



Maryland State Board of Education

200 WEST BALTIMORE ST. / BALTIMORE, MD 21201-2595 / (410) 767-0467

February 17, 2020

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky
Senate Ed., Health, and Env. Affairs Committee
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Anne R. Kaiser
House Committee on Ways and Means
131 House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Guy Guzzone
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
3 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Maggie McIntosh
House Appropriations Committee
121 House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Senate Bill 1000/House Bill 1300 – The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future – Implementation

Dear Chairs Pinsky, Kaiser, Guzzone, and McIntosh:

The Maryland State Board of Education (State Board) offers the following information regarding Senate Bill 1000 and House Bill 1300, *Blueprint for Maryland’s Future – Implementation*.

The State Board remains enthusiastic about the prospect of bringing to life a number of the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education (Kirwan Commission) recommendations identified in this legislation, and we are appreciative of the General Assembly’s commitment to providing a world-class education to all of Maryland’s students. In addition, the State Board has supported additional accountability measures and transparency at all levels of government to ensure that the most critical aspects of these recommendations are implemented with fidelity.

The State Board has significant concerns with SB 1000/HB 1300, most specifically with the proposed creation of the Accountability and Implementation Board. The State Board maintains, as it has throughout the development of the recommendations outlined in SB 1000/HB 1300, that the existing structures of State government are the best mechanisms to provide the necessary governance and accountability sought by all stakeholders involved. Under the oversight of the State Board, the Maryland Department of Education (MSDE) has the structure, expertise, and experience in place to carry out the responsibilities and charges outlined in this legislation. We have consistently urged the Kirwan Commission and the General Assembly to resist the development of a new structure of government that does not include a clear delineation of authority. The State Board should be the accountability body to oversee the implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future.

The role of the State Board beyond enactment of the SB 1000/HB 1300 requirements is unclear as a number of the responsibilities assigned to the newly-formed Implementation Board would seemingly duplicate or usurp the standing authority of the State Board as the accountability body for education policy in the State.

As laid out in SB 1000/HB 1300, the Accountability and Implementation Board and the State Board would simultaneously serve as accountability bodies for the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), local school systems, and other educational providers. As the education policy developers in the State, the State Board is vested with the appropriate authority to carry out the accountability measures established in SB 1000/HB 1300. Without additional clarity, significant confusion and uncertainty will ensue for all involved stakeholders at every level of government, local school systems, parents and community members.

Additionally, while the language in SB 1000/HB 1300 authorizes the Accountability and Implementation Board to hire an Executive Director and any staff necessary to carry out its duties, the timing and development of this new structure creates significant concerns for effective and efficient application of the substantial responsibilities identified for this new body. As large and consequential portions of the bill begin to take effect, MSDE and the State Board already have the structures in place to address them.

Lastly, the State Board is concerned that the Accountability and Implementation Board does not have an entity to which it is accountable. There are over 22 pages detailing accountability measures for state agencies and local governments, however, there is no mention of any accountability measures for the Accountability and Implementation Board. This is particularly concerning when the Accountability and Implementation Board is given a significant amount of leeway in its operation, including being exempt from a large portion of the State Finance and Procurement Article as well as the State Personnel and Pensions Article.

The State Board of Education urges the committees to consider the amendments below.

Amendments:

The Maryland State Board of Education asks that the Accountability and Implementation Board be stricken from SB 1000/HB1300, and in each instance where the Accountability and Implementation Board is instructed to complete an action or given certain authority, the Maryland State Board of Education be substituted.

For additional information or questions, please contact Tiffany Clark at 410-767-0090 or tiffany.clark1@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,



Brigadier General Warner I Sumpter (Ret.)
President, Maryland State Board of Education

cc: Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D., State Superintendent of Schools
Tiffany Johnson Clark