

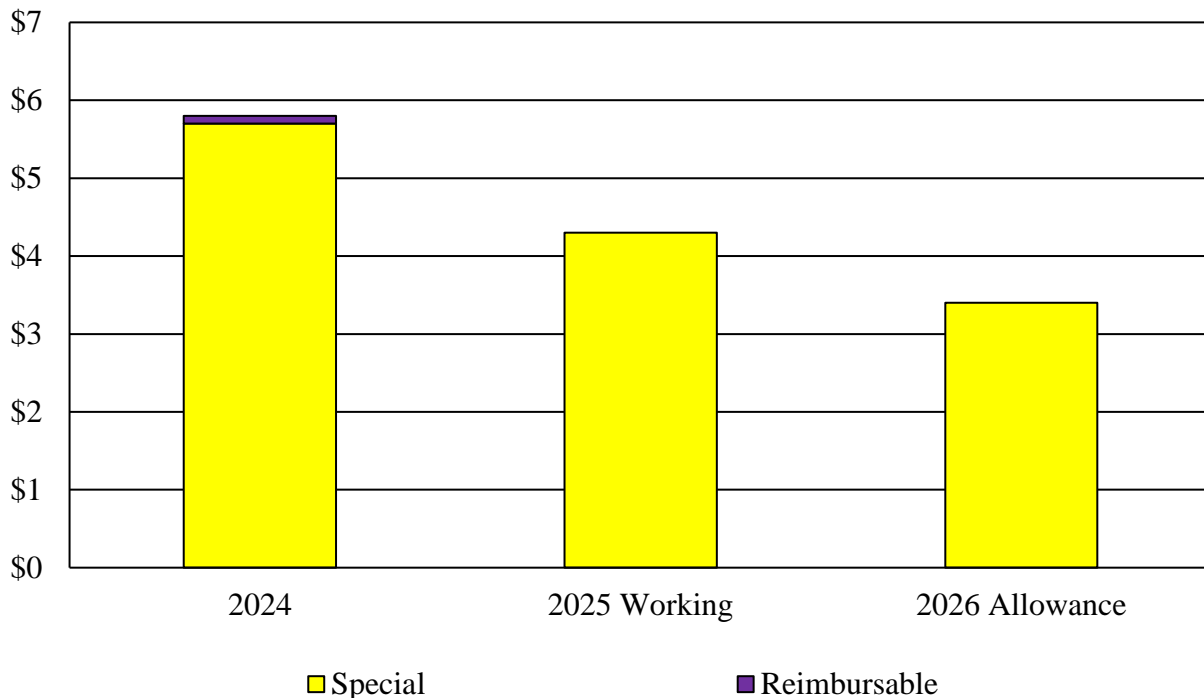
R12 Accountability and Implementation Board

Program Description

The Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB) was established as part of Chapter 36 of 2021, the Blueprint for Maryland's Future – Implementation (Blueprint). AIB is an independent agency responsible for the oversight of Blueprint implementation and evaluation of its outcomes. AIB is led by a seven-member board appointed by the Governor for staggered terms of six years.

Operating Budget Summary

Fiscal 2026 Budget Decreases \$911,403, or 21.0%, to \$3.4 Million (\$ in Millions)



Note: The fiscal 2025 impacts of statewide salary adjustments are centrally budgeted in the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), and adjustments are not reflected in this agency's budget. The fiscal 2026 impacts of the fiscal 2025 statewide salary adjustments appear in this agency's budget. The fiscal 2026 statewide salary adjustments are centrally budgeted in DBM and are not included in this agency's budget.

- AIB is funded with special funds from the Blueprint for Maryland's Future Fund, which was created as part of Chapter 36.

