

BILL: Senate Bill 1102
TITLE: Education – Blueprint for Maryland’s Future – Alterations
POSITION: SUPPORT
DATE: March 27, 2024
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means
CONTACT: John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) supports Senate Bill 1102, which would make several modifications to the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future law. MABE endorses the changes recommended by the Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB) contained in this legislation. MABE recognizes that this Committee has already passed the House version, House Bill 1426, with somewhat different amendments than those adopted in the Senate.

MABE agrees that the bill’s amendments to the Blueprint are needed to address a range of issues, especially the proposal to cover the costs of fees for certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) for more educators, and the amendment to address the need to limit the number of dual enrollment courses in which a student may enroll at any one time. Senate Bill 1102 would require that local school systems be consulted in the State’s decisions in this regard. The Senate bill includes provisions amending the teacher qualifications under Prekindergarten Expansion Grant Program; bill provisions which MABE supports. The bill would also extend deadlines for the independent evaluation of the Blueprint.

As this committee knows, 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 full commitment Maryland must make to fully and equitably fund a world class public education for all of Maryland’s nearly 900,000 students. Unfortunately, not all county governments are either mandated or volunteering to step up to generate and invest increases in local funding to fulfill the promise of a robust combination of state and local funding. To be clear, many counties and Baltimore City are investing historically high and increasing amounts of revenues to support their school system’s transformative, comprehensive, and therefore quite costly Blueprint reforms. While MABE has requested amendments on this bill, as introduced, to formally address the local funding challenges facing many of our local boards and school systems, we recognize that the legislature is focused in 2024 on making adjustments to the terms and conditions for implementation. Again, MABE supports the changes contained in this bill.

MABE believes that the success of the Blueprint will continue to deserve the legislature’s serious scrutiny and consideration of amendments to not only address implementation issues but also ensure full funding, at both the state and local levels. And MABE will continue to advocate vigorously to guarantee an equitable funding opportunity for all school systems to make the Blueprint a success story in their local schools and communities and for each and every student.

For these reasons, MABE requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 1102.