

BILL: House Bill 733
TITLE: Primary and Secondary Education - Community Schools - Established
POSITION: OPPOSE
DATE: February 28, 2019
COMMITTEES: Ways and Means Committee
CONTACT: John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) opposes House Bill 733, because it would prematurely establish standards and requirements for community schools in advance of the implementation of the funding and policy recommendations of the Kirwan Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education.

The Kirwan Commission is recommending that more resources be directed to the students who need it the most, including through the expansion of community schools. First, the Commission is recommending adding a concentrated poverty weight to the funding formula to support intensive services, for students and their families to enable them to succeed in school, that are coordinated and able to meet the additional needs of students in schools located in distressed communities. Second, the Commission is recommending adding fixed, categorical funding amounts for each school with concentrated poverty to be used to (1) establish or enhance community schools and (2) establish or enhance school health and behavioral services.

Specifically, a fixed amount would be provided for each school that meets the 55% threshold of students living in poverty. This fixed funding is to be used to provide a community schools coordinator and a health services practitioner, who may work under a school health services program, school-based health center, or community-partnered school behavioral health services program. In addition to this fixed amount of funding, there will be an additional per pupil amount for each student enrolled at the school.

This per pupil funding (in combination with the per pupil funding enhancements provided through the compensatory education funding formula) will be used to provide programs and services identified in a school's needs assessment. Examples of such services include:

- Additional extended learning time including before and after school, summer, and extended school year;
- Additional social workers, counselors, psychologists, and restorative practice coaches;
- Vision and dental care services, and physical wellness including providing food for in-school and out-of-school time and linkages to community providers;
- Behavioral health services such as mental health practitioners and providing professional development to provide trauma-informed interventions;
- Family and community engagement and supports including informing parents of academic course offerings, opportunities for children, and available social services as well as educating families on how to monitor a child's learning;

MABE supports these recommendations and initiatives, which are described in much greater detail in the section of the Commission's report attached to this testimony. However, without the provision of the significant funding needed to establish community schools, MABE cannot support codifying the program standards and timeline contained in this bill.

For the reasons outlined above, MABE respectfully requests an unfavorable report on House Bill 733.

- b. safe transportation to school;
- c. vision and dental care services;
- d. additional social workers, counselors, psychologists, and restorative practice coaches;
- e. physical wellness including providing food for in-school and out-of-school time and linkages to community providers;
- f. behavioral health services such as mental health practitioners and providing professional development to provide trauma-informed interventions;
- g. family and community engagement and supports including informing parents of academic course offerings, opportunities for children, and available social services as well as educating families on how to monitor a child's learning;
- h. linkages to Judy Centers and other early education programs that feed into the school;
- i. student enrichment experiences;
- j. improving student attendance;
- k. improving the learning environment at the school; and
- l. other professional development for teachers and school staff to quickly identify students who are in need of these resources.

The per pupil allocation will be provided on a sliding scale based on the concentration of students living in concentrated poverty so that a "cliff" effect is minimized.

- 6. The per pupil allocation will be provided on a sliding scale based on the concentration of students living in concentrated poverty so that a "cliff" effect is minimized. This means that schools with 55% of its students living in poverty will receive 0% of the per pupil amount steadily increasing to 100% of the per pupil amount for schools with at least 80% of its students in poverty.
- 7. Schools may use existing staff to be the community schools coordinator or the health services practitioner. This will provide more flexibility for how a school can implement this item particularly if a school already is a community school or already provides health services.
- 8. The State will provide the full resources for the fixed amount while the per pupil amount will be wealth equalized as are all other per pupil formulas under current law.
- 9. The requirement to establish a community school will be phased in as follows: (1) in fiscal 2020 a needs assessment will be completed and the fixed amount for a coordinator and health care practitioner will be provided for the schools with at least 80% of students living in poverty; (2) in fiscal 2021 a coordinator and health care practitioner will be provided for the remaining schools with at least 55% of students living in poverty.

10. The per pupil funding amount will be provided beginning in fiscal 2022 and is phased in reaching full funding by fiscal 2023.
11. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) will need to hire a director of community schools coordinator to provide professional development for staff at the school level as well as disseminate information on and coordination of best practices.

Implementation Decisions:

1. For community schools, each school or school district will submit an implementation plan based on an assessment of need. School or district-level implementation plans should include, but are not limited to:
 - a. a community-based needs assessment process that may be conducted in partnership with a local capacity building organization to develop an implementation strategy for addressing the needs of the students and their families, building on and strengthening community resources near the school;
 - b. ensuring that an experienced and qualified community schools coordinator at the appropriate administrative level is hired;
 - c. inclusion, if possible and practicable, of community partners in geographic proximity to the school who can assist in meeting the needs identified;
 - d. ensuring that time is made available to train staff on the support available, the need for the supports, and how to engage with the community school coordinator in accessing these supports; and
 - e. development of strategies to maximize external non-State or local education funding.
2. Local school systems must demonstrate that funds provided under the weight are being provided to the schools in which the weight is applicable and are being used for the purpose of implementing the needs and implementation plans.
3. Local governments will be expected to demonstrate support through meaningful partnership and support that is supplemental to and does not supplant existing efforts.
4. Partner agencies such as local management boards should participate at the State level and provide necessary funding and support to enable local agencies to participate as partnering organizations.
5. Accountability measures should focus on indicators identified in the implementation plan that include, but are not limited to, successful implementation of the plan, number of students served and not served, time

- to receive services, attendance, enrichment opportunities, reduction in disciplinary actions, student and principal satisfaction, and meaningful family involvement. It is important that accountability measures and data points be clearly defined and developed locally in partnership with each school district.
6. Every year, districts will be required to report on their program including progress on indicators.
 7. Schools with a lower poverty threshold could still provide wrap-around services, organize a community school, and/or provide health and behavioral health services using their compensatory education funding.