Fiscal 2025

Implementation of Legislative Priorities

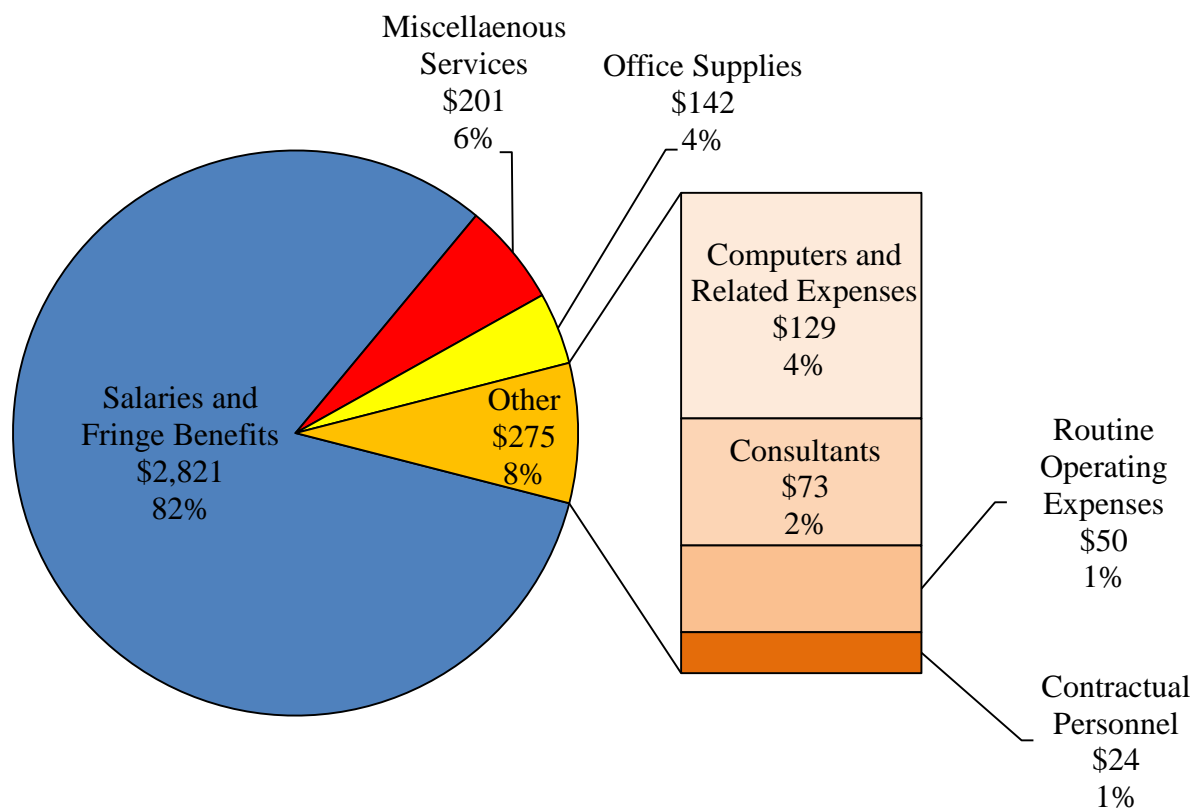
In Section 21 of the fiscal 2025 Budget Bill (Chapter 716 of 2024), the General Assembly added legislative priorities in AIB's budget totaling \$1.4 million in Blueprint special funds, allocated as follows:

- \$1.1 million for Phase II technical assistance grants to local education agencies (LEA), which have been awarded with 21 LEAs and the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Committee participating;
- \$150,000 for personnel expenditures for a new government affairs position, who started in January 2025; and
- \$140,000 for rent, furniture, and equipment costs associated with new office space, which has been delayed, but the lease is tentatively scheduled for review by the Board of Public Works at the February 26, 2025 meeting. Once the lease is approved, then AIB will procure office furniture and equipment.

Fiscal 2026 Overview of Agency Spending

Exhibit 1 displays AIB's fiscal 2026 budget. AIB receives \$3.4 million, of which \$2.8 million, or 82%, is for salaries and fringe benefits. Other expenses include \$201,451 for State services, including \$150,000 for a 50/50 cost share agreement with the Interagency Commission on School Construction (IAC) for an assistant Attorney General and \$51,141 for printing, design, and website services; \$141,500 for office supplies; \$129,054 for computers and related expenses, including \$59,404 for Department of Information Technology services; \$72,757 for consultants to assist with development of outcome measures and implementation plan review; \$49,532 for routine operating expenses, which includes communications, conferences, training, fees, and insurance; and \$23,540 for training contractual personnel.

