



Mohammed Choudhury
State Superintendent of Schools

February 24, 2022

The Honorable Maggie McIntosh
121 Taylor House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Vanessa Atterbeary
131 Taylor House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis MD 21401

Re: HB1450 - Blueprint For Maryland's Future - Implementation Plans and Fund - Alterations

Dear Chair McIntosh and Chair Atterbeary:

Thank you for the opportunity to brief the Appropriations and Ways and Means Committees last week on the important work happening across the state to implement the Blueprint For Maryland's Future. I enjoyed providing this update and am grateful to see responsive legislation introduced to make necessary adjustments.

I am writing today to ask that HB1450 be modified to include additional changes to support high quality Blueprint implementation in Fiscal Year 2023 and beyond. While the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) is meeting the deadlines outlined in the Blueprint, these changes are smart policy and reflect a strategic approach to ensure high quality implementation:

1. **Adjust the College and Career Readiness Implementation Timeline.** Current law (Section 7-205.1 of the Education Article) requires local educational agencies to develop and implement (1) for students who have demonstrated College and Career Readiness (CCR), "post-CCR pathways," and (2) for students who have not demonstrated College and Career Readiness by the end of 10th grade, programs of support or "CCR support pathways." The post-CCR pathways are to be implemented by the 2023-24 school year and the CCR support pathways are to be implemented by the 2022-23 school year. This is a massive workstream that will require local school systems to - at a minimum - develop new courses and reimagine schedules and staffing structures, train teachers, develop new individualized support plans for a large number of students, develop articulation agreements with local institutions of higher education and employers, and more.

The current timeline should be expanded to allow for the level of strategic planning and community engagement that local school systems must conduct to do this well. An expanded time period will allow the MSDE to give the hands-on guidance and support we plan to offer to increase the likelihood that this work is done well across the state. Finally, an expanded timeline will allow the implementation of an updated CCR standard informed by the results of the two studies MSDE is conducting on the most appropriate measures of College and Career Readiness. Amending the timeline will allow the first year of CCR pathway implementation to be based upon factors in addition to standardized test scores, including promising alternatives such as, for example, Grade Point Averages. Best in class studies have validated that these other factors are better predictors of success in college and less biased than standardized tests, especially for historically disadvantaged students. **For these reasons, MSDE respectfully requests that HB1450 adjust Sec. 7-205.1(e)(1)(i) to replace "2022-2023" with "2024-2025" and Sec. 7-205.1(g)(1) to replace "2023-2024" with "2024-2025."**

2. **Adjust the Automatic Withholding of Funds Language.** While the MSDE wholeheartedly supports the timeline adjustment proposed in HB1450, it is imperative that the timeline changes do not delay districts' receipt of critical implementation funds. With this in mind, the MSDE asks for two related additions to the bill.
- a. **FY23 Adjustment:** HB 1450's proposed timeline change will delay the Accountability and Implementation Board's (AIB's) approval of local education agencies' initial implementation plans until well into the second half of Fiscal Year 2023 (FY 23). Under Section 5-405 of the Education Article, a portion of the increase in the State share of major education aid is automatically withheld from local school system in FY 23 until the AIB finds that the local education agency has received approval for its initial implementation plan. **MSDE respectfully requests that HB1450 adjust Sec. 5-405(b) and (c) to replace "2023" with "2024."**
 - b. **Long Term Adjustment:** As currently written, Section 5-405(b) of the Education Article requires the Department of Education to automatically withhold 25 percent of the increase in the State share of major education aid over the amount provided in the *current* fiscal year. The Department believes this may have been an unintended drafting error, as 5-405(a) defines the amount to be withheld as a portion of the increase over the *prior* fiscal year. **MSDE respectfully requests HB1450 adjust Sec. 5-405(b) to replace "current" with "prior."**

Both of these changes have been previewed publicly and are based on consultation with local school systems. On January 24, 2022, MSDE gave a [detailed presentation](#) on the College and Career Readiness (CCR) portion of the Blueprint, featuring a need for a change in the timeline at our State Board of Education meeting. On February 14, 2022, I presented an [overview of Blueprint Implementation](#) with the Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB), which previewed both the need for a change in the CCR timeline and the need to ensure that any timeline changes do not lead to a delay in districts receiving critical state funds for education. In both of these presentations MSDE also presented the need for a change in the overall implementation plan timeline already reflected in HB1450. All three of these changes should occur simultaneously.

I respectfully request that you consider this information as you deliberate **HB1450**. Please contact Ary Amerikaner, at 410-767-0090, or ary.amerikaner@maryland.gov, for any additional information.

Sincerely,



Mohammed Choudhury
State Superintendent of Schools

cc:

House Speaker Adrienne Jones
Members of the Appropriations Committee
Members of the Ways and Means Committee
Members of the Accountability and Implementation Board