

HB 1196.pdf

Uploaded by: Dr. Karen Couch

Position: FAV



Kent County Board of Education

Growing a Community of Leaders

Dr. Karen M. Couch
Office of the Superintendent

March 28, 2023

The Honorable Guy Guzzone
3 West, Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SUPPORT

BILL: HB 1196

TITLE: Blueprint for Maryland's Future Implementation- Funding and Independent Evaluation- Alterations

COMMITTEE: Budget and Taxation

CONTACT: Dr. Karen M. Couch, Kent County Public Schools Superintendent

Dear Chair Guzzone and the members of the Budget and Taxation Committee,

The Kent County Public Schools (KCPS) supports House Bill 1196. This bill would provide a \$150,000 to each Local Education Agency for fiscal years 2025 and fiscal 2026 for the personnel costs to hire a Blueprint Implementation Coordinator (IC). Many of the current coordinators wear multiple hats, and have significant responsibilities in addition to the Blueprint work that will be required in future years. This is especially challenging in smaller districts with fewer staff and resources. This bill will allow each school system to dedicate one person to monitor and oversee the implementation of the Blueprint.

KCPS also supports the \$250,000 appropriation to a local school system with a full-time equivalent student enrollment of fewer than 2000 students. KCPS is the smallest school system in Maryland with an enrollment of 1751 students and five (5) schools. Two schools are designated concentration of poverty schools and next year, five (5) schools will participate in the Community Eligibility Provision. Under the best of circumstances, we face significant challenges due to the size of our school system. It takes the same amount of funding to transport 20 students on a bus versus 70 students. The same funding is required to operate and maintain a school of 150 students versus a school of 500 students. Unfortunately, due to small student enrollment, the funding formula does not generate sufficient funding to support the district's basic needs. A small school system simply requires more funding due to the economy of scale.

I served on the Kirwan Commission representing Maryland Superintendents and advocated for an additional state allocation for the smallest counties in Maryland. Thirty-seven (37) states provide additional funding allocations for small and sparse school districts; however, Maryland does not. KCPS is an extreme outlier and **one size simply does not fit all.**

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future will bring exciting opportunities to improve our educational system; however, there will be significant fiscal challenges for the smallest county in Maryland even when state and local shares are factored into the equation. Without the resources we need, KCPS will be unable to retain good teachers and staff to deliver the quality of education that students in our county deserve.

For these reasons, KCPS supports House Bill 1196 and requests a favorable report.

cc: The Kent County Board of Education
The Honorable Stephanie Smith
The Honorable Stephen S. Hershey, Jr.
The Honorable Jefferson L. Ghrist
The Honorable Jay A. Jacobs
The Honorable Steven J. Arentz
The County Commissioners of Kent County

HB1196_fsullivan_Testimony_Favorable.pdf

Uploaded by: Francoise Sullivan

Position: FAV

**HB1196 Blueprint for Maryland's Future Implementation - Funding and Independent Evaluation –
Alterations**

March 29, 2023

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

SUPPORT

Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe and Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee,

My name is Francoise Sullivan and I am a member of the Kent County Public Schools Board of Education. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB1196 - sponsored by Delegate Smith. This bill with alterations provides funding to cover the salary of each county's Blueprint Implementation Coordinator by altering certain education funding formulas and includes a request that the state mandate supplemental funding for small school districts with low student populations.

With a county population of less than 20,000, Kent County is Maryland's smallest county. We have five schools that serve the entire county: a single high school, a single middle school, and three elementary schools. Our school enrollment has been under 2,000 students for many years. All of our schools are Title I and two of our elementary schools are Community Schools.

Meaningful funding is difficult for us to raise locally because we are so small, so any additional funding from the state has potential for transformative impact in our schools. Conversely, without this additional funding, we struggle to pay (and retain) teachers, keep classroom sizes manageable, and offer adequate support to high-needs students.

If it passes, HB1196 will help small counties like ours secure the additional resources we need to ensure the strength and quality of Kent County Public Schools. I urge a favorable report on HB1196. Thank you for your time.