Exhibit 1
Overview of Agency Spending
Fiscal 2026 Allowance
(\$ in Thousands)



Note: The fiscal 2026 statewide salary adjustments are centrally budgeted in the Department of Budget and Management and are not included in this agency's budget.

Source: Governor's Fiscal 2026 Budget Books

Proposed Budget Change

The fiscal 2026 allowance reflects a net decrease of \$911,403 in Blueprint special funds compared to the fiscal 2025 working appropriation. As shown in **Exhibit 2**, expenditures increase by a net \$216,000 for personnel and \$100,000 for routine operating expenses. These increases are offset by decreases of \$1.1 million for technical assistance grants, which ended in fiscal 2025, and \$127,000 for consultants who assisted with development of Blueprint outcome measures and implementation plan review.

Exhibit 2
Proposed Budget
Accountability and Implementation Board
(\$ in Thousands)

How Much It Grows:	<u>Special</u> <u>Fund</u>	<u>Reimb.</u> <u>Fund</u>	<u>Total</u>
Fiscal 2024 Actual	\$5,676	\$125	\$5,800
Fiscal 2025 Working Appropriation	4,350	0	4,350
Fiscal 2026 Allowance	<u>3,438</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>3,438</u>
Fiscal 2025-2026 Amount Change	-\$911	\$0	-\$911
Fiscal 2025-2026 Percent Change	-21.0%		-21.0%

Where It Goes:	<u>Change</u>
Personnel Expenses	
Salary increases and associated fringe benefits including fiscal 2025 cost-of-living adjustment and increments.....	\$201
Reclassifications.....	50
Turnover adjustment from 1.68% to 1.59%.....	2
Employee and retiree health insurance.....	-38
Other Changes	
Computer hardware and software, including DoIT services.....	63
Contract for an assistant attorney general shared with IAC.....	35
Cell phones.....	4
Fees and insurance	2
Contractual employee training and staff development.....	-4
Consultants for Blueprint for Maryland's Future outcome measures and review of implementation plans.....	-127
Local education agency technical assistance grants.....	-1,100
Total	-\$911

DoIT: Department of Information Technology
IAC: Interagency Commission on School Construction

Note: Numbers may not sum to total due to rounding. The fiscal 2025 impacts of statewide salary adjustments are centrally budgeted in the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), and adjustments are not reflected in this agency's budget. The fiscal 2026 impacts of the fiscal 2025 statewide salary adjustments appear in this agency's budget. The fiscal 2026 statewide salary adjustments are centrally budgeted in DBM and are not included in this agency's budget.

Personnel Data

	<u>FY 24</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>FY 25</u> <u>Working</u>	<u>FY 26</u> <u>Allowance</u>	<u>FY 25-26</u> <u>Change</u>
Regular Positions	15.00	16.00	16.00	0.00
Contractual FTEs	<u>0.75</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
Total Personnel	15.75	16.00	16.00	0.00

Vacancy Data: Regular Positions

Turnover and Necessary Vacancies, Excluding New Positions	0.25	1.59%
Positions and Percentage Vacant as of 12/31/24	6.00	37.50%
Vacancies Above Turnover	5.75	

- The fiscal 2026 proposed budget provides AIB with 16 regular positions. As of January 2025, AIB has filled 10 regular positions: an executive director; a deputy director of operations; an outreach and communications director; an implementation plan director; a finance director; a policy director; a data analyst; 2 policy analysts; and an executive assistant. The agency also has an assistant Attorney General, which is shared with IAC but is not included in AIB's personnel count because it is budgeted in IAC through a memorandum of understanding (MOU). Not reflected in this count is AIB's new governmental relations director who started on January 22, 2025.
- The agency's fiscal 2026 budgeted turnover rate is 1.59%. Therefore, as of December 31, 2024, AIB reported 5.75 more vacancies than would be needed to meet the fiscal 2026 budgeted turnover. This budgeted turnover rate allows the agency to fill 5 positions in fiscal 2026 and provides savings if that number of vacant positions is not filled. In fiscal 2025, AIB plans to hire 5 additional staff: a director of accountability; 3 policy analysts; and an administrator/fiscal officer. The agency expects to have a full complement of personnel headed into fiscal 2026.
- AIB notes that in the near future, the agency may need to reclassify positions and hire additional fiscal or policy analysts to replace experts in Blueprint focus areas procured through technical assistance grants in the operating budget.

