

TITLE: Blueprint for Maryland's Future – Implementation
BILL: SB 1000/ HB 1300 **POSITION:** Support with Amendment **HEARING DATE:** 2/17/20

The Maryland Out of School Time (MOST) Network is a statewide organization working to increase both the quality and quantity of afterschool and summer learning opportunities for all students. MOST serves at the backbone for the Maryland Coalition for Community Schools (MD4CS) which is working to expand implementation of the Community School Strategy with fidelity to national best-practices. On behalf of the constituents supported by MOST and MD4CS we would like to applaud the Kirwan Commission for their ground-breaking policy recommendations and we are pleased to see the Blueprint for Maryland's Future – Implementation legislation SB1000/HB1300 adheres closely to the recommendations document. The comprehensive approach to education reform in all five areas of the document will undoubtedly transform Maryland education system and address long standing inequities in resources and opportunities afforded to our students, families, teachers, and schools.

After considerable research, consultation with experts, and briefings from advocates and implementers, the Commission chose to include Community Schools and Expanded Learning as key strategies for addressing the barriers to education students experience when they live in communities and attend schools that have been impacted by generational and concentrated poverty. The additional per-pupil funds designed to allow schools to expand learning and offer high quality afterschool and summer learning opportunities will support working families, increase safety and promote academic achievement. Community Schools and Expanded Learning combined are powerful deliverers of opportunities that change lives. MOST and MD4CS look forward to supporting school districts and schools in designing and implementing Community School and Expanded Learning strategies the align to the national and state standards and that fully incorporate community-based partners, utilize innovative learning approaches and reflect the principles of Youth Development Practice.

The decision to include Community Schools has been further supported by 2020 Rand Corporation study (https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR3245.html) which adds to the growing body of evidence that Community Schools are helping schools turn the corner Over the three year study, schools in New York City implementing a Community School Strategy saw statistically significant improved attendance, on-time grade progression, credit-accumulation rates for high school, graduation rates, along with promising trends on math achievement. Two other outcomes from this study that may receive less attention but are equally as promising are

- Teachers in New York's Community Schools reported increased feeling of shared responsibility for student success; and,
- Elementary and Middle School student reported an increased sense of connectedness to adults and peers.

While “wrap-around” services are tools employed by Community Schools to address needs, the crux of the success of a community school is changing culture, creating an empowered sense of distributed leadership where all stakeholders are invested and involved in fostering student success.

Community Schools were identified as one of the critical strategies with a significant dollar investment; therefore we were surprised that Community Schools' implementation does not receive direct attention in the Accountability portion of the legislation. We would ask that amendments be added that:

- Require Community School expertise on the Blueprint Accountability & Implementation Board; and,
- The Board should review the district level plans where coordination is allowed for 40 or more schools to ensure alignment with intent

In addition there needs to be dedicated resource allocated at the state level for training and technical assistance for Community School implementation in addition to the Director of Community School position at the Maryland State Department of Education.

With these changes we encourage all of the Senate and House Committees to provide a favorable report and move forward this legislation with the urgency and commitment it deserves. The time for this historic legislation is long overdue and our children can't wait.