Francoise Sullivan
Vice President,
Board of Education
Kent County Public Schools
5608 Boundary Avenue
Rock Hall, MD 21661

HB 1196.Blueprint Coordinator Dedicated Salary Fun

Uploaded by: John Woolums

Position: FAV

BILL: House Bill 1196
TITLE: County Boards of Education – Blueprint for Maryland’s Future Implementation Coordinator – Salary Grant
POSITION: SUPPORT
DATE: March 30, 2023
COMMITTEE: Budget and Taxation
Education, Energy, and the Environment
CONTACT: John R. Woolums, Esq.

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.

JGoetz HB1196 – Blueprint for Maryland's Future Im

Uploaded by: Joseph Goetz

Position: FAV

March 29, 2023

The Honorable Senator Guy Guzzone
3 West
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: **SUPPORT** HB1196 – Blueprint for Maryland's Future Implementation - Funding and Independent Evaluation - Alterations

Dear Chair Guzzone, Vice-Chair Rosapepe and Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee:

My name is Joe Goetz and I currently serve as the School Board President for Kent County Public Schools. I am asking for a favorable report on HB1196 – Blueprint for Maryland's Future Implementation - Funding and Independent Evaluation – Alterations.

Kent County is the smallest school system in the State of Maryland with a student population that is on the lower end of the socioeconomic scale. Our school population consists of five buildings where all of our schools are Title 1 schools and two of our elementary schools are Community Schools. Our school system is facing massive gaps in funding where without assistance; we would be forced to make cuts in personnel and services that would directly affect our most important resources, the students of Kent County.

We want to continue providing the very best for our students and in order to do that, we will need a bridge to help fund the necessary services that we need. Without this additional funding, we will struggle to maintain and pay teachers and offer adequate support to all students.

This letter provides written testimony in support of HB1196 – Blueprint for Maryland's Future Implementation - Funding and Independent Evaluation – Alterations. Calculation - Mandated Funding which would require the Governor to include in the annual budget bill an appropriation in an amount equal to the low-density calculation for counties that have a population density amount of less than 100 and a full-time equivalent student enrollment of fewer than 2,000 students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph W. Goetz", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Joseph Goetz

Kent County Board of Education – Board President

Cc: Appropriations Committee Members
The Honorable Stephen S. Hershey, Jr.
The Honorable Jay A. Jacobs
The Honorable Steven J. Arentz
The Honorable Jefferson L. Ghrist
The Kent County Board of Education
Dr. Karen M. Couch 0

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Uploaded by: Mary Pat Fannon

Position: FAV



PSSAM
Public School Superintendents' Association
OF MARYLAND

Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director
1217 S. Potomac Street
Baltimore, MD 21224
410-935-7281
marypat.fannon@pssam.org

BILL: HB 1196

TITLE: County Boards of Education – Blueprint for Maryland’s Future
Implementation Coordinator – Salary Grant

DATE: March 30, 2023

POSITION: Support

COMMITTEE: Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

CONTACT: Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, PSSAM

The Public School Superintendents’ Association of Maryland (PSSAM), on behalf of all twenty-four public school superintendents, **supports** House Bill 1196.

This bill would provide a \$150,000 appropriation to each Local Education Agency for fiscal years 2025 and fiscal 2026 for the personnel costs for a Blueprint Implementation Coordinator (IC). The bill also addresses other Blueprint initiatives including an extension for the Accountability Implementation Board’s (AIB) outside evaluation of the implementation, due to the delayed implementation of the Blueprint.

The House amended the bill directing that the funding is appropriated in the same manner as the foundation formula between the State and the local government. There has also been discussion about the bill’s wording regarding the \$150,000, specifically whether it is a state mandated salary. PSSAM has been advocating for this funding for several months, and it has been our intention that the funds would be for personnel costs, which are largely acknowledged to be inclusive of salary and fringe benefits; we did not, and do not, see this as a mandated salary.

