

(8) "Region" means the counties supporting a regional community college established under Subtitle 3 of this title.

(9) "State share" means the amount of money for community college operating funds to be provided each fiscal year to a board by the State.

(10) "Student credit hours" means student credit hours or contact hours which are eligible, under the regulations issued by the Maryland Higher Education Commission, for inclusion in State funding calculations.

(11) "Total State operating fund" means the sum of community college State appropriations for direct grants ~~and for challenge grants~~.

[(12) "Wealth" means wealth as determined for purposes of the State aid calculated under § 5-202 of this article.]

(b) (1) The total State operating fund per full-time equivalent student to the community colleges for each fiscal year as requested by the Governor shall be [not less than an amount equal to the total State operating fund per full-time equivalent student in the previous fiscal year]:

(I) IN FISCAL YEAR ~~1997~~ 1998, NOT LESS THAN AN AMOUNT EQUAL TO ~~22%~~ 21% OF THE STATE'S GENERAL FUND APPROPRIATION PER FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT STUDENT TO THE 4-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE STATE AS DESIGNATED BY THE COMMISSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF ADMINISTERING THE JOSEPH A. SELLINGER PROGRAM UNDER TITLE 17 OF THIS ARTICLE IN THE PREVIOUS FISCAL YEAR;

(II) IN FISCAL YEAR ~~1998~~ 1999, NOT LESS THAN AN AMOUNT EQUAL TO ~~23%~~ 22% OF THE STATE'S GENERAL FUND APPROPRIATION PER FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT STUDENT TO THE 4-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE STATE AS DESIGNATED BY THE COMMISSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF ADMINISTERING THE JOSEPH A. SELLINGER PROGRAM UNDER TITLE 17 OF THIS ARTICLE IN THE PREVIOUS FISCAL YEAR;

(III) IN FISCAL YEAR ~~1999~~ 2000, NOT LESS THAN AN AMOUNT EQUAL TO ~~24%~~ 23% OF THE STATE'S GENERAL FUND APPROPRIATION PER FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT STUDENT TO THE 4-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE STATE AS DESIGNATED BY THE COMMISSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF ADMINISTERING THE JOSEPH A. SELLINGER PROGRAM UNDER TITLE 17 OF THIS ARTICLE IN THE PREVIOUS FISCAL YEAR;

(IV) IN FISCAL YEAR 2001, NOT LESS THAN AN AMOUNT EQUAL TO 24% OF THE STATE'S GENERAL FUND APPROPRIATION PER FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT STUDENT TO THE 4-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE STATE AS DESIGNATED BY THE COMMISSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF ADMINISTERING THE JOSEPH A. SELLINGER PROGRAM UNDER TITLE 17 OF THIS ARTICLE IN THE PREVIOUS FISCAL YEAR; AND

~~(IV)~~ (V) IN FISCAL YEAR ~~2000~~ 2001 2002 AND EACH FISCAL YEAR THEREAFTER, NOT LESS THAN AN AMOUNT EQUAL TO ~~24%~~ 25% OF THE STATE'S GENERAL FUND APPROPRIATION PER FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT STUDENT TO THE