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BILL: HB 490
TITLE: Education – The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future – Revisions
DATE: February 24, 2026
POSITION: Favorable with Amendments
COMMITTEE: House Appropriations Committee
House Ways and Means Committee
CONTACT: Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, PSSAM

The Public School Superintendents’ Association of Maryland (PSSAM), on behalf of all twenty-four public school superintendents, **supports** HB 490 with **one amendment**.

This legislation makes several changes to the law governing the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future, including, repealing a technology report due each year; extending a hold harmless provision for the calculation of compensatory education; repealing a termination date for the use of funds under the Concentration of Poverty Grant Program for the purpose of funding Fine Arts and World Languages and altering the qualifications for an initial teacher certificate. The bill also extends the date by which a teacher must be a National Board Certified teacher before becoming a licensed principal; extends the time during which the State Board of Education and Accountability and Implementation Board may limit the number and types of dual enrollment; alters the definition of “wraparound services” as it applies to community schools to include the offering of certain academic interventions; alters the purpose, composition, and duties of the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Committee; repeals the CTE Skills Standards Advisory Committee; requires State agencies and workforce development and education programs use a certain list of occupations; and generally relates to revisions to the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future.

PSSAM appreciates several technical and clarifying improvements in this omnibus bill; however, our testimony is limited to three provisions we strongly support.

1. Extension of the National Board Certification Requirement for Principals

We support extending the date by which a teacher must become National Board Certified before serving as a licensed principal.

However, as [we recommended in 2025](#) (#7), we firmly believe that administrators should not be included on the Career Ladder. Assistant principals and principals are not teachers under collective bargaining structures, and National Board Certification (NBC) is not an appropriate benchmark for school leadership roles.

While we would prefer complete removal of this requirement in the Blueprint, we support extending the timeline to allow the Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB) and MSDE to study the issue more carefully. We have provided a comprehensive [white paper](#) to the AIB and MSDE outlining our concerns with this Blueprint provision. We strongly support rigorous instructional leadership, however, these provisions unintentionally restrict leadership capacity and undermine the development of effective school leaders. In addition, after reviewing the Kirwan Commission materials, there is no cited research supporting this requirement. Therefore, if aspects of NBC are deemed valuable for administrators, we believe they should be incorporated into licensure standards through State Board regulation - not embedded in statute.

2. Extension of Dual Enrollment Flexibility

We appreciate the collaboration between MSDE and the AIB in adopting Joint Implementation Policy #1, which has provided essential flexibility for LEAs in implementing post-CCR dual enrollment opportunities. This Policy is only possible due to the statutory authority granted a few years ago; HB 490 proposes to extend this authority.

Last year PSSAM requested this legislative action in letters dated [July 9](#) and [August 14, 2025](#). The CCR standards adopted for the 2025-2026 school year significantly expanded eligibility for dual enrollment. While this was a positive step, it increased fiscal and operational demands on local systems. Extending the statutory authority for the AIB and MSDE to adjust as needed to meet these demands and provide stability will ensure that systems are able to:

- Budget and staff appropriately,
- Coordinate with higher education partners,
- Ensure equitable expansion, and
- Communicate clearly with students and families.

3. Extension — and Permanence — of Compensatory Education Hold Harmless

We support the AIB’s amendment extending the compensatory education hold harmless provision for two years. *However, we believe the most appropriate action is to make the hold harmless permanent until a new statewide poverty measure is adopted and seek the committees’ support of this as an amendment.*

This compensatory education hold harmless is consistent with our [November 25, 2025 letter](#) to the Governor requesting his support as school systems face enrollment fluctuations. This particular hold harmless provision is crucial for districts participating in the Community Eligibility Program (CEP). As this committee is aware, the statutory language in 5-222 changed the funding formula for compensatory education beginning in FY ‘27. However, this change was made anticipating that a new methodology would have been established by now, along with an alternative form created by MSDE. This was to be informed by a study and broad consultation with stakeholders; that work is not complete and a new methodology has yet to be created.

In the absence of a reliable statewide poverty measure, districts face significant uncertainty. CEP calculations alone do not capture a complete picture of poverty, yet compensatory education funding remains heavily dependent on those counts. A refined statewide methodology is crucial to:

- Target resources to the most vulnerable students,
- Provide confidence for expanded CEP participation,
- Improve identification of Community Schools, and
- Strengthen Title I allocation accuracy.

And most importantly, ensuring that funding is distributed in a way that achieves true equity under the Blueprint. We encourage continued attention to funding sufficiency, and the development of a comprehensive poverty-counting methodology to ensure that this investment delivers the maximum impact for Maryland’s students.

For these reasons, PSSAM respectfully **supports** HB 490 with **an amendment to make the hold harmless permanent until a new statewide poverty measure is adopted.**