



HB0490 – EDUCATION – THE BLUEPRINT FOR MARYLAND’S FUTURE – REVISIONS

February 24, 2026

APPROPRIATIONS

SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

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Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) supports with amendments **HB0490 – Education – The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future - Revisions**. This bill: (1) repeals the requirement that county boards of education submit an annual technology report; (2) extends the time period from fiscal year 2026 to fiscal year 2027 during which compensatory education enrollment may be established using the greater of the number of students eligible for free-or-reduced-price meals or certain community eligibility provisions; (3) repeals the termination date for the use of funds under the Concentration of Poverty Grant Program for the purposes of fine arts instructional programs; (4) alters the requirements for initial teacher certification to: a. include a portfolio-based assessment of a teacher preparation program that has been approved by MSDE; b. waive the requirement for the passage of an assessment of teaching ability in lieu of an apprenticeship certification for an individual who successfully completes a department-sponsored registered apprenticeship program for teaching; and c. permit teachers who graduated from an institution of higher education in another state or holds a professional license or certificate from another state to submit documentation to MSDE of two years of effective evaluations as a way of obtaining initial licensure; (5) delays from 2029 to 2034 the requirement that licensed principals be a National Board Certified teacher; (6) extends authority for MSBE and Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB), in consultation with local boards, to limit the number and types of courses that a dually enrolled student may take as part of a post CCR pathway from 2027 to 2030; (7) expands definition of “wrap around services” to include other evidence-based academic interventions, in addition to in-school and in-person tutoring during the school day; (8) alters the purpose, composition, and duties of the Career and Technical Education Committee ; and (9) repeals the CTE Skills Standards Advisory Committee.

The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future (Blueprint) is a set of policies and dedicated funding that is intended to transform Maryland’s early childhood, elementary, and secondary education system to the levels of a high-performing systems around the world. The Blueprint aims to improve the quality and equity of Maryland’s public education system, so every student receives a world class education that prepares them for success in their postsecondary endeavors, whether that be college or career employment. AACPS believes in the vision of the Blueprint to transform public education in the State and is committed to implementing the Blueprint with fidelity, while also advocating for the Blueprint reform necessary to account for lessons learned during the first four years of implementation.

AACPS has taken the lead in implementing a career ladder for educators in the State, as required by the Blueprint. We respectfully request HB0490 be amended to align career ladder requirements with established structures of school systems. Specifically, we request administrators be removed from the career ladder and school counselors be permitted to join the career ladder. Declassifying assistant principals and principals as teachers frees them from the Blueprint’s teaching time and National Board Certification requirements, which are not appropriate for their roles. Furthermore, the Blueprint has not taken steps to recognize the role

school counselors play in supporting public school systems. These individuals are not incentivized under the Blueprint to pursue continued education to improve their craft. AACPS believes the school counselors that do not currently meet the definition of teacher play an essential role in supporting our students and should be recognized and incentivized to improve their skills, thus enabling them to better support Maryland's students.

Moreover, AACPS encourages the Maryland General Assembly to address the challenges of Blueprint funding that have arisen during the first four years of implementation. One of the primary objectives of the Blueprint is to allocate funding to schools based on a weighted-student formula and specific programs, ensuring that each school and student has the resources they need. However, the enactment of the Blueprint has been an exercise in compliance-driven and rigid budgeting. In addition to the targeted per pupil foundation funding, the Blueprint provides funding to schools based on the characteristics, needs, and accomplishments of each student. This includes funding specifically intended to support prekindergarten, multilingual learners, and special education students, as well as support for college and career readiness programs. School systems are mandated to provide each school with a minimum of 75 percent of funding received in all categories, requiring school systems to account for expenses by category and by school, even when expenses are shared amongst schools. This exercise in rigid budgeting results in an increased burden for administrators of school finances rather than improved student results. AACPS does not dispute that the targeted funding to support our most vulnerable learners should be required to be spent at the school the student attends. However, we request the flexibility to report other categories, including foundation funding, in the aggregate by school rather than in each individual funding category to allow school systems additional flexibility in allocating resources while still meeting the intent of the Blueprint to deliver more resources to students who need it.

Finally, the rigid budgeting required by the Blueprint has also revealed that the targeted per pupil foundation amount is currently inadequate to meet the basic education needs of traditional students, particularly given the increasing costs associated with providing special education and transportation services. Increased foundation funding is necessary to ensure districts can provide a world-class education to all of Maryland's students.

Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** committee report on HB0490.