In the final version of the Blueprint legislation (HB 1300/2020), the Legislature required the local governing body and the LEA to jointly designate Blueprint Coordinators. The requirement was that this position would be required through fiscal 2025, which was subsequently changed to fiscal 2026 during the 2021 session (HB 1372). The IC position was also mandated without an identified funding source. Lastly, the position was to be created by July 1, 2021; all districts were in compliance within one or two months of that deadline.

In July of 2021, the role of the coordinators was unclear and many districts assigned this responsibility to existing staff. Now, eighteen months later, many of the coordinators are still wearing multiple hats in their districts, and have significant responsibilities in addition to the Blueprint work. This is especially challenging in smaller districts with fewer staff and resources. For example, among the ICs there are Chief Financial Officers, Chief Administration Officers, and two or three Directors of Assessment and Reporting.

Having staff serve as the IC seemed reasonable when we (PSSAM) first started convening this group in 2021. At that point we were meeting about once a month and we were waiting for the AIB to be named, and the new State Superintendent was settling . As the AIB and MSDE geared up, meeting frequency increased and going back to September 2021, there have been roughly 71 meetings, (excluding duplicate sessions), the bulk of which occurred beginning July 2022 when there were roughly 62 meetings. As you can see, the commitment to the Blueprint work has been immense.

The designation of ICs has created a moderate equity issue between the smaller and larger districts. Even after adjusting for the enrollment of the districts - the planning and implementation has to be done if you are a district with 200,000 students as those with 2,000 students. As we have moved through the initial year of the Blueprint, it is exceptionally clear that these ICs are integral for the proper implementation with fidelity. We recognize that there are many staff that are overworked, but we feel it is appropriate to request a carve-out for the salaries of the ICs, especially since the General Assembly mandated the position. We believe a line item in the budget would provide an equitable funding opportunity for all districts to hire and employ a full-time Blueprint Coordinator.

For these reasons, PSSAM **supports** House Bill 1196 and requests a favorable report.

HB1196-BT_MACo_SWA.pdf

Uploaded by: Brianna January

Position: FWA



House Bill 1196

Blueprint for Maryland's Future Implementation - Funding and Independent Evaluation - Alterations

MACo Position: **SUPPORT WITH
AMENDMENTS**

To: Budget and Taxation and Education,
Energy, and the Environment Committees

Date: March 30, 2023

From: Brianna January

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS HB 1196 WITH AMENDMENTS**. The original intent of this legislation was to provide State grants to local school districts to cover the salaries of Local Blueprint Coordinators, mandatory positions required by the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. **Amendments have removed that provision and effectively changed the intent of the bill.**

MACo strongly supports HB 1196 as originally drafted, with the initial intent to provide grants to cover the salaries of the Local Blueprint Coordinators, and requests amendments to revert HB 1196 back to providing State grants to fund these positions.

All 24 local jurisdictions are deep into the implementation of the Blueprint and its many complex facets, many of which are very costly and pose immediate and long-term challenges for counties. HB 1196 as originally drafted would have been a welcome step toward addressing the many fiscal components of the Blueprint.

Instead, HB 1196 was amended to mandate minimum salaries of \$150,000 for Blueprint coordinators across all jurisdictions without any consideration of the cost or significant variance in cost of living and financial capacity of Maryland's diverse counties. This is not reasonable or practical: for example, a Coordinator in Garrett County would make the same as one in Prince George's County, despite their very different costs of living and economic needs.

Furthermore, as amended, the bill no longer provides critical State support to fully fund these positions in the form of grants – as the legislation originally intended – and instead places a new funding mandate onto counties atop their already daunting funding obligations.

The financial support of HB 1196 as originally imagined would have provided critical help for counties – relieving them of the additional burden related to hiring and staffing implementation coordinators. In doing so, the original bill would have created full parity across all 24 localities and empower each to hire the same high-caliber candidates to help guide their county through Maryland's most consequential education reform in a generation.

Counties request amendments to revert HB 1196 back to providing State grants to fund these positions. For these reasons, MACo **SUPPORTS HB 1196** and urges a **FAVORABLE** report **with those AMENDMENTS**.