

February 25, 2020

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Kirwan Blueprint Bill Update

The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future (House Bill 1300/Senate Bill 1000) was introduced on Friday, February 7, and on Monday February 17, Presidents Day, the General Assembly held a joint hearing of House and Senate committees responsible for deliberating on the bill. House Bill 1300 is now being considered through a workgroup comprised on the Education Subcommittees of the Appropriations and Ways and Means Committees. These subcommittees, and the respective full committees are expected to act on the House bill through this week and next.

MABE has developed a comprehensive set of amendments to House Bill 1300. Key areas of focus for these amendments include the phasing in of budgeting and expense reporting requirements, the implementation of the prekindergarten program, special education per pupil funding, maintenance of effort, and the role of the Accountability Board. In offering amendments, MABE has emphasized to legislative leaders that these requested amendments are intended to reflect our strong support for the framework envisioned by the Commission and to maintain the integrity of each of the major facets of this legislation.

This bill, beginning in fiscal 2022, substantially alters State aid and State policy for public schools known as the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future. The bill establishes in law the policies and accountability recommendations of the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education, including creation of a new Accountability and Implementation Board to oversee implementation of the policies and funding provided under the Blueprint. Funding for existing education formulas, including the foundation program and targeted programs, is altered and new funding formulas are established for specific purposes, such as the concentration of poverty grant program and publicly funded full-day prekindergarten program. The bill also repeals and alters other grants and programs. Local government school funding requirements are also altered. The bill takes effect July 1, 2020.

- [MABE Summary/Outline](#)
- [MABE Testimony & Leadership Panel Remarks](#)
- [Fiscal & Policy Note](#)
- [Additional Funding Tables](#) (“DLS Modeling Assumptions” on the Commission’s webpage)

Legislative Committee

2020 Calendar

- 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](#).

Kirwan Blueprint Bill Hearing Highlights

On Monday, February 17, the General Assembly held a joint hearing of House and Senate committees responsible for deliberating on the Blueprint for Maryland's Future bill. MABE leadership provided testimony in strong support for the bill, highlighting the bill's alignment with enhancing equity in school funding, the educational and economic returns on investment, as well as identifying the need for several technical and structural amendments around funding formulas, timelines, and governance.

Martha James-Hassan, MABE President, and a member of the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners, voiced strong support for the Blueprint for Maryland's Future legislation, and the transformational impact over the next decade on the education of Maryland's nearly 1 million public school students. She outlined MABE's support for the Blueprint bill as fulfilling the State's constitutional duty to our students.

"MABE fully endorses the Blueprint's focus on policy and funding reforms in the following major policy areas:

- The equitable expansion of high-quality early childhood education programs;
- Continuous improvement in teacher pay, preparation, and classroom supports, and a much more diverse workforce of teachers and principals;
- Access for each student in every school to college and career readiness pathways; and
- The significant increase in state and local resources needed to ensure that each and every student is afforded genuine, sustained opportunities to succeed.

MABE views the Blueprint for Maryland's Future as a "Call to Action" for the building of a world class education system in Maryland. This legislation also represents a long-overdue updating of the State's school finance system in order to fulfill the Maryland's constitutional education funding imperative. The Maryland State Constitution requires the General Assembly to: "establish throughout the State a thorough and efficient system of free public schools; and shall provide by taxation or otherwise for their maintenance."

Maryland's courts have, through the years, updated their interpretation of this language. In 2002, the State agreed to uphold its constitutional duty by enacting the Bridge to Excellence Act. Today, Maryland is poised to reaffirm this constitutional duty to our students by enacting and fully funding the Blueprint for Maryland's Future."

Julie Hummer, Chair of MABE's Legislative Committee, and a member of the Anne Arundel County Board of Education, provide the following remarks:

"Passing the Blueprint for Maryland's Future is MABE's top legislative priority in the 2020 session. Local boards of education, through MABE, led the advocacy effort to create the Kirwan Commission in Innovation and Excellence precisely so that an updated adequacy study and other funding and accountability issues could be debated and transformed into legislation to update and improve Maryland's school finance system.

