implemented with fidelity, help educators identify struggling students early, deliver interventions matched to their needs, and track progress over time. This systematic, evidence-driven process supports educational attainment by ensuring no student falls through the cracks and that resources are allocated where they are needed most. **RTI's foundation in evidence-based instruction further amplifies its effectiveness in improving learning outcomes for all students.**

Data-Based Decision Making

Data-based decision making involves the continuous use of screening, progress monitoring, and other forms of data to guide instruction and school improvement efforts. By harnessing student data, educators can personalize learning, target interventions more effectively, and make informed choices that lead to better student outcomes ([Panorama Education](#)). Research consistently shows that strategic use of data leads to significant improvements in learning, helping to identify barriers and drive measurable gains ([Trevecca University](#)). **Data-driven approaches also empower school leaders to optimize resource allocation and plan targeted improvement strategies** ([Ellevation Education](#)).

Conclusion:

Evidence-based instruction is a proven catalyst for educational attainment. By prioritizing evidence-based teaching, implementing robust RTI frameworks, and embedding data-based decision making into everyday practice, schools can ensure that every student receives the support they need to succeed. These approaches, grounded in research and best practice, are essential for raising achievement, closing gaps, and preparing learners for future success.

II. Encouraging Political Engagement in Young Adults

A substantial body of research demonstrates that educational attainment is the most significant indicator of political involvement and voting habits among young adults. **Young adults with higher levels of education are far more likely to vote and participate in civic activities.**

According to recent findings, gaps in youth voter turnout by educational attainment and socioeconomic status are so pronounced that they threaten to undermine a truly representative electorate. Young adults who have not completed high school or attended college are far less likely to engage politically than their peers, reflecting deep-rooted inequities in access to civic learning and participation opportunities (CIRCLE at Tufts

University)[<https://circle.tufts.edu/latest-research/youth-are-taking-civic-action-need-opportunities-and-support-overcome-socioeconomic>].

Youth and Civic Engagement:

Encourage young adult with higher education and socioeconomic status to engage in civic programs and opportunities for politicians and with youth. They can be encouraged to lead group discussions, organize campaigns by canvassing for political candidates, lead role-playing, debates, and other community service programs and opportunities with youth to encourage the political process.

III. Encouraging Social Justice and Civic Program Opportunities for Youth

Strengthening the educational pipeline—ensuring that all youth have equitable access to quality schooling and civic learning—remains a necessary first step toward bridging the political divide. Traditional civics courses alone are not enough. **For youth to feel invested in the democratic process, they need meaningful, real-world opportunities to engage with issues that matter to them, especially those centered on social justice.** Studies show that civics education which is rooted in social justice not only increases political efficacy (the belief in one's ability to effect change) but also motivates youth to participate actively in civic life. When students see that their voices can influence outcomes on issues like racial equity, environmental justice, and community policing, they are more likely to develop lifelong habits of political engagement (UNICEF)[<https://www.unicef.org/innocenti/exploring-civic-education>].

Programs that allow youth to lead discussions, organize campaigns, and interact directly with policymakers help foster a sense of agency and responsibility. These programs often include role-playing, debates, and community service, all tailored to students' developmental stages. Importantly, such instruction should reach all children, not just those in well-resourced schools, to ensure that every young person—regardless of background—has the chance to become an engaged citizen (CIRCLE at Tufts University)[<https://circle.tufts.edu/latest-research/equitable-civic-learning-all-how-k-12-schools-can-grow-voters>].

Building political engagement starts early. Civic education programs do more than teach facts; they cultivate skills, attitudes, and dispositions necessary for meaningful participation. Research shows that when schools adopt well-designed, inclusive civics curricula, students become more

knowledgeable about politics and likely to participate as adults (iCivics)
[<https://vision.icivics.org/>].

Civic opportunities that connect to young people's lived experiences—especially those that tackle the injustices they see around them (e.g., juvenile curfews, racial violence, BLM/police shootings, ICE detainments, DEI rollbacks, federal job losses, SNAP (food assistance) and Medicaid (health coverage) program cuts for low income Americans—are critical in nurturing a generation ready to participate in democracy.

Conclusion:

Encouraging educational attainment in children and political engagement in youth and young adults are critical strategies to bridging the political divide and sustaining a vibrant democracy. The evidence is clear: boosting educational attainment in children thru EBI, embedding social justice in civic programs and opportunities for youth, and encouraging young adults with higher education and socioeconomic status to vote and participate in civic activities. By investing in these approaches, we empower the next generation with the knowledge, skills, and motivation they need to participate fully in civic life—and, in doing so, strengthen the democratic fabric for everyone.

Position Paper on Safety in Maryland and Legislative District 24

Demographics

Maryland Legislative District 24, located in Prince George's County, has an estimated population of approximately 131,229 residents. The district is heavily Democratic, with 83.3% of registered voters affiliated with the Democratic Party. The population is predominantly Black or African American (approximately 73%–79.5%), with a median age of 40.6 years and a foreign-born population of 20.1%.

