

MEMORANDUM

TO: MABE Ad Hoc Committee on the Blueprint for Maryland's Future
FROM: John Woolums
DATE: 11/8/2021 (working document)

SUBJECT: Response to request to identify challenges presented by the implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future law

The following outline highlights significant challenges under each of the 5 major policy areas contained in the Kirwan Commission recommendations and Blueprint law. Note: the policy area on College and Career Readiness is separated into two areas, including one focused on Career and Technical Education (CTE).

1. Investing in High-quality Early Childhood Education and Care: Significant expansion of full-day pre-school, to be free for all low-income three- and four-year-olds, so that all children have the opportunity to begin kindergarten ready to learn.

Major Funding/Policy Issues:

- Expand full-day Pre-K at no cost for four-year-olds and three-year-olds from families with incomes up to 300% of the federal poverty level (FPL) and for four-year-olds from families between 300% and 600% FPL using a sliding scale, and via public/private agreements.
- **Challenges:**
 - The calculation and timing of enrollment projections relative to operating budgets (state/local)
 - Impact of pandemic on public/private early education enrollment
 - Private participation rates & LEA mandate to achieve 30%-50% private slots
 - Transition from existing PreK expansion grant program to new program
 - Staffing
 - The calculation and timing of enrollment projections relative to capital budgets (state/local)
 - Space
 - Satisfying the eligibility quality standards (EXCELS 3/privates, EXCELS 4/publics)
 - Parent/guardian expectations for access to unavailable programs
 - Alignment of public/parental expectations and availability of public/private slots

2. Elevating Teachers and School Leaders: Raising the standards and status of the teaching profession, including a performance-based career ladder and salaries comparable to other fields with similar education requirements.

Major Funding/Policy Issues:

- Raise teacher pay to make it equitable with other highly trained professionals with the same amount of education.
- Develop career ladders for teachers and school leaders comparable in design to the career ladders found in Singapore and Shanghai, with respect to standards for advancement and compensation.

- **Challenges:**
 - Negotiations/Re-negotiations of teacher contracts, costs of newly-mandated Blueprint provisions and other negotiated provisions, costs of giving raises to non-mandated raises employees (counselors, nurses, ESP/aides, etc.), differentiated pay based on NBC status and school-specific criteria (low performing)
 - Mandates 10% raises over 5 years (2019-2024).
 - Defining scope of eligible employees and funding mandate
 - Costs relative to “me too” agreements with noncertificated employees
 - Mandates starting salary of at least \$60,000 (2026).
 - Cost relative to adjustments across steps/career ladder
 - Mandates local career ladders, including: Level 1 is a state certified teacher; Level 2 is a teacher pursuing a master’s or National Board Certified (NBC); Level 3 is an NBC teacher, master’s in subject, or assistant principal.
 - Local negotiation of new collective bargaining agreements including career ladders
 - Adequacy of state/local funding for local agreements
 - Mandates \$10,000 raises for NBC teachers, and \$7,000 raises for NBC teachers at a low-performing school.
 - Defining low-performing school
 - Cap on teacher classroom time of 80% of workday.
 - Staffing and space
 - Assistant principals required to teach 20% per week.
 - Staffing
 - 100-day to 1-year teacher training practicum.
 - Costs of minimum 100-day practicum and transition to full year by July 1, 2025
 - Implementation/regulation by State Board/PSTEB/AIB

Major Funding/Policy Issues:

- Make teacher preparation much more rigorous and integrate induction with teacher preparation more systematically.

- Raise standards for licensing new teachers to levels comparable to the standards in the top-performing nations.
- **Challenges:**
 - Mandates specific reforms to teacher preparation programs in all Maryland public/private IHEs.
 - Impact on pipeline of qualified teachers
 - Implementation/regulation by State Board/PSTEB/AIB

3. Creating a World Class Instructional System: An internationally benchmarked curriculum that enables most students to achieve “college- and career-ready” (CCR) status by the end of tenth grade and then pursue pathways that include early college, Advanced Placement courses, and/or a rigorous career and technical education (CTE) leading to industry-recognized credentials and high-paying jobs.