Throughout the years of reviewing funding adequacy studies and hearing from consultants on other countries' education systems, MABE has always articulated a clear message in support of a balanced approach to significantly increasing state and local funding, adopting policy

reforms and the new school finance procedures aligned with these reforms, and enhancing shared responsibility and accountability for student learning outcomes.

MABE believes that the Blueprint for Maryland's Future legislation strikes such a balance in many areas. However, MABE is also concerned about the structure of the bill in areas of school finance and performance accountability, bill provisions that we believe do not adequately reflect the role of local boards in governing local school systems. Again, passage of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future is MABE's top legislative priority in the 2020 session."

Mavis Ellis, President of the Howard County Board of Education, testified as vice-chair of MABE's Legislative Committee, and a member MABE's Board of Directors.

"Equity, in funding and educational policies and programs, is a top priority for MABE and the local boards we represent. For MABE, educational equity 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.

Funding equity is necessary to support educational equity, and clear and formal requirements for state and local investments in programs, schools and students are needed to ensure that both of these equity outcomes are achieved. This is why MABE so strongly supports increasing funding for all students, but even more so for students learning English, receiving special education services, from economically disadvantaged households and communities, and our struggling learners.

For the same reason, MABE supports adding the concentrated poverty funding formula to support intensive, coordinated services for students and their families to enable them to succeed in school.

Lastly, MABE strongly endorses the Blueprint's assurance that local governments pay a local share of per pupil funding for our economically disadvantaged students, students receiving special education services, and students learning English. This commitment is essential if we are to "close the gaps" by providing an equitable local share of per pupil funding for these students who need a strong, shared investment of state and local dollars the most."

Cheryl Pasteur, a member of the Baltimore County Board of Education, testified as a member of MABE's Legislative Committee and Ad Hoc Committee on Funding, and a member of the Kirwan Commission's Funding Workgroup.

"The substantial investment being called for is raising the question, "Is Kirwan affordable?" The answer is "Yes!" The Sage Policy Group's return on investment analysis confirms that investing in education is money well spent. Better educated workers are higher paid and therefore higher tax-paying citizens, and they are citizens who place fewer and lower demands on state funding for social services. The return on investment study also concludes, that by the time our babies in prekindergarten today are entering the workforce of tomorrow, the entire program will have paid for itself.

This is how economists analyze this legislation, and they see very predictable and very positive outcomes for our State's economy. As a career educator, I want to emphasize that these positive outcomes are rooted in the transformational power of public education to improve the quality of life for our children, families, and communities.

Therefore, the real question – and the true challenge for our state, its citizens, and the state’s political leadership – is where are we going to be as a state if we fail to not only launch, but also sustain, our commitment to fully funding the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future in the years ahead.”

Legislative Day Highlights

Thank you to all legislators, local board members, Superintendents, and staff that attended The Maryland Association of Boards of Education Legislative Day Luncheon held on Thursday, February 13th, in The Miller Senate Conference Center.

MABE’s Director of Governmental Relations John Woolums kicked off the event by presenting the key provisions of the monumental “Blueprint for Maryland’s Future” legislation, and its goal in securing the long-range advancement of Maryland’s public education system, along with MABE’s other legislative priorities for the 2020 session. MABE’s President Martha James-Hassan made opening remarks for the luncheon and Legislative Chair, Julie Hummer, introduced the guest speakers and other legislators that were in attendance.

