

KATIE FRY HESTER
Legislative District 9
Carroll and Howard Counties

Education, Health, and
Environmental Affairs Committee

Chair, Joint Committee on
Cybersecurity, Information Technology
and Biotechnology



Annapolis Office
James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 304
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3671 • 301-858-3671
800-492-7122 Ext. 3671
KatieFry.Hester@senate.state.md.us

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony in Support of SB983 - Maryland Data Analysis and Accountability Program - Established

February 26th, 2020,

Chairman Pinsky, Vice-Chair Kagan, and Members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee:

Thank you for your consideration of SB983 - Maryland Data Analysis and Accountability Program - which will provide the engine for a data-driven, **continuous improvement process as we implement the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.**

While I am new to this committee, many of you may have picked up that I am a fan of science and data driven decision making accompanied by accountability. This is true in many contexts, but this year - when we are working on transforming the future of our education system - this is particularly true.

As one of the consultants to the Kirwan Commission, the internationally renowned expert Dr. Tucker, said early on, accountability is foundational to the success of this endeavor. The Kirwan commission report and the legislation both contemplate to a varying degree the need to track results by utilizing the power of data. Given the importance of this issue and the power of this data, this concept and its execution is not something that should be left open—we have a responsibility to affirmatively mandate this process rather than to assume it will happen.

SB983 further defines this concept and specifically tasks a governing entity with doing this. It takes our existing Maryland Longitudinal Data System Center and specifically tasks them and their governing board with compiling the data to evaluate how this legislation is implemented.

Today, I would like to explain to you

- 1) What this bill does
- 2) Why we should “super charge” Maryland Longitudinal Data System Center for this purpose
- 3) Why you should vote for this bill

While I do not have 50 witnesses signed up to testify today, I would propose that every single person that testified in support of FWA on SB1000 has a significant interest in seeing this bill pass. Therefore, I ask you to please keep an open mind and really work with me on this bill given it's important to my children, your children and all the children of Maryland.

What this bill does:

1. Creates the Maryland Data Analysis and Accountability Program to be administered by MLDS Center and establishes its purpose: to evaluate the success of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.
2. Defines the duties and functions to support the Data Analysis and Accountability Program
3. Adds 2 members to the MLDS Board and directs the board to provide oversight to the Data Analysis and Accountability Program and report annually to the Accountability and Implementation (AI) Board established in the Blueprint (SB1000) as well as the Governor, General Assembly, County Boards.

So, what are the duties and functions of the MLDS Center in administering the program? With the provided amendment, this bill would require MLDS to:

- i. Provide the Accountability and Implementation Board, with all required evaluations of the outcomes achieved during the implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future
- ii. Provide projections showing the likelihood of students reaching specific performance levels in later grades
- iii. Analyze the social determinants from appropriate state and local agencies that impact the education performance of students and indicate the need for wraparound services of students
- iv. Conduct analyses on the success of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future in improving early childhood education, high-quality and diverse teachers, college and career readiness pathways and eliminating the achievement gap between students.
- v. Review data and provide research to determine the success of the implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future goals.
- vi. Provide transparency of budgeting by tracking appropriations, allocations, and uses of funding associated with the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, including the impact of the funds on performance outcomes.

Why MLDS?

Maryland already has a thought leader in the Maryland Longitudinal Data System. It is one of the more robust analytical platforms throughout the nation and already has the experience in establishing data governance, data security, and operationalizing sharing data through user-friendly dashboards to evaluate policies and programs. The vast data inventory contains robust education and workforce data extending back to 2008, with 167 new elements added in 2019, including data sets on Apprenticeship and Student Discipline. *(A more complete data inventory for what is available within the system is also available on the MLDS website).* With this powerful data set, MLDS can provide invaluable analysis such as the student and school poverty research they presented this year to the Maryland Task Force on Reconciliation and Equity at Morgan State University. Their Executive Director, Ross Goldstein is here today to answer any questions about their work. However, I would like to take just a few minutes to explain why “super-charging” the MLDS center to support SB1000 makes so much sense.

First, the MLDS Center currently has a robust set of existing data from multiple agencies which dates back to the 2007-2008 academic year for K-12 – which is great because we don’t have to start from scratch! Attached to my testimony is a graphical overview of the MLDS Data, which includes data from: MSDE, MHEC, DOL, DJS and other sources¹. There are MOUs in place for all data being shared: in 2019 legislative session information from the Comptroller, Juvenile Services and MSDE disciplinary data were added.

The depth of the data available allows for meaningful statistical analyses and assessment of education and workforce policies. In order to fully track the implementation of the blueprint, and establish the ROI (return on investment) we would need to expand the data collection, analysis and reporting of data only slightly to include:

- Financial investments made in accordance with the Blueprint
- Metrics for new program included in the Blueprint
- Any additional data required to analyze the system for example:
 - The relationships between the increased hiring of diverse teachers and student performance
 - The relationship between increased number of Judy Centers and early education performance
 - Others?

¹ MSDE (attendance, completion, assessment, discipline, early childhood, staff, schools)
Dept of Higher Education (enrollment, degrees, courses, credit, financial aid)
Dept of Labor (including wages, apprenticeships, key industry data)
Dept. of Juvenile Services (including juvenile delinquency records)
Other sources (comptroller, college boards, MVA)

- Reports required to support the improvement of performance at the school level. So, we are ensuring that our principals and teachers get annual data-driven reports on their performance, to allow a continuous improvement of student learning.

Finally, I wanted to point out that MLDS is a nationally recognized center, and we are extremely lucky to have them here in our State. As a result of our previous efforts, the **Data Quality Campaign** recently recognized Maryland as one of three leading states in developing data governance models. The Workforce Data Quality Campaign – recognized the Center for its dashboards on *Wages by High School Outcome and Postsecondary Enrollment Status*. The National Governors Association recently invited Maryland to present its strategies for linking K-12 and workforce data systems, and they have recently completed a voluntary IT System Security audit conducted by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s Computer Emergency Readiness Team.


Why you should vote for this bill as amended

- 1) As currently drafted, SB1000 is complicated with respect to data collection, performance evaluation and accountability. This bill seeks to clarify and delineate specific tasks and projects, establishing ownership as to who is responsible to collect and analyze the data, and ensuring that the agencies and school systems are effectively sharing this information to help the Governor and the General Assembly evaluate the results of this vastly important investment in our children.
- 2) We already have the capacity to do this within MLDS – let’s not recreate the wheel!
- 3) We have a responsibility to the stakeholders—students, educators, and parents to ensure that the reforms contemplated are successful and that we hold systems accountable. There is a commensurate fiduciary responsibility to the taxpayers to make sure that this investment is being managed appropriately.

Before I close, I want to mention again that you should have copies of the MLDS Data and Governance structure and the Executive Director of MLDS is in the room if there are questions. Senator Serafini, has also been looking at this from the budget perspective and is also available. Finally, there is also some very interesting reading from North Carolina, who has a very similar data center for tracking their educational system.

In closing, I would like to say that our kids deserve to know that we see the complex set of circumstances that are impacting them. We live in a changing world and need to be vigilant and hold ourselves accountable. As my former Congressman Elijah Cummings said to me, and many others “ Our children are the message we leave to the future.” For that reason I respectfully request a favorable report on SB983.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katie Fry Hester". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "K" and "H".

Senator Katie Fry Hester