Key Socioeconomic Indicators

Indicator	Estimate	Margin of Error
Median Household Income	\$100,710	± \$3,821
Families with Children Under 18 Living in Poverty	12.8%	± 3.0%
Households Receiving SNAP Benefits	13.8%	± 1.5%
Population Ages 65+ Living in Poverty	10.6%	—

I. Is Maryland Safe?

Maryland consistently ranks between the 13th and 25th safest states in America, depending on the methodology used. However, safety conditions vary significantly between urban and suburban communities. While violent crime remains concentrated in certain urban areas such as Baltimore, many suburban neighborhoods and smaller communities maintain comparatively low crime rates.

Crime Reduction Trends

Recent 2025–2026 data indicate measurable improvements in public safety across the state:

- Violent crime decreased by approximately 21% compared to the same period in 2024.
- Homicides declined by 41%.
- Some jurisdictions reported carjacking reductions exceeding 50%.

These improvements reflect stronger coordination between law enforcement agencies, community organizations, and local governments.

Community Safety Initiatives

Maryland continues to invest in strategies designed to improve long-term public safety, including:

- Expanded mental health services
- Youth engagement and mentorship programs

- Reentry and rehabilitation support for formerly incarcerated individuals

School Safety Concerns

School safety remains a major concern, particularly in Prince George's County. Recent incidents involving school violence and student altercations have prompted discussions regarding additional mental health resources and expanded school security measures.

Current School Safety Measures

- **Mental Health Services:** Schools are implementing behavioral threat assessment procedures to identify risks and provide early intervention.
- **Technology and Infrastructure:** Enhanced security measures include metal detectors, additional surveillance cameras, and Bi-Directional Amplifiers (BDAs) to improve emergency radio and cellular communication inside school buildings.
- **Legislation:** Proposed legislation, including House Bill 68, seeks to prohibit students under investigation for violent felonies from attending in-person classes during active investigations.
- **Cybersecurity:** School systems continue to address threats to digital learning platforms following recent hacking and cybersecurity incidents.

Key Safety Resources

- Maryland Center for School Safety — Provides school safety training, emergency planning assistance, and security resources.
- Safe Schools Maryland Tip Line — Anonymous reporting system for threats, bullying, and mental health concerns (1-833-MD-B-SAFE).

II. Is District 24 Safe?

Schools

Legislative District 24 is served primarily by Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS). Communities within the district include:

- Seat Pleasant
- Capitol Heights
- Fairmount Heights
- Landover
- Glenarden
- Largo
- Mitchellville

High Schools Serving District 24

- Charles Herbert Flowers High School
- Largo High School
- Academy of Health Sciences @ PGCC
- Frederick Douglass High School
- DuVal High School
- Suitland High School
- Central High School

Middle Schools Serving District 24

- Kettering Middle School
- Drew-Freeman Middle School
- Kenmoor Middle School
- G. James Gholson Middle School
- Walker Mill Middle School

Elementary Schools Serving District 24

- Robert Goddard Montessori School
- Landover Hills Elementary School
- Central Heights Elementary School
- Peppermill Village Elementary School

Infrastructure and Public Safety

Funding continues to support public safety improvements throughout District 24, including projects such as the Seat Pleasant Multi-Purpose Public Safety Facility. As of mid-2026, public safety in Maryland's District 24 (Prince George's County) focuses on reducing violent crime while strengthening community-police relations. Key efforts include addressing carjackings, investing in youth programs and mental health services, and implementing police reform for increased transparency. Candidates for the District 24 Senate seat emphasize a mix of strong law enforcement, community-based violence prevention, and support for mental health services to enhance safety.

Core Public Safety Agencies

The [Prince George's County Police Department](#) operates in the district, with specific district stations serving local areas, including District II (Bowie), District III (Landover), and District I (Hyattsville).

Emergency Contacts

- **Emergency:** 911
- **Non-Emergency Dispatch:** 301-352-1200
- **Fire/EMS Information:** 301-583-2200
- **Crime Solvers (Anonymous Tips):** 1-866-411-8477
- **Domestic Violence Hotline:** 211
- **Local Resources:** Residents can use the Prince George's County [non-emergency dispatch number \(301-352-1200\)](#) to report issues like vandalism, suspicious persons, or theft.
- **Alert System:** Residents are encouraged to sign up for [Alert Prince George's](#) for updates on incidents and severe weather.

Legislative Action

New legislation introduced in 2026 seeks to strengthen public safety efforts by addressing:

- Carjacking prevention
- Package theft (“porch piracy”)
- Enhanced law enforcement training and accountability

Roadway Safety in District 24

Road safety initiatives in District 24 are closely aligned with Maryland’s “Vision Zero” strategy, which aims to eliminate pedestrian, bicyclist, and traffic fatalities by 2030.

Current initiatives include:

- Increased traffic enforcement
- Intersection redesign and safety upgrades
- Targeted safety studies along major corridors such as MD 704 and MD 212

Transportation and Highway Safety

The Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA) is prioritizing pedestrian and bicyclist safety improvements along several Prince George’s County corridors, including MD 214.