3A. CCR Generally

Major Funding/Policy Issues:

- Requires all local school systems to provide all students who meet the CCR standard with access to a set of post-CCR program pathways that includes: IB, AICE, AP; dual-enrollment with the possibility of earning an associate degree while in high school; CTE pathways that include workplace training and lead to industry-recognized credentials; and combinations of these options.
- Requires alignment/re-alignment of K-12 curriculum to achieve CCR. The Blueprint mandates the development of new State curriculum resources which the State may require a school to adopt based on low performance. However, the law clarifies that otherwise the law “does not require a public school or county board to adopt the department’s curriculum standards or curriculum resources and may not be construed to restrict a county board’s authority to adopt curricula.
- Creates Expert Review Teams.
- Mandates 9th grade tracker system.
- Mandates programs and services for students not CCR by the end of 10th grade, in collaboration with community colleges.
- **Challenges:**
 - Funding: Adequate state/local funding to implement
 - Legal: Negotiating agreements with community colleges/IHEs on dual enrollment
 - Liability: Identification, disproportionality, services re students not CCR by end of 10th grade

3B. CTE

Major Funding/Policy Issues:

- Requires all local school systems to provide all students who meet the CCR standard with access to a set of post-CCR program pathways that includes: IB, AICE, AP; dual-enrollment with the possibility of earning an Associates degree while in high school; CTE pathways that include workplace training and lead to industry-recognized credentials; and combinations of these options.
- Goal/mandate of 45% of all HS students in CTE programs (by 2030).
- New governance role of the new Career and Technical Education Committee (under the Governor's Workforce Development Board) and role of the Skills Standards Advisory Committee.
- Separate CTE Expert Review Teams.
- Mandates schools to provide every middle and high school student with ready access to individuals who can counsel and advise them on CTE pathway options.

3B. CTE

- **Challenges:**
 - Funding: Adequate state/local funding to implement
 - Equity/Liability: Marketing, counseling, assignment of students to respective programs
 - Equity/Funding: expanded transportation to dual enrollment/workplace learning

4. Providing More Support to Students Who Need it the Most: Broad and sustained new supports for schools serving high concentrations of students living in poverty, with before-and after-school and summer academic programs and student access to needed health and social services, and increased support for English learner and special education students.

Major Funding/Policy Issues:

- The Blueprint utilizes the revised enrollment counts and increased foundation amount of per pupil funding in conjunction with additional amounts of per pupil funding for students under the categories of special education, English Learners, and economically disadvantaged.
- The law defines the annual target per pupil foundation amounts (PPFAs) of state education funding to be provided each year from FY 2023 through the full implementation of the Blueprint in FY 2033, after which the PPFA will increase annually by inflation.
- Specifically, the target PPFA includes costs associated with implementing the Blueprint including: (1) increasing salaries; (2) additional teachers to provide professional learning and collaborative time for teachers; (3) career counseling; (4) behavioral health; (5) instructional opportunities for students who are college and career ready and those who

are not; (6) maintenance and operation of schools; and (7) supplies and materials for teachers.

- Adds 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.

- **Challenges:**
 - Program Expansion: Community schools identified based on 80% FRPM student count, with the 80% FRPM threshold dropping each year by 5% to 55%.
 - Staffing: Community School Coordinators and Health Care Professionals at each community school.
 - Program Responsibilities: Community School Coordinators must ensure wraparound services are provided via partnerships.

5. Ensuring Excellence for All: An accountability-oversight board that has the authority to ensure that the Commission’s recommendations are successfully implemented and produce the desired results.

Major Funding/Policy Issues:

- The Blueprint law creates an Accountability & Implementation Board (AIB) to develop a comprehensive 10-year plan and monitor and hold school systems (and other entities) accountable for implementing the law and Kirwan Commission recommendations.
- The AIB is an independent unit of state government with regulatory authority and plenary authority over the State Dept. of Education, local boards, etc.
- The AIB is “not intended to usurp or abrogate the day-to-day decision making of county boards, local superintendents, institutions of higher education, or other stakeholders.”

- **Challenges:**
 - Governance: New and changing governance roles for the AIB, State Board, CTE Board, PSTEB, MHEC, IHE, Comm. Colleges, LEAs, local governments
 - Funding: potential withholding of portion of increased state funds

 - State Implementation Plan/Local Plans: State & local plans must show how the school system will achieve the following:
 - Adapt curriculum, instruction, and the organization of the school day to enable more students to achieve CCR by the end of 10th grade, provide behavioral health services, and identify students falling behind and get them on track;
 - Close student achievement gaps (race, ethnicity, disability status, household income, linguistic status, and any other student group characteristics that feature achievement gaps as determined by the AIB);

- Avoid the disproportionate placement of students with racial, ethnic, linguistic, economic, or disability status characteristics with novice or out of field teachers.