

January 17, 2020

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MABE Advocacy for the Kirwan Blueprint

The Kirwan Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education is a multi-year initiative to research and develop major funding and policy reforms to improve the quality of Maryland’s public education system to benefit all of the more than 890,000 students, which will, in turn, benefit the State’s economy and quality of life for all Marylanders.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) calls on all Marylanders to support the immediate passage of the Kirwan Blueprint legislation in 2020 to make all Maryland public schools world-class to prepare each of our students for success in college and careers.

The following advocacy tools provide clear and concise explanations of the key reasons to pass the Kirwan Blueprint in 2020. MABE encourages all board members and all Marylanders to use these talking points with state legislators and local officials.

- [Blueprint Talking Points](#) - A list of 10 talking points on a convenient 5X7 postcard
- [The Value of the Blueprint in One Page](#) - A one-page document that outlines easy to understand concepts on the importance of the Blueprint
- [Kirwan Business Leaders & the ROI](#) - A brief document outlining what Maryland business leaders are saying about Kirwan and the return on investment
- [An Economic Assessment of Kirwan Commission Recommendations](#) - A study written by Sage Policy Group Inc., and paid for by Strong Schools Maryland

More information on the Kirwan Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education, including the Commission’s [Interim Report](#) issued in January 2019, the [National Center on Education and the Economy \(NCEE\) Framework](#), the Blueprint legislation passed in 2019 (Senate Bill 1030), and MABE’s testimony throughout the process, is available on MABE’s [priority issue page](#) on the Kirwan Commission and Blueprint for Maryland’s Future.

Legislative Committee

2020 Calendar

- January 6, 2020
* (January 8, 2020 - Session convenes)
- January 27, 2020
* (Feb, 1-4, 2020 NSBA Equity Symposium & Advocacy Inst. in DC)
- February 10, 2020
- February 13, 2020
MABE’s Legislative Day Luncheon, Miller Senate Building, Conference Center West, Annapolis (Meeting: 10:00-11:00; Luncheon: 11:00-1:00)
- March 2, 2020
- March 16, 2020
- March 30, 2020
* (April 6, 2020 - Session adjourns "Sine Die")
- April 27, 2020

MABE’s Legislative Committee meetings are held in the MABE office on Monday mornings, 10:00 to 12:00, unless otherwise indicated. Meeting agendas and materials are posted on the [MABE website](#).

Governor's Budget for Education

On January 15, the Governor released his proposed budgets, both operating and capital, for fiscal year (FY) 2021. Detailed budget highlights and the proposed budgets for all state agencies are available on the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) [website](#).

The operating budget is introduced as [Senate Bill 190/House Bill 150](#), Budget Bill (Fiscal Year 2021). The capital budget is [Senate Bill 191/House Bill 151](#); and the Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act (BRFA) is [Senate Bill 192/House Bill 152](#).

Governor's Education Budget Highlights

The Governor's proposed State Budget for FY 2021 would fully fund the Kirwan Blueprint implementation as mandated by the legislation passed in 2019 (SB 1030) and exceed the amount of programmatic funding already mandated for prekindergarten expansion and concentration of poverty grant funding for community schools.

The following descriptions are excerpted directly from the [Primary and Secondary Education Budget Highlights](#) published by the Department of Budget and Management (DBM).

- **Foundation Program:** The foundation program is the largest single local aid program and is fully funded in FY 2021. Under the program, aid is distributed on the basis of public school enrollment and equalized for taxable wealth so that jurisdictions with smaller per pupil tax bases receive proportionately more aid. Additional funding of \$9.4 million is provided to ensure that every jurisdiction receives at least \$100,000 more direct aid in FY 2021 than in FY 2020.
- **Compensatory Education:** The compensatory education program is directed toward the education of children who are economically and environmentally disadvantaged. The Bridge to Excellence Act directs the aid according to the number of students receiving free or reduced price meals.

