

**MABE's Legislative Proposals to  
Improve and Help Ensure the Success of the  
Blueprint for Maryland's Future**

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), on behalf of all local boards, strongly supports the Blueprint for Maryland's Future law and its vision for a world-class public education system for all students. The initial 235-page Blueprint bill became law in 2021, with minor revisions enacted in 2022 and 2023. The State budgets have fully funded the Blueprint, the Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB) is overseeing Blueprint implementation, along with the Maryland State Board and Department of Education (MSDE), and all 24 school systems have developed AIB-approved implementation plans.

**Most importantly, Blueprint reforms are well underway.** Students and families are benefiting from access to publicly funded Prekindergarten for three and four year olds; students, families and educators are focused on achieving college and career readiness for all; teaching and learning in math and reading are improving; family and student access to community based mental health care and other social services is expanding; teachers and staff are receiving raises and being incentivized to pursue national board certification; community college dual enrollment programs are expanding; and employers and school systems are working to build new, innovative career and technical education partnerships and programs. MABE believes that all of these successes, and many more not listed here, are worthy of the State's attention and renewed commitment to full implementation. This is why MABE has surveyed local school systems and developed a set of legislative proposals to improve the Blueprint.

**MABE is supporting the introduction and passage of legislation in the 2024 legislative session to improve the Blueprint law by making several key alterations to the state and local funding formulas that support the Blueprint's programs and services.** MABE seeks the commitment of legislators and leaders in Annapolis to enact the following amendments to build a state school finance system that ensures the permanent balance of increases in state *and* local funding necessary for the Blueprint's success. This balance is essential to each local school system striving to fulfill the Blueprint's vision to make Maryland's statewide system of public schools the very best in the world.

**MABE fully supports the Blueprint law, and MABE's legislative proposals would not delay or disrupt the timely implementation of any Blueprint program. Instead, these proposals are focused on securing modest increases in local funding above the minimum Maintenance of Effort amount (MOE), unrestricting a reasonable amount of state funding, and supporting well-funded Blueprint coordinator positions and operations in all 24 school systems.**

The 23 county and Baltimore City governments are required by the Blueprint to provide local funding in an amount that is not less on a per pupil basis than in the previous year (MOE), or the new amount calculated under Blueprint formulas (local share). Most counties do not have to fund above the MOE funding floor for many years, leaving their school systems with insufficient funds to fully implement the Blueprint's many valuable programs. MABE set of legislative proposals would solve this problem, and others. In addition, MABE seeks state funding to support the salary of each school system's Blueprint Implementation Coordinator position, and to provide targeted Blueprint implementation grants to Maryland's least populated rural school systems.

Specifically, the proposed legislation would amend the Blueprint law by:

- **Re-establishing the Maintenance of Effort “escalator” to require increased local funding in certain jurisdictions.**
  - This amendment restores a successful approach in place between 2012 and 2023 to require jurisdictions to increase local funding based on their level of education spending relative to local wealth and in comparison to other jurisdictions.
- **Adding an inflation adjustment to the minimum Maintenance of Effort amount of local funding.**
  - This amendment would ensure that local funding is at least keeping pace with inflation, a requirement already in place for state funding.
- **Removing foundation program funding from the 75% school-based funding allocation requirement.**
  - This amendment would ensure that 75% of all categorical funding continue to “follow the student” to the school, but allow flexibility for the foundation program funding to be utilized on a school system-wide basis.
- **Adding a population density-based adjustment to state funding for certain jurisdictions.**
  - This amendment would provide targeted funding allocations to school systems with very low population densities, including: Dorchester, Garrett, Kent, and Somerset County school systems.
- **Requiring state and local government cost-sharing for the salaries of local Blueprint Implementation Coordinators.**
  - These professionals are responsible for coordinating with the AIB and MSDE, and developing local implementation plans and therefore critical to the success of the Blueprint.

The State fiscal effect of this proposal is limited to the cost of the population density grants, which would total \$1 million; and the Blueprint Implementation Coordinator salary grants, which would total \$1.8 million. Local government and school system fiscal effects vary based on which jurisdictions would be subject to the Maintenance of Effort escalator, and depending on whether the inflation factor would increase a local funding amount above Maintenance of Effort by more than the amount the local government would have provided. Removing the foundation program from the school-based funding requirement has no impact on state or local government finances.

