

BILL: House Bill 1196
TITLE: County Boards of Education – Blueprint for Maryland’s Future Implementation Coordinator – Salary Grant
POSITION: SUPPORT
DATE: March 7, 2023
COMMITTEE: Appropriations
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The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) supports House Bill 1196, which would provide a much needed dedicated state grant of \$150,000 for each local school system to use in FY 2025 and FY 2026 to support the personnel costs for their Blueprint Implementation Coordinator. These Coordinators are not only mandated positions but essential to the successful initial planning and operation of the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future.

In the final version of the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future legislation (HB 1300, 2020), the legislature required each local school system and local governmental entity (23 counties and Baltimore City) to jointly designate a Blueprint Coordinator in each jurisdiction. The requirement provided in the Blueprint was that this position would be required through FY 2025, and this was subsequently extended to FY 2026 in subsequent Blueprint legislation (HB 1372, 2021). The Blueprint Coordinator position was also mandated without an identified or dedicated funding source.

Initially, and to comply with the deadline of July, 2021, many school systems assigned the Blueprint Coordinator position and responsibilities to existing staff. Now, eighteen months later, many of the Coordinators are still wearing multiple hats in their school system central offices, and have significant responsibilities in addition to the Blueprint work. For example, among the Blueprint Coordinators there are Chief Financial Officers, Chief Administration Officers, and two or three Directors of Assessment and Reporting. This is especially challenging in smaller school systems with fewer staff and limited central office resources, thereby creating a challenge to equitable launch of the Blueprint as well.

The Blueprint law is an enormous and multi-faceted set of education funding and policy reforms. At its core, the Blueprint mandates increases in State and local funding for public education that represent the commitment Maryland must make to fully and equitably fund a world class public education for all of Maryland’s nearly 900,000 students. The Kirwan Commission recommendations and key components of the Blueprint law, include:

- Ensuring high-quality early childhood education and care, including expanded full-day prekindergarten for low-income three and four year-olds;
- Elevating teachers and leaders through increased salaries and numbers of teachers, counselors and other staff, including a more diverse workforce;
- Creating a world-class instructional system of college and career readiness pathways, including career and technical education (CTE);
- Increasing per pupil funding for all students and targeting additional funding for students who need it most, including economically disadvantaged students, students receiving special education services, and English language learners;

- Providing comprehensive supports by targeting funding to schools serving high concentrations of students living in poverty to provide community schools which feature before-and after-school, summer academic programs, and student access to needed health and social services; and
- Ensuring excellence for all through enhanced oversight and accountability to ensure that the Commission's recommendations are successfully implemented and produce the desired results.

As all 24 school systems have moved through the initial year of the Blueprint, it is exceptionally clear that these Blueprint Coordinators are integral to the comprehensive planning, stakeholder engagement, and liaison work with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and the Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB). MABE strongly supports House Bill 1196 in recognition of the fact that the Blueprint Coordinators are essential the success of the Blueprint and mandated by the law.

Again, MABE believes a line item in the budget would provide an equitable funding opportunity for all school systems to hire and employ a full-time Blueprint Coordinator.

For these reasons, MABE urges a favorable report on House Bill 1196.