2019 Kirwan Blueprint (SB 1030) Mandated Funding in the FY 2021 Budget

| | <u>FY 2020</u> | <u>FY 2021</u> |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| Enhanced Special Education Funding | \$65.5 | \$65.5 |
| Concentration of Poverty Grants ¹ | 54.6 | 58.9 |
| Transitional Supplemental Instruction | 23.0 | 23.0 |
| Supplemental Prekindergarten Grants | 31.7 | 53.6 |
| Enrollment-based Grants | 0.0 | 16.7 |
| Mental Health Services Coordinator | 2.0 | 2.0 |
| Teacher Salary Incentive Grants | 75.0 | 75.0 |
| Teacher Collaborative Grants ² | 2.5 | 2.5 |
| Outreach and Training | 0.3 | 0.3 |
| MSDE Data System Enhancement | 0.5 | 0.2 |
| Appropriation to The Blueprint Fund | 0.0 | 58.0 |
| Office of the Inspector General for Education | 0.7 | 0.8 |
| Total | \$255.7 | \$356.2 |

The Kirwan Blueprint bill (SB 1030) passed in 2019 appropriated \$255.7 million for FY 2020 and also mandated that the Governor include \$356.2 million in his proposed budget for FY 2021. \$58 million of this total amount was allocated to the Blueprint Fund, rather than being tied to specific programs. The Governor's FY 2021 budget now proposes to spend those "unallocated" funds as follows:

- \$12.4 million – Concentration of Poverty Grant Expansion
- \$45.5 million – Early Childhood Expansion

Again, these amounts are in addition to the already mandated funding levels for these 2 important programs.

- **Special Education:** Aid for special education is provided to school systems to help cover the additional cost of educating students with needs for special services. These funds are allocated on a formula basis for students in local schools and to support children placed in nonpublic special education schools. The FY 2021 budget reflects the state’s share at 70% of the cost of nonpublic placements over a certain amount.
- **Student Transportation:** This program provides aid for the transportation of students to and from school, including a specific grant aid for transporting special needs students.
- **Other Education Aid:** Other education aid includes \$350.4 million in grants related to Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education initiatives, \$348 million to support students with limited English proficiency, and \$41.2 million for the Guaranteed Tax Base program, which provides grants to those subdivisions that have less than 80% of the statewide average wealth per pupil and that provide local education funding above the local share required by the foundation program.
- **State Retirement System:** In addition to direct aid for education, the state pays a portion of pension and retirement benefits for teachers, principals, administrators, and other eligible employees on behalf of each board of education.

Governor’s School Construction Budget Highlights

The following descriptions are excerpted directly from the Budget Highlights published by the Department of Budget and Management (DBM).

- The FY 2021 capital budget for school construction totals a new record level of \$733 million. This year begins a new initiative to substantially meet the state’s school construction needs over the next four years. The Building Opportunity Fund initiative will provide \$2.2 billion in new school construction funding. The proposed new funding is in addition to the \$1.6 billion in GO bond funding for school construction currently included in the state’s five year CIP. Over five years, the proposed state investment totals nearly \$3.9 billion.
- The governor’s proposed budget will use a portion of casino revenues to fund 30-year revenue bonds totaling \$2.2 billion for school construction projects. Beginning in FY 2021, revenue bonds will fund two initiatives that will supplement the \$329 million in GO Bond funding already planned for school construction: the Building Opportunity Fund and a revolving loan fund to assist local governments in meeting matching fund requirements. The revenue bonds will also fund the Healthy Schools Facility Fund and various school safety improvements.

| FY 2021 School Construction Funding | |
|--|--------------|
| (Millions of \$) | |
| <u>GO Bonds</u> | |
| Public School Construction Program | 280.0 |
| Supplemental Capital Grant Program | 40.0 |
| Aging Schools Program | 6.1 |
| Non-Public Aging Schools Program | 3.5 |
| Subtotal GO Bonds | 329.6 |
| <u>General Funds</u> | |
| Non-Public Schools Safety | |
| Improvements | 3.5 |
| Subtotal General Funds | 3.5 |
| <u>Revenue Bonds</u> | |
| Building Opportunity Fund | 340.0 |
| Local School Costs Revolving | |
| Loan Fund | 20.0 |
| Healthy Schools | 30.0 |
| School Safety Improvements | 10.0 |
| Subtotal Revenue Bonds | 400.0 |
| TOTAL | 733.1 |

DLS Budget Briefing

On January 20, at 1:00 in the Joint Hearing Room, the General Assembly's budget and appropriations committees will hold their annual budget briefing to hear the analysis of the Governor's budget presented by the staff of the Department of Legislative Services (DLS).

