

BILL: House Bill 490
TITLE: Education - The Blueprint for Maryland's Future - Revisions
HEARING DATE: February 24, 2026
POSITION: SUPPORT
COMMITTEE: Appropriations
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The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all of the State's local boards of education, **supports House Bill 490, Education - The Blueprint for Maryland's Future - Revisions.**

House Bill 490 makes a series of revisions to the Blueprint for Maryland's Future:

- Extending the hold harmless period for calculating compensatory education funding using a methodology more favorable to school systems and more likely to accurately count students experiencing economic hardship;
- repealing the annual technology report requirement;
- repealing the termination date for allowing Concentration of Poverty Grant funds to support Fine Arts and World Languages;
- altering qualifications related to initial teacher certification and extending the date by which a teacher must attain National Board Certification before becoming a licensed principal;
- extending the timeframe during which the State Board of Education and the Accountability and Implementation Board may limit the number and types of dual enrollment courses;
- broadening the definition of wraparound services for community schools to include certain academic interventions; and
- restructuring Career and Technical Education governance by altering the purpose, composition, and duties of the CTE Committee, removing the CTE Skills Standards Advisory Committee, and requiring State agencies and workforce development programs to use a specified occupations list.

MABE supports House Bill 490 primarily because it extends a more equitable and better way to calculate compensatory education funding (that we would like to see extended further, or replaced by a long-term equitable way to count the same), allows greater flexibility in use of Concentration of Poverty Grant funds and broadens the definition of wraparound services for community schools, and further delays a requirement for a teacher to be Nationally Board Certified before in order to be a principal.

Compensatory Education Funding Calculations

The extension of the compensatory education hold harmless provision is particularly important. The Blueprint shifted the methodology for counting students experiencing economic hardship in anticipation of a new statewide poverty measure, but that work has not yet resulted in an alternative. In the interim, school systems are navigating significant uncertainty in a funding stream that is foundational to serving students with the greatest needs.

Accordingly, MABE supports extending the current, more favorable methodology and encourages consideration of extending the hold harmless further, or maintaining it until a new, transparent, and statewide poverty measure is formally adopted through a clear regulatory or statutory process. Predictability in this funding stream is critical. A stable and accurate method for identifying students in poverty is essential to target resources effectively, sustain community schools, align Title I allocations, and ensure that Blueprint investments are distributed in a manner that advances meaningful resource equity across Maryland's school systems.

Additional Blueprint Flexibility

House Bill 490 also advances an important theme of flexibility in Blueprint implementation. It provides greater discretion in the use of Concentration of Poverty Grant funds and broadens the definition of wraparound services for community schools to include certain academic interventions. MABE has long supported preserving local discretion and flexibility when implementing statewide policies and regulations. These provisions recognize that while the Blueprint establishes clear statewide goals, local school systems must retain the ability to tailor strategies to the specific academic and community needs of their students.

Delaying NBC Credential for Principals

MABE supports the decision in House Bill 490 to delay the requirement that administrators obtain National Board Certification as part of the Career Ladder framework. Assistant principals and principals are not members of teacher bargaining units under Maryland's collective bargaining structure, and incorporating them into a system designed for classroom teachers presents practical and administrative challenges. Although we strongly support high standards for instructional leadership, applying a teacher-focused credential to school leaders may inadvertently limit the leadership pipeline and create barriers that do not necessarily translate into stronger school administration. As implementation continues, we encourage careful consideration of whether this mandate is needed at all.

For these reasons, **MABE supports House Bill 490** and requests a favorable report.