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BLUEPRINT FOR MARYLAND'S FUTURE

House Bill 1426 – Blueprint for Maryland's Future – Alterations Chair, House Ways and Means Committee

Testimony in Support

**Chair Isiah Leggett
Executive Director Rachel Hise
February 26, 2024**

The Blueprint Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB) has recommended several legislative changes to support successful implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. These recommendations were developed in response to implementation considerations that were included in the [2023 Blueprint Comprehensive Plan Update](#) and/or in collaboration with stakeholders. The specific provisions are summarized below by Blueprint pillar. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact Rachel Hise at Rachel.Hise@maryland.gov or 410-991-7525.

Thank you for your consideration of this bill and your commitment to the Blueprint for Maryland's Future and a world class education for every student.

Pillar 1 – Early Childhood Education

- Authorize/require local departments of health and social services to share the names and contact information of families with children who are income-eligible for publicly funded pre-K with local education agencies (LEAs). This will enable LEAs to follow up with those families that are eligible to enroll in free full-day pre-K to support the enrollment of eligible children in the program.
- Clarify that the changes to the high-quality pre-K staffing requirements passed in the 2023 session moving the requirements to the 2027-2028 school year also apply to the Pre-K Expansion Grant.
- Authorize State grants for Patty and Judy Centers to include one year of planning to support development of a new Patty or Judy Center.
- Add early childhood educators pursuing/achieving the high-quality pre-K standards required by the Blueprint and employed by providers who are participating in the publicly funded full-day prekindergarten program to be eligible to participate in the Nancy Grasmick Loan Assistance Repayment Program.

Pillar 2 – High-Quality and Diverse Teachers and Leaders

- Clarify that the National Board Certification (NBC) fee subsidy is available to *non-classroom* educators. This provision will restore the NBC fee subsidy program, which has been in place since 1999 under the Quality Teacher Incentive Act, to provide 100% fee payment through a combination of State and local funding for any educator who chooses to pursue NBC. The Blueprint inadvertently limited eligibility to “classroom teachers” who meet the definition of teacher for the career ladder. Prior to the Blueprint, any educator was eligible for the fee subsidy. The Blueprint seeks to encourage existing instructional specialists, administrators, assistant principals, and principals to earn NBC to advance on the career ladder.

Pillar 3 – College and Career Readiness

- Alter the due date for the CTE Committee to establish statewide goals to meet the Blueprint goal that 45% of high school students to complete the high school level of a registered apprenticeship or another industry recognized credential from 12/1/22 to 6/1/24. The CTE Committee requested an extension of this deadline from AIB, but as the deadline is statutory the date must be changed in law. The AIB has been working with the CTE Committee in its development of a CTE Framework aligned with the Blueprint that includes definitions of the high school level of a registered apprenticeship (also known as School to Apprenticeship) and industry recognized credential that will count toward the 45% goal. Once this work has been adopted, the CTE Committee will establish statewide goals to meet the 45% goal by 2031 as required by the law. AIB will work with CTE Committee in developing the statewide goals in alignment with the AIB’s Outcome Measures Workgroup.

Pillar 5 – Governance and Accountability

- Modify the Blueprint interim program evaluation due date to 12/1/26 and the AIB report/recommendations due date to 1/15/27. This is consistent with legislation considered during the 2023 session that passed both houses but failed to gain final legislative approval prior to *Sine Die (HB 1196)*. The Blueprint law requires AIB to contract with a public or private entity as soon as practicable to conduct an independent evaluation of the State’s progress in implementing the Blueprint with an interim evaluation currently due 10/1/2024 and AIB’s report/recommendations due 12/1/2024. Given the two-year delay in beginning implementation of the Blueprint, the AIB has proposed adjusting the interim evaluation timeline so that the evaluation covers the same implementation period as originally intended.