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## **AN ACT concerning**

### **Blueprint for Maryland’s Future Implementation – State and Local Funding Alterations**

FOR the purpose of requiring certain state and local education funding formula alterations for the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future; altering the definition of minimum school funding; establishing a population density adjustment for state funding for the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future; establishing an adjustment based on education effort to increase local funding for the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future for certain jurisdictions; establishing an adjustment based on inflation to increase local funding for the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future for certain jurisdictions; and generally relating to the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future implementation.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
Article – Education  
Section 5-234(a), 5–235(a), (b) and (p), and §5–404.  
Annotated Code of Maryland  
(2022 Replacement Volume)

BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,  
Article – Education  
Section 5-201(h) and 5–239  
Annotated Code of Maryland  
(2022 Replacement Volume)

Education Article

§5–234.

(a) (1) Except as provided by paragraph (2) of this subsection and subsections (e) and (f) of this section, for each of the following programs, “minimum school funding” means at least 75% of the per pupil amount applicable to each of the following programs:

- [(i) The foundation program under § 5–213 of this subtitle;]
- [(ii)] **(I)** The compensatory education program under § 5–222 of this subtitle;
- [(iii)] **(II)** The English learner education program under § 5–224 of this subtitle;
- [(iv)] **(III)** The special education program under § 5–225 of this subtitle;
- [(v)] **(IV)** Public providers of prekindergarten under § 5–229 of this subtitle;
- [(vi)] **(V)** Transitional supplemental instruction under § 5–226 of this subtitle;
- [(vii)] **(VI)** The comparable wage index grant under § 5–216 of this subtitle; and
- [(viii)] **(VII)** The college and career readiness program under § 5–217 of this subtitle.

§5–235.

(a) (1) (i) Subject to subsection (o) of this section and beginning in fiscal year 2023, the county governing body shall levy and appropriate an annual tax sufficient to provide an amount of revenue for elementary and secondary public education purposes equal to the local share of major education aid as adjusted under § 5–239 of this subtitle **OR THE MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT AMOUNT REQUIRED UNDER SUBSECTION (A)(2) OF THIS SECTION, WHICHEVER IS GREATER.**

(ii) For the purposes of calculating the local share of major education aid and regardless of the source of the funds, all funds that a county board, including the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners, is authorized to expend for schools may be considered as levied by the county council, board of county commissioners, or the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore except for:

1. State appropriations;
2. Federal education aid payments; and
3. The amount of the expenditure authorized for debt service and capital outlay.

(2) **(I)** Subject to subsection (o) of this section [and except as provided in subsection (a–1) of this section], the county governing body shall appropriate local funds to the school operating budget in [an] **A MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT** amount no less than the product of the county’s enrollment count for the current fiscal year and the local appropriation on a per pupil basis for the prior fiscal year using enrollment count; **AND**

**(II) BEGINNING IN FISCAL YEAR 2026 THE MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT AMOUNT DETERMINED UNDER THIS SECTION SHALL BE INCREASED BY NO LESS THAN THE INFLATION ADJUSTMENT AS DEFINED IN § 5–201 OF THIS ARTICLE.**

**(3) IN EACH FISCAL YEAR IF A COUNTY’S EDUCATION EFFORT, AS DEFINED IN § 5–239 OF THIS SUBTITLE, IS BELOW 100% OF THE STATEWIDE 5-YEAR MOVING AVERAGE OF EDUCATION EFFORT, THE REQUIRED MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT AMOUNT FOR THE COUNTY SHALL BE ADJUSTED BY INCREASING THE PER PUPIL AMOUNT BY THE LESSER OF: A. A COUNTY’S INCREASE IN THE LOCAL WEALTH PER PUPIL; B. THE STATEWIDE AVERAGE INCREASE IN LOCAL WEALTH PER PUPIL; OR C. 2.5%.**

[(a–1) For fiscal year 2023, the county governing body shall appropriate to the school operating budget the greater of:

- (1) The local share of major education aid under subsection (a)(1) of this section; or
- (2)
  - (i) For Allegany County, \$31,854,912;
  - (ii) For Anne Arundel County, \$784,741,000;
  - (iii) For Baltimore City, \$275,513,758;
  - (iv) For Baltimore County, \$888,261,619;
  - (v) For Calvert County, \$134,705,250;
  - (vi) For Caroline County, \$16,080,832;
  - (vii) For Carroll County, \$204,617,860;
  - (viii) For Cecil County, \$89,196,266;
  - (ix) For Charles County, \$200,686,400;
  - (x) For Dorchester County, \$20,937,715;
  - (xi) For Frederick County, \$316,348,012;
  - (xii) For Garrett County, \$28,705,313;
  - (xiii) For Harford County, \$293,812,984;
  - (xiv) For Howard County, \$628,300,000;
  - (xv) For Kent County, \$18,559,629;

