



# 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

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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