The following legislative leaders delivered remarks:

- Senate President Bill Ferguson
- Senator Paul Pinsky, Chair of Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs
- Senator Cheryl Kagan, Vice-Chair of Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs
- Senate Majority Leader Nancy King
- Delegate Sheree Sample – Hughes, Speaker Pro-Tem
- House Majority Leader Eric Luedtke
- Delegate Kathy Szeliga, Minority Whip
- Andrew Cassily, Senior Advisor to the Governor of Maryland
- Senator Adelaide Eckardt

Senate President, Bill Ferguson emphasized the importance of passing the "Blueprint for Maryland's Future" legislation. In his remarks, President Ferguson highlighted the importance of a tenacious public-school system to ensure Maryland's next generation can compete on a global scale in fields of technology innovation and industrial development. Majority leader, Eric Luedtke then emphasized the importance of passing House Bill 1, the "Built to Learn Act of 2020", in tandem with the "Blueprint for Maryland's Future" legislation. He noted that If implemented, this legislation will one day propel Maryland's students into a new bracket of academic excellence, allowing for a globally competitive workforce.

Speaker Pro-Tem, Sheree Sample-Hughes noted the importance of both the “Built to Learn Act of 2020” and the “Blueprint for Maryland’s Future” in supporting Maryland's students in academic and career readiness. She reiterated the priority of Maryland students from all regions across the State having the same degree of opportunity for personal and educational development of “the highest standard.” Senator Paul Pinsky expressed the potentially transformative nature of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future bill, noting that is it's a "once in a generation piece of legislation." He emphasized

the importance of funding initiatives to continue the momentum of positive advancement within Maryland's public education system.

Former school Board member Senator Nancy King indicated the significance of school board autonomy and urged board members to support all means of funding to support the recommendations made by the Kirwan Commission. Additionally, former delegate Andrew Cassilly, now Senior Advisor to the Governor of Maryland, shared Senator King's enthusiasm for board member legislative outreach and highlighted the value of out of school programs that enhance students' college and career readiness.

Once again MABE greatly appreciates the sponsorship of Senator Addie Eckardt in hosting MABE's Legislative Day in the Senate's Conference Center. Senator Eckardt shared her perspectives on school health issues based on her years of nursing experience, including work as a school nurse. Several other legislators also took the time to discuss their legislative priorities and underscored the importance of MABE's work in local board governance and legislative advocacy.

Again, MABE greatly appreciates all the board members, legislators, and staff that made our 2020 Legislative Day Luncheon such a success!

Built to Learn Bill Update

On Wednesday, February 19, the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee held a hearing on House Bill 1, as passed with amendments by the House of Delegates just days earlier.

This bill authorizes the Maryland Stadium Authority (MSA) to issue up to \$2.2 billion in revenue bonds, backed by annual payments from the Education Trust Fund (ETF) beginning in fiscal 2022 that phase up to \$125 million annually by fiscal 2024, for public school construction projects in the State, including to support a possible public-private partnership (P3) agreement for Prince George's County. It also increases or extends mandated State funding for supplemental public school construction programs and establishes a new special fund and mandate for the highest priority school facilities.

Bill Highlights

As MABE tracks more than 400 bills this session, it's worth noting certain themes and the prospects of other bills passing this session (unrelated to the Blueprint or Built to Learn). Policy and funding areas which are the subject of multiple bills include medical cannabis in schools; school facilities mandated to be geothermal, solar, or net zero; special education, and employee relations.

[Bill Highlights by Subject Area](#)

Bill Report

The [February 21, 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.

Bill Hearing Highlights

February 26, 2020 – Ways & Means Committee – 1:00

- HB 1008 - Education - Child Abuse and Sexual Misconduct Prevention - Hiring Emergent Employees (MABE Position: Support)
- HB 1292 - Public Schools - Special Education Classrooms - Use of Video Recording Devices (MABE Policy: Oppose)

February 27, 2020 – Appropriations Committee – 1:00

- HB 665 - Public School Construction and State Buildings - Use of Geothermal Energy (MABE Position: Support w/Amendment)

February 28, 2020 – Ways & Means Committee – 1:00

- HB 1074 - Education - Collective Bargaining - Certificated Employees - Class Size (MABE Policy: Oppose)
- HB 1075 - Public School Employees - Whistleblower Protection - Civil Actions (MABE Policy: Oppose)

MABE Advocacy for the Kirwan Blueprint

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.

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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