- (xvi) For Montgomery County, \$1,752,662,235;
- (xvii) For Prince George's County, \$766,762,200;
- (xviii) For Queen Anne's County, \$62,559,389;
- (xix) For St. Mary's County, \$114,540,490;
- (xx) For Somerset County, \$10,490,432;
- (xxi) For Talbot County, \$43,905,596;
- (xxii) For Washington County, \$106,847,824;
- (xxiii) For Wicomico County, \$49,135,024; and
- (xxiv) For Worcester County, \$97,117,331.]

(b) (1) Except as provided in [paragraph (2) of this subsection and] subsection (c) of this section, for purposes of this section, the local appropriation on a per pupil basis for the prior fiscal year for a county is derived by dividing the county's highest local appropriation to its school operating budget for the prior fiscal year by the county's enrollment count for the prior fiscal year. For example, the calculation of the foundation aid for fiscal year 2003 shall be based on the highest local appropriation for the school operating budget for a county for fiscal year 2002. Program shifts between a county operating budget and a county school operating budget may not be used to artificially satisfy the requirements of this paragraph.

[(2) For fiscal year 2024, the following amounts shall be subtracted from the county's fiscal year 2023 highest local appropriation:

- (i) For Allegany County, \$384,498;
- (ii) For Anne Arundel County, \$10,291,149;
- (iii) For Baltimore County, \$41,682,056;
- (iv) For Calvert County, \$2,109,359;
- (v) For Carroll County, \$7,549,762;
- (vi) For Charles County, \$7,074,539;
- (vii) For Frederick County, \$9,076,061;
- (viii) For Garrett County, \$342,058;
- (ix) For Harford County, \$19,512,731;
- (x) For Howard County, \$23,479,884;

- (xi) For Kent County, \$488,031;
- (xii) For Montgomery County, \$30,992,076;
- (xiii) For Queen Anne’s County, \$406,525; and
- (xiv) For St. Mary’s County, \$6,110,337.]

**(P) (1) IN THIS SUBSECTION, “POPULATION DENSITY AMOUNT” MEANS THE TOTAL COUNTY POPULATION DIVIDED BY THE SQUARE MILES IN THE COUNTY.**

**(2) FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025, THE GOVERNOR MAY INCLUDE IN THE ANNUAL BUDGET BILL AN APPROPRIATION OF \$250,000 TO A LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM IN A COUNTY WITH:**

**(I) A POPULATION DENSITY AMOUNT OF LESS THAN 100.**

**(3) BEGINNING IN FISCAL YEAR 2026, THE GOVERNOR SHALL INCLUDE IN THE ANNUAL BUDGET BILL AN APPROPRIATION OF \$250,000 TO A LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM IN A COUNTY WITH:**

**(I) A POPULATION DENSITY AMOUNT OF LESS THAN 100.**

§5–404.

(h) (1) For each of fiscal years 2022 through **2033 [2026]**, the governing body of a county and the local school system jointly shall appoint a single implementation coordinator responsible for the implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future by all government units operating in the county.

**(2) FOR EACH FISCAL YEAR THROUGH 2033, EACH COUNTY BOARD SHALL PROVIDE \$150,000 FOR THE SALARY, BENEFITS, AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION COORDINATOR APPOINTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION.**

**(3) FUNDING FOR THE SALARY, BENEFITS AND SUPPORT FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION COORDINATOR PROVIDED BY THE COUNTY BOARD IN ACCORDANCE WITH PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION SHALL BE PAID BY THE STATE AND THE COUNTY IN THE SAME PROPORTION AS THE FOUNDATION PROGRAM UNDER § 5–213 OF THIS TITLE.**

§5–239.

(a) (1) Under this section a county may be eligible for a reduction in the local share of major education aid required under § 5–235(a)(1) of this subtitle.

(2) A reduction in the local share of major education aid under this section may not reduce the local share below the per pupil appropriation required under § 5–235(a)(2) of this subtitle.