AIB should comment on the reasons for the high vacancy rate of 37.5% (6 positions) as of December 31, 2024. The agency should also comment on reasons for hiring delays, particularly hiring an accountability director.

Key Observations

1. AIB Approval of LEA Implementation Plans Progressing; Agency Reporting Delayed

Chapter 36 as amended requires AIB to take certain actions and meet certain requirements in regard to Blueprint implementation. AIB’s responsibilities include submission of the agency’s annual report, revision to the comprehensive implementation plan, and review of LEA and State agency implementation plans. Language in the fiscal 2025 Budget Bill required AIB to submit a report on delayed activities supporting Blueprint. In September 2024, AIB provided a status update on Blueprint implementation in the following areas: LEA and State agency comprehensive implementation plans; Managing for Results (MFR) measures; LEA technical assistance grants; revision of teacher preparation requirements; targeted training on Blueprint; and the independent evaluation of Blueprint implementation. AIB also provided the Department of Legislative Services (DLS) with updated information on agency actions and the status of required reports in January 2025. **Exhibit 3** shows the current status of AIB’s required reports and actions for Blueprint implementation in calendar 2024 and 2025.

Exhibit 3 AIB Reports and Actions Calendar 2024-2025

<u>Requirement</u>	<u>Due Date</u>	<u>Actions</u>
Calendar 2024		
Local Education Agency (LEA) Comprehensive Implementation Plans	March 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual update of LEA implementation plans. • As of January 2025, 23 of 24 LEA plans have been fully approved and funds released. • LEAs not meeting submission requirements by June 1, 2025, are subject to withholding of 25% of the increase major education aid over the amount provided in the prior fiscal year.

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<u>Requirement</u>	<u>Due Date</u>	<u>Actions</u>
LEA Additional Submissions	July 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10% Attestations for Salary Increases: All 24 LEAs demonstrated a 10% teacher salary increase. • Career Ladder Plan: All 24 LEAs submitted their initial plan and first maintenance of certification. • Career Counseling Reports: All 24 LEAs submitted their first-year implementation reports on mandated career counseling programs for middle and high school students and the accompanying fiscal report.
Minimum School Funding	July 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starting on July 1, all 24 LEAs are required to submit financial data on minimum funding requirements to MSDE and AIB and on the fifteenth of every month thereafter.
AIB Comprehensive Implementation Plan	August 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual changes to the agency comprehensive implementation plan.
State Agency Comprehensive Implementation Plans	August 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Consortium on Coordinated Community Supports (CCCS), Career and Technical Education Committee, and Maryland Higher Education Commission annual implementation plan update. • CCCS was approved on December 19, 2024. • Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB) is currently reviewing other plans (delayed).

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<u>Requirement</u>	<u>Due Date</u>	<u>Actions</u>
Juvenile Services Education Program (JSEP) Comprehensive Implementation Plan	October 31	• Annual update to JSEP comprehensive implementation plan; deadline extended only for calendar 2024.
AIB Annual Report	November 1	• Annual report from agency on Blueprint progress (delayed).

Calendar 2025

LEA Comprehensive Implementation Plans	March 15	• Annual update of LEA comprehensive implementation plans.
State Agency Comprehensive Implementation Plans	June 15	• Annual update of comprehensive implementation plans from State agencies.
AIB Comprehensive Implementation Plans	August 1	• Annual changes to the agency comprehensive implementation plans.
AIB Annual Report	November 1	• Annual report from agency on Blueprint progress.

Note: Does not include State or LEA reports or actions, as required in Chapter 36 of 2021 as amended, that are not subject to AIB participation or review.