Kirwan Briefing

On January 14, Dr. Brit Kirwan and Rachel Hise (DLS) presented an "[Overview of the Maryland Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education](#)" to the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs (EHEA) Committee.

The presentation outlined the current status of Maryland's ranking for school performance, the 5 policy areas identified for funding and policy reforms, the 2019 actions to pass legislation and fund the launch of the Kirwan Blueprint, and the Commission's adoption of the recommendations of the Funding Workgroup that met through the summer and fall of 2019.

Dr. Kirwan presented an enthusiastic and comprehensive overview of the Commission's recommendations, and he responded to the questions from members of the [EHEA Committee](#). Ms. Hise responded primarily to questions on the funding formulas and 10-year projected costs for the State and local governments.

The 2020 Kirwan Blueprint legislation is anticipated to be introduced near the end of this month and will be an omnibus bill including all of the major funding and policy components of the reforms recommended by the Kirwan Commission.

State Superintendent's Briefing

On January 15, Dr. Karen Salmon, State Superintendent of Schools, presented to the House Ways and Means Committee an overview of "Maryland's Public Education Landscape" and the work of the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). Dr. Salmon highlighted enrollment figures, early childhood program quality improvement and workforce development, early intervention and special education programs, school performance accountability and 2019 Maryland Report Card results, and MSDE's published Guide to Equity and Excellence. She described the Lead Higher initiative as a major equity-related program resulting in a 28% increase in the number of students of color and low-income students passing at least one AP/IB course in the 2018-2019 school year compared the previous year.

Dr. Salmon also reviewed Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs including the P-Tech programs in Baltimore City, and Allegany, Baltimore, Harford, Montgomery, and Prince George's counties. Regarding accountability, she described the implementation of the new Maryland Comprehensive Accountability Program (MCAP) and new assessments being administered in the current school year. Updates on student health programs including school-based health centers, sexual abuse and assault prevention, and youth mental health first aid were also presented. Other topics covered included the teacher shortage and school construction. The [recorded briefing and presentation](#) are available on the Committee's website.

Educational Equity

During the State Superintendent's January 15 presentation to the House Ways and Means Committee, several questions from legislators focused on the department and State Board's [Guide to Educational Equity in Maryland](#), and the incorporation of [educational equity](#) as a performance measure for school accountability on the Maryland Report Card. MABE fully supports the State's work as it closely aligns with and builds on MABE's own initiatives on educational equity which began several years ago.

On January 17, 2018 the MABE Board of Directors unanimously voted to define education equity as follows:

"For MABE, educational equity in Maryland means providing access to essential academic, social, emotional, and economic supports in order to engage each student in rigorous instruction with appropriate educational resources to achieve their highest potential."

[MABE's work on educational equity](#) has included creating an ad hoc committee, adopting an equity lens and sample board policy, adopting a continuing resolution, and becoming a national leader in presenting on educational equity at conferences of state associations of boards of education.

- [MABE's Educational Equity Continuing Resolution \(2019-2020\)](#)
- [MABE's Equity Lens](#)

As stated in the association's resolution:

- MABE pledges to continue to provide a forum for local boards of education to participate in examination and discussion of the concept and issue of educational equity as it relates to student opportunity, learning and instruction in Maryland public schools, as well as to encourage shared learning on equity;
- MABE pledges to continue to utilize the MABE Equity Lens in the decision-making processes of the MABE Board of Directors, standing committees, ad hoc committees, and other decision-making processes within the association; and
- MABE urges the State Board of Education and local boards to use the MABE Equity Lens in their decision-making processes.