Additionally:

- Increased enforcement of Maryland’s “Move Over” law is underway.
- Automated speed enforcement systems are being expanded in high-risk work zones.
- Public awareness campaigns continue to encourage attentive driving and reduced speeds in construction areas.

Residents may report roadway concerns through:

- MDOT SHA District 3 Office: 301-513-7300
- CountyClick 311 for county-maintained roads

Conclusion

While challenges remain, particularly in school safety and violent crime prevention, both Maryland and Legislative District 24 have made measurable progress in reducing crime and improving public safety. Continued investments in education, mental health services, transportation safety, and community-based programs are essential to sustaining these improvements and building safer neighborhoods for all residents.

POSITION PAPER ON DATA CENTERS

Title: Maryland Data Centers: Why We Should Oppose Further Expansion

Issues: I. Environmental and Resource Strain: Immense consumption of electricity and water which drives up utility bills for residents

II. Economic Concerns: Massive construction, few permanent jobs even after large taxpayer funded subsidies.

III. Inequitable Land-use and Sitings: Often built near residential areas that degrades local areas

IV. Political and Community Opposition: Serves to benefit large out of town tech companies at the expense of local citizens and prompts bipartisan opposition.

V. Comprehensive Oversight Measures needed for Environmental Health Monitoring of air, water, and soil.

VI. Push for Transparency: Public access to environmental data, permits, financial impacts, public records and the location of data centers proposed and built nationally.

Introduction:

Maryland is already home to 53 data centers across 8 different markets, serving as crucial infrastructure for the digital economy. While data centers drive technological progress, the expansion of these massive facilities in Maryland comes with significant costs to the environment, local communities, and the public interest. For these reasons, I am opposed to the construction of additional data centers in Maryland.

I. Environmental and Resource Strain: Immense consumption of electricity and water which drives up utility bills for residents

First, the resource demands of data centers are staggering. These facilities are notorious for their vast consumption of electricity and water, usage that can drive up utility bills for nearby residents and put added strain on local resources. Studies have shown that the environmental footprint of data centers varies by location, but their cumulative demand can reach hundreds of terawatt-hours annually, with water usage for cooling alone placing stress on municipal supplies. In Maryland, where infrastructure is already pressured by population growth, additional data centers could exacerbate utility costs for everyday families and threaten water security, especially during dry spells or droughts. Transparency around actual local energy and water impacts remains limited, making it difficult for the public to fully assess the risks (see discussion in Environmental Research Letters and [Wiley Online Library](#)).

II. Economic Concerns: Massive construction, few permanent jobs even after large taxpayer funded subsidies.

Second, the promised economic benefits of data centers are often overstated. While construction generates short-term jobs, the permanent workforce required to operate a typical data center is relatively small compared to the scale of the facility. At the same time, local governments frequently offer substantial subsidies and tax incentives to attract these projects, effectively shifting public funds to large corporations. This diversion of taxpayer money could otherwise be invested in schools, infrastructure, or small business development. The imbalance between public investment and long-term local job creation raises serious economic concerns ([Stanford](#)).

III. Inequitable Land-use and Sitings: Often built near residential areas that degrades local areas

Third, the placement of data centers is often inequitable, with many facilities built near residential neighborhoods. These areas bear the brunt of noise, increased truck traffic, potential pollution, and reduced property values, while the broader benefits accrue elsewhere. This pattern of development underscores the need for more just and equitable planning processes, ensuring that no community is disproportionately burdened.

IV. Political and Community Opposition: Serves to benefit large out of town tech companies at the expense of local citizens and prompts bipartisan opposition.

Fourth, political and community opposition to data centers is rising. Many of these projects are spearheaded by large, out-of-state tech companies whose interests may not align with those of local residents. This disconnect has led to bipartisan opposition, with citizens and policymakers alike demanding a greater say in decisions that affect their neighborhoods and environment ([Stanford](#)).

V. Comprehensive Oversight Measures needed for Environmental Health Monitoring of air, water, and soil.

Fifth, robust oversight is essential to protect environmental health. Currently, regulations lag behind the rapid pace of data center expansion, and there is often insufficient monitoring of air, water, and soil quality in areas surrounding these sites. Without comprehensive and enforceable oversight, the risks of pollution and ecosystem damage increase ([Wiley Online Library](#)).

VI. Push for Transparency:

Finally, a push for transparency is urgently needed. Too many data center deals are negotiated behind closed doors, with little public access to data on environmental impacts, permitting, or financial arrangements. Policymakers and the public deserve open access to information about where new data centers are proposed, what impacts they may have, and how decisions are being made. This level of transparency is critical for democratic accountability and prudent stewardship of public resources ([Stanford](#); [iScience](#)).

Conclusion:

In summary, while data centers are a vital part of our digital world, Maryland has already shouldered more than its fair share. The environmental, economic, and social costs of further expansion outweigh the benefits. We must prioritize thoughtful oversight, equitable development, and full transparency before considering any additional facilities. Our communities and environment deserve nothing less.