Source: Accountability and Implementation Board; Department of Legislative Services

Approval of 2024 LEA Implementation Plans and Minimum School Funding

Under Chapter 36 as amended, LEAs must ensure “minimum school funding,” which means that at least 75% of the per pupil amount allocated to certain programs is distributed to schools where these students are enrolled. Beginning on July 1, 2024, and each July 1 thereafter, LEAs must report to AIB and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) on compliance with minimum school funding requirements at the LEA and individual school level. The new Blueprint financial reporting system authorized in this statute is designed to assist LEAs in reporting this information. In April 2024, LEAs had access to a test version of the new system, and AIB anticipates the first full year of LEA data will be available after fiscal 2025 closeout.

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If LEAs do not ensure minimum school funding, AIB has the authority to withhold up to 25% of the increase in the State share of major education aid over the amount provided in the prior fiscal year pending the board's approval of LEA implementation plans. From fiscal 2023 to 2025, AIB is authorized to release funds after an LEA has developed an initial implementation plan and has received AIB approval. Beginning in fiscal 2026, AIB is authorized to release or withhold funds based on whether an LEA has made sufficient progress on an implementation plan or taken appropriate steps to improve student performance.

In May 2024, AIB and MSDE issued a joint policy statement regarding the minimum school funding provision and its implementation. LEAs were urged to meet the requirement no later than the 2026-2027 school year, consistent with the following timeline:

- ***2024-2025 School Year (Fiscal 2025):*** LEAs are expected to make a good faith effort to meet the requirement;
- ***2025-2026 School Year (Fiscal 2026):*** LEAs that are not in compliance with the requirement shall reduce by at least half the percentage of students within a district who attend a school that has not met the minimum school funding level of per pupil formula funding; and
- ***2026-2027 School Year (Fiscal 2027):*** LEAs shall demonstrate that the minimum school funding level of per pupil formula funding is following all students to their school.

As of January 2025, 23 of 24 LEA plans have met the criteria for fiscal 2025, and funds have been released. One LEA, Montgomery County, is conditional pending finalization of its agreement on teacher certification funding. All approvals must be complete by June 1, 2025, to avoid withholding of funds.

Approval of 2024 State Agency Comprehensive Implementation Plans

AIB is also responsible for review of State agency comprehensive implementation plans. Initial State plans were reviewed and approved in calendar 2023, with an annual update due in June 2024. As of January 2025, all reports have been submitted, AIB has fully approved the 2024 Consortium for Coordinated Community Supports plan, and AIB staff continue to review and work with the other State agencies to revise their plans.

Revision of Teacher Preparation Requirements and New Workgroup

Chapter 36 as amended requires AIB to work with the State Board of Education (SBOE) and the Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board (PSTEB) to adopt regulations related to educator preparation and licensure. In November and December 2023, PSTEB and SBOE adopted new regulations aligned with Blueprint that became effective on April 1, 2024. The amended regulations require bachelor's degree programs and alternative programs to provide a

full-year practicum in partner schools beginning July 1, 2025, and provide instruction in specific areas outlined in statute.

In calendar 2022 and 2024, AIB and MSDE convened workgroups to propose changes to regulations, but no action was taken. More recently, Chapters 187 and 188 of 2024 updated requirements for initial teacher certification in alignment with Blueprint. With these updates, AIB decided to reconvene the teacher preparation workgroup, which met for the first time in November 2024 and will continue to meet in calendar 2025. Issues covered at the initial workgroup meeting included conditional teachers, new teacher induction and mentoring, diversity in teacher candidates, professional learning and instructional support, educator recruitment, and innovative approaches and alternative pathways to licensure.

Targeted Training on Blueprint

Chapter 36 as amended requires MSDE and AIB to establish a cohort-based school leadership training program for all school, LEA, local and State board, and agency personnel in leadership positions on the strategic principles underlying Blueprint. Although this requirement was initially authorized in calendar 2021, and \$2.0 million in Blueprint special funds were allocated for this purpose in MSDE’s budget in fiscal 2024, as of March 2024, it had not been implemented. Chapter 127 of 2024 revised requirements for Blueprint training, and in order to implement these changes, MSDE offered a \$2.0 million competitive grant for a School Leadership Training Program to external vendors. In July 2024, this grant was awarded to the K-12 Coalition, which AIB reports is a vendor with national experience in providing education leadership training programs. In summer and fall 2024, AIB and MSDE held planning meetings with the vendor to refine the training model, clarify expectations and approaches, and determine cohorts and training groupings. Training sessions started in December 2024 and are scheduled through summer 2025. MSDE also received \$3.2 million in fiscal 2025 leadership training that has not been expended.