(3) If a reduction in the local share of major education aid under this section would result in a local share that is less than the requirement under § 5–235(a)(2) of this subtitle, the State distributions required under this section shall be reduced.

(4) For the purposes of § 5–205 of this subtitle, State distributions required under this section shall be included in the State share of major education aid.

(b) (1) (i) In this subsection the following words have the meanings indicated.

(ii) “Education effort adjustment” equals the local share of major education aid minus the maximum local share.

(iii) “Education effort index” means local education effort divided by the State average education effort.

(iv) “Local education effort” means, for each county, the county’s local share of major education aid divided by the county’s wealth and rounded to the nearest seven decimal places.

(v) “Major education aid” has the meaning stated in § 5–201(l) of this subtitle minus item (9) of § 5–201(l) of this subtitle.

(vi) “Maximum local share” equals the local wealth multiplied by the State average education effort.

(vii) “State average education effort” equals the local share of major education aid for all counties divided by the wealth of all counties and rounded to the nearest seven decimal places.

(2) (i) A county is eligible for the education effort adjustment if the education effort index is greater than 1 for 2 consecutive fiscal years.

(ii) Subject to subsection (a) of this section, the required local share of major education aid is reduced by the amount provided by the State under this subsection.

(3) For each county, if the education effort index is greater than 1 but less than 1.15, the State shall distribute to the county board the following proportion of the education effort adjustment and the county shall provide the remainder:

(i) For fiscal year 2022, 10%;

(ii) For fiscal year 2023, 15%;

(iii) For fiscal year 2024, 20%;

(iv) For fiscal year 2025, 25%;

(v) For fiscal year 2026, 30%;

(vi) For fiscal year 2027, 35%;

(vii) For fiscal year 2028, 40%;

(viii) For fiscal year 2029, 45%; and

(ix) For fiscal year 2030 and each fiscal year thereafter, 50%.

(4) For each county, if the education effort index is at least 1.15 but less than 1.27, the State shall distribute to the county board the following proportion of the education effort adjustment and the county shall provide the remainder:

- (i) For fiscal year 2022, 20%;
- (ii) For fiscal year 2023, 20%;
- (iii) For fiscal year 2024, 35%;
- (iv) For fiscal year 2025, 45%;
- (v) For fiscal year 2026, 55%;
- (vi) For fiscal year 2027, 65%;
- (vii) For fiscal year 2028, 75%;
- (viii) For fiscal year 2029, 85%; and
- (ix) For fiscal year 2030 and each fiscal year thereafter, 100%.

(5) For each county, if the education effort index is at least 1.27, for fiscal year 2022 and each fiscal year thereafter, the State shall distribute to the county board 100% of the education effort adjustment.

(c) (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection and subject to the limitation in subsection (a) of this section, the local share of major education aid shall be reduced by the amount of State funds provided to a county board under § 5–214 of this subtitle.

(2) For Baltimore City, the local share of major education aid may be reduced only by the amount by which the State funds provided under § 5–214 of this subtitle exceed \$10,000,000.

(d) Subject to the limitation in subsection (a) of this section, the local share of major education aid shall be reduced by:

(1) The sum of the amount of State funds provided to a county board in a county that is eligible for the minimum State funding under the foundation program as defined in § 5–201(q)(2) of this subtitle and the difference between the local share of the foundation program and the foundation program; and

(2) The amount by which the sum of the State share and local share of the at–promise programs as defined in § 5–221(c)(2) of this subtitle exceeds the total program amount as defined in § 5–221(e) of this subtitle for each program.

(e) Subject to the limitation in subsection (a) of this section, the local share of major education aid for counties with an index of at least 0.130 under § 5–216 of this subtitle shall be reduced by the amount equal to 50% of the local share calculated under § 5–216 of this subtitle.



§ 5–201.

(h) (1) Subject to paragraph (2) of this subsection, “inflation adjustment” means a percentage, rounded to the nearest two decimal places, that is the lesser of:

- (i) The increase in the implicit price deflator for State and local government expenditures for the second prior fiscal year;
- (ii) The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers for the Washington Metropolitan Area, or any successor index, for the second prior fiscal year; or
- (iii) 5%.

(2) If there is no increase in the implicit price deflator for State and local government expenditures for the second prior fiscal year or in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers for the Washington Metropolitan Area, or any successor index, for the second prior fiscal year, then “inflation adjustment” means 0%.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act is not intended to affect the local education effort adjustments provided in the Education Article.

SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June 1, 2024.