

**Testimony of the  
Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners  
In Opposition to  
House Bill 1432 – Education – Prekindergarten and  
Withholding of County Board Funding (Blueprint Accountability and Flexibility  
Act of 2024)**

**March 6, 2024**

The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners has no objections to altering the pre-k timeline as it relates to the requirement that 50% of providers be private, as well as the requirements regarding staffing qualifications. However, the Board has concerns with the remaining provisions of the legislation.

The legislation vastly increases the oversight authority of the AIB, including the reasons that they can withhold funds from districts, and the amount that can be withheld; including, but not limited to investigations by the OIGE and unsatisfactory results on the MCAP. The notion of unsatisfactory is not defined and would be left to the interpretation by the AIB. Also, there is nothing in the legislation that gives credit to school districts that may be increasing the number of 3, 4 and 5 star rated schools, but may still have schools that may be deemed unsatisfactory, per an unknown definition that will be created by the AIB. For example, this legislation does not take into account that while Baltimore City has more 2-star rated schools in the State than others, we have outpaced the State in our star rating improvement on the Maryland Report Card. The school system should be given credit for such improvement and not penalized. **27% of our City Schools improved compared to 8% of schools across the state.** In addition, the proportion of 3-, 4-, and 5-star rated schools in City Schools increased 10 percentage points.

The legislation also empowers the AIB to set both fiscal and academic standards for full funding of school systems. This is not only extremely concerning but unsure how the current existing oversight of MSDE would fit into this equation.

Given the current authority of MSDE and the current authority of AIB, this legislation does not consider the working relationship that has been and is being established by MSDE and AIB, nor does it give credit to school systems that are improving. For the foregoing reasons, the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners opposes House Bill 1432 and urges and unfavorable report.

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