In the 2025 session, HB 504/SB 439 of 2025 (the Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act) suggests changes to the statute for Blueprint training for leaders. The bill proposes to split leadership training into two programs: (1) a school system leadership program with training for the State and LEA superintendents, AIB, and school board members; and (2) the Maryland School Leadership Academy, which is designated for school principals and assistant principals, county board members, and any other school leaders that MSDE or county boards determine could benefit from the academy. In the fiscal 2026 budget as introduced, the Maryland School Leadership Academy receives \$6.3 million provided through MSDE Headquarters.

Independent Evaluation of Blueprint Implementation

Chapter 36 as amended requires AIB to contract for an interim independent evaluation of the State’s progress in implementing and meeting expected outcomes of Blueprint programs. Through the fiscal 2025 budget, AIB received a deficiency appropriation of \$1.0 million in Blueprint special funds for this contract in fiscal 2024. However, the Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2024 changed the due date for submission of the independent evaluation to the

Governor and General Assembly to January 15, 2027. In January 2025, AIB awarded the evaluation contract to the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago.

LEA Technical Assistance Grants

Chapter 36 as amended requires the Governor to allocate \$3.0 million each year from fiscal 2022 through 2024 for AIB to distribute technical assistance grants to LEAs and the CTE Committee. In fiscal 2022, AIB was not established as an agency, and AIB canceled Blueprint special funds allocated for that purpose. AIB received funds in the fiscal 2023, 2024, and 2025 budgets totaling \$6.0 million, which the agency has either spent or obligated on grants through fiscal 2025. Grants were awarded in two phases: Phase I grants launched in summer 2023 that total \$2.3 million; and Phase II grants launched in spring 2024 that total \$3.6 million.

For Phase I grants, AIB awarded the total amount of \$2.3 million through grant awards of \$100,000 each to 22 LEAs and the CTE Committee. As part of the grant program requirements, grantees selected a strategic facilitator and created a project plan focused on high-priority Blueprint goals, such as career ladder implementation, prekindergarten expansion, and development of college and career ready (CCR) pathways. As of December 2024, Phase I grantees had no cost extensions to expend funds through the end of calendar 2024, although AIB reports some grantees may need an additional extension until May 2025 to complete work.

For Phase II grants, grant applications were due May 2024. AIB awarded a total of 21 grants to LEAs and the CTE Committee, totaling \$1.6 million. These grants are intended to provide technical assistance to LEAs and the CTE Committee to develop plans in four targeted areas: (1) resource allocation and strategic budgeting; (2) career ladder; (3) CCR pathways; and (4) prekindergarten expansion. Grantees could choose to continue their Phase I grant work with strategic facilitators or develop plans in targeted areas. AIB reports that Phase II grants have not been allocated to LEAs that have not spent all Phase I funds.

Additional LEA Deliverables

Career Ladder

Chapter 36 as amended requires LEAs to implement a new career ladder before July 1, 2024, and AIB is responsible for the review of LEA career ladder implementation plans. The Blueprint career ladder has four levels:

- Level 1 is a State-certified teacher;
- Level 2 is a teacher pursuing a master's degree, 30 credits of a program of study approved by the State board or National Board Certification (NBC); an assistant principal; or if there is no assessment comparable to NBC for the teacher's subject area, a teacher with a master's degree in the teacher's subject area;

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- Level 3 is an NBC teacher; and
- Level 4 is either a teacher on the leadership track to become a lead teacher, distinguished teacher, or professor distinguished teacher or on the leadership track to become a licensed principal or a distinguished principal.

As of January 2025, all LEAs have submitted their initial career ladder plans and received a first maintenance of certification from AIB. Four LEAs are piloting the Level 4 career ladder, and AIB is working with MSDE on draft criteria for 2025 submissions and getting feedback from union representatives and teachers.

