

**STEPHEN S. HERSHEY, JR.**  
*Legislative District 36*  
Caroline, Cecil, Kent, and  
Queen Anne's Counties

—  
MINORITY LEADER  
—

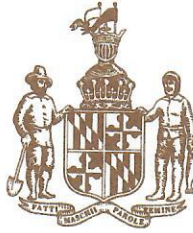
Finance Committee

Executive Nominations Committee

Rules Committee  
—

Joint Committee on Legislative Ethics

Legislative Policy Committee



James Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen Street, Room 423  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
410-841-3639 · 301-858-3639  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3639  
Fax 410-841-3762 · 301-858-3762  
Steve.Hershey@senate.state.md.us

**THE SENATE OF MARYLAND**  
**ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401**

Honorable Brian J. Feldman  
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
2 West Miller Senate Office Building  
RE: SB 1062 Education- Prekindergarten and Withholding of County Board Funding (Blueprint Accountability and Flexibility Act of 2024)

Dear Chairman and Members of the Committee,

Senate Bill 1062 delays the deadlines for Pre-K implementation by three years expansion, requiring the AIB Board to establish a plan to hold localities accountable for inappropriate spending found in fiscal audits, and requires the AIB to create a plan to withhold funding based on assessments.

Maryland is investing billions of dollars in K-12 education in the coming years. With this significant budget deficits looming and concerns about how to pay for this investment, we must ensure that these dollars are spent appropriately.

This bill grants the Accountability and Implementation Board additional powers that guarantee accountability when it comes to inappropriate spending. Under Senate Bill 1062, the AIB must establish a plan to withhold funding from a county board for inappropriate spending discovered in fiscal audits, an annual school-based expenditure report or an investigation by the Inspector General for Education.

This legislation also gives the AIB the ability to withhold funding should MCAP scores be unsatisfactory. This legislation does not require the AIB to hold back funding, it requires them to set up standards and establish a process to withhold funding while still giving the AIB the option to withhold funds using their discretion.

Senate Bill 1062 also provides flexibility-flexibility not only for local boards of education but also for the State of Maryland as we battle the budget constrains of fully funding the mulit-billion-dollar Blueprint. It also gives the local boards the additional time they need to address the various challenges they are experiencing when it comes to Pre-K expansion.

I also have an amendment in file that speaks to the expansion of Pre-K in Maryland. Under the Blueprint, there is a goal that by the 2026-27 school year, 50% of the required Pre-K slots will be provided by eligible private providers This amendment creates a study to be done by the Maryland Department of Education on the status of private preschools in Maryland and their ability to partner with LEA's to provide Pre-K services as envisioned under the Blueprint, and report to the General Assembly by December 31, 2024.

I ask for your favorable consideration of Senate Bill 1062.