Special Education Study Released

In 2017 the General Assembly directed MSDE to contract with an outside entity to conduct a comprehensive study of special education programs and funding in Maryland. The 330 page study, conducted by WestEd and entitled "[Maryland Special Ed IEP Adequacy Study Consolidated Final Report, December 2019](#)", is now available.

Highlighted Recommendations and Findings

- Researchers found that the distribution of resources mechanism is not aligned to student needs. The researchers propose a model that would more accurately direct dollars based on students' disabilities and their established needs.
- Maryland should differentiate the allocation of resources for special education. Mechanisms and data-based justifications for differentiation of resources are explored further in the cost function analysis in Section 2.5.

- To increase education and functional outcomes for students with disabilities, Maryland should consider moving from a single weight allocation model to differentiated weights and should consider the inclusion of disability categories in some way as a factor for differentiation, given the positive correlation to improved numeracy outcomes.
- Evidence from the state-by-state scan, the state weights study, and the cost function analysis all suggest that Maryland should implement differential weights for funding special education instead of the single weight used in the current funding formula. Further, the cost function analysis demonstrates the ability to incorporate student need on the basis of reading, math and writing need into the calculation of weights by disability summary category. Maryland should use these weights to distribute the current state revenue allocation for special education and the proposed increase in funding identified as ongoing investments below. The calculation for the application of these weightings in Maryland are presented in Section 2.6.
- Maryland should explore the creation of a high-cost pool to offset expenses for exceptionally costly programming (including defining “high cost”). This approach may help to offset exceptional costs, especially for smaller LSSs. Some states have created economies of scale by establishing regional service centers.
- Researchers reviewed MSDE policies and procedures related to the IEP process to identify opportunities to create efficiencies and reduce any extra burden created by requirements that go beyond the federal IDEA regulations. The Maryland regulations and procedures are strong in ensuring that materials for families are written or made available in accessible formats and languages and also written in plain language so that they are accessible to all. Maryland has a number of regulations that exceed IDEA requirements. Most of these do not, however, create unnecessary burdens interfere with parents and guardians accessing their rights under IDEA, the intent of these regulations that exceed IDEA requirements is to protect those rights.

The study does not recommend revising the standards or procedures for dispute resolution and does not recommend increasing overall funding beyond the already substantial increases called for by the Kirwan Commission.

Additional information and background on the study is also provided on the [MSDE website](#).

Bill Hearing and Briefing Highlights

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|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • January 20, 2020 - Fiscal Briefing & Overview of Final Recommendations of the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education Joint with Senate Budget & Taxation and House Appropriations Committee 1:00 PM – Department of Legislative Services Building, Joint Hearing Room, Annapolis, MD |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • January 21, 2020 – School Construction Briefing from Local School Systems 1:00 PM – House Appropriations Committee, Room 120, Annapolis, MD |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • January 21, 2020 - Fiscal Briefing & Overview of Final Recommendations of the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education 2:00 PM – House Ways and Means Committee Room 130, Annapolis, MD |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • January 23, 2020 – House Bill 1 – Built to Learn Act of 2020 (MABE Position: Support w/ Amendments) House Appropriations Committee - 1:00 PM |

Bill Report

The [January 17, 2020 Bill Report](#), including MABE's positions and the status of all the bills we are tracking, is available on the MABE website and updated weekly during Session.

Advocacy Resources

- [MABE's Annapolis Advocacy Center](#)
 - Including resources on MABE's [Legislative Committee](#), [Priority Issues](#), [2020 Positions & Bill Testimony](#), the [Education Advocate](#) newsletter, and [Kirwan Blueprint resources](#).
- [MABE's State Board Advocacy Center](#)
 - Including resources on pending State Board regulations, and issues of MABE's newsletter recapping the monthly State Board meetings, [The Monitor](#).
- [MABE's Federal Advocacy Center](#)
 - Including resources on MABE's Federal Relations Network Committee and pending federal funding and policy issues.

For more information, contact John R. Woolums, Esq., MABE's Director of Governmental Relations, at jwoolums@mabe.org or 410-841-5414.

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