

February 21, 2020

Dear Members of the General Assembly:

Over the last three years, educators across the state have been fully engaged in the most critical conversation we have had in a generation: how do we fundamentally, equitably, and sustainably improve our schools and prepare our students for the jobs of today and the future. From the beginning, this conversation has appropriately been focused on research-based best practices to develop the policy reforms necessary to make this happen. And from the beginning, it has been clear that supporting these world-class schools and programs would require new investments in state and local funding.

Now that HB 1300 and SB 1000, the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, have been introduced, the time to act to make this vision for our schools a reality is now. Our kids can't wait; passing this legislation is both an economic and moral imperative. Every student in every neighborhood in Maryland should have a great public school and the opportunity to succeed. Voting to pass the Blueprint alone will not make this happen; we must also look to your leadership to fully fund the legislation as well. A policy bill and new formulas without the resources to deliver them will not result in the outcomes that Marylanders expect and students deserve.

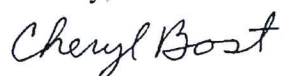
We are nearing the finish line of being able to say that we have fully secured this once-in-a-generation opportunity to improve our schools and provide a better future for our students and state. That is why I am so encouraged by the actions of legislative leaders to develop long-term, sustainable funding solutions necessary to fully implement the funding formula and the Blueprint's game-changing vision for our schools.

House Bill 1628 was introduced today and is a single action that the legislature can take to generate the revenues necessary to fund the Blueprint, and does so while also reducing taxes on goods that absorb so much of the budgets of middle-class and lower-income Marylanders. While this fair and comprehensive proposal is not the only smart revenue measure MSEA supports, I am writing to you today to offer our full support for this legislation and the goals that it meets to fully fund the state share of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. The certainty that fully funding the Blueprint this year would create for school systems will ease implementation and planning of the new programs that it will create, and will put the state budget on stable footing for years to come.

MSEA will certainly continue to advocate for other fair funding initiatives that ensure the wealthiest among us and corporations pay their fair share, that our tax code reflects modern times with how digital companies are taxed and regulated, and to otherwise make our tax code more fair and progressive. House Bill 1628 is in keeping with those priorities and I hope it will earn your full support and action.

Supporting our schools requires strong action to meet the urgency of this moment. Passing and fully funding the Blueprint for Maryland's Future is the strong action that will yield immense benefits for our schools, our economy, and the next generation of Marylanders. Thank you for your support of our schools, educators, and students. We look forward to working with you to pass and fund the Blueprint.

Sincerely,



Cheryl Bost

Cheryl Bost, President