Career Counseling

Chapter 36 provides \$62 of the per pupil State Share of the Foundation formula for local workforce development boards to support the Career Counseling Program for Middle and High School students. This funding is designed to encourage LEAs to develop introductory CTE courses with the goal of making CTE a part of all elementary, middle school, and high school curricula. As part of this requirement, LEAs must enter into an MOU with a community college and local workforce development board to create a new Blueprint career counseling program. LEAs are also required to submit fiscal reports in calendar 2024, 2025, and 2026 on the use of funds for this provision, and AIB asked LEAs to submit implementation plans. As of January 2025, 18 LEAs have entered into MOUs; 6 LEAs have multi-year MOUs that did not require an update; and all LEAs submitted Year 1 implementation plans and fiscal reports.

AIB should comment on (1) reasons for delays in the submission of the agency’s annual report and when the annual update to AIB’s comprehensive implementation plan will be posted to the agency website; (2) status of the teacher preparation workgroup, LEA technical assistance grants, and career counseling MOUs; (3) status of State agency implementation plans; and (4) anticipated changes to Blueprint leader training and/or funding if HB 504/SB 429 is enacted.

2. AIB and SBOE Adopt First Round of Blueprint Metrics; Final Measures Remain Incomplete

Exhibit 4 shows AIB and MSDE’s progress in establishing Blueprint outcome measures, including baseline and target results. Part of the work of Blueprint implementation is for AIB and MSDE to develop outcome measures, which are metrics that provide information on whether a specific goal has been achieved, such as the percentage of third grade students scoring proficient on the English/language arts Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program assessment. To accomplish this task, AIB convened an outcome measures workgroup, which met from February 2022 to May 2024. In July 2024, SBOE adopted the first round of metrics, which include literacy and mathematics goals for grades 3 through 8 and workforce diversity and retention.

Measures still in progress include early childhood education, CCR, career ladder, and student support personnel.

Exhibit 4
Blueprint Outcome Measures
Calendar 2024

<u>Area</u>	<u>Measures</u>	<u>Baseline and Proposed Targets</u>
Measures Adopted with Targets in 2025-2026 School Year		
Literacy – Grade 3	Percentage of grade 3 students scoring at or above proficient on the grade 3 English/language arts (ELA) assessment.	Baseline: 46% Target: 56%
Literacy – Grade 3 through 8	Percentage of grade 3 through 8 students scoring at or above proficient on the Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP) ELA assessment.	Baseline: 47% Target: 57%
Mathematics – Grade 5	Percentage of grade 5 students scoring at or above proficient on the grade 5 MCAP mathematics assessment.	Baseline: 29% Target: 39%
Mathematics – Grade 3 through 8	Percentage of grade 3 through 8 students scoring at or above proficient on the MCAP Mathematics assessment.	Baseline: 27% Target: 37%
Chronic Absenteeism	Rate of chronic absenteeism in all schools	Baseline 30% Target: 15%
Measures Adopted with Targets in 2026-2027 School Year		
Workforce Diversity – Teachers of Color	Percentage of new teachers of color.	Baseline: 46% Target: 55%
	Percentage of teachers of color retained over a three-year period.	Baseline: 70% Target: 75%

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<u>Area</u>	<u>Measures</u>	<u>Baseline and Proposed Targets</u>
Workforce Retention	Percentage of teachers retained over a three-year period.	Baseline: 74% Target: 79%
	Percentage of new teachers of color retained over a three-year period.	Baseline: 64% Target: 69%
Measures in Progress		
Early Childhood Education	Percentage of kindergarten students demonstrating readiness on a Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA).	Wait to set target until new KRA is adopted.
College and Career Readiness	Percentage of Maryland students who met the college and career ready (CCR) standard by the end of grade 10.	Wait to set targets; need baseline data.
	Percentage of Maryland students who met the CCR standard before high school graduation.	
	Percentage of high school students who completed a post-CCR pathway.	
Career Ladder	Percentage of teachers participating at each level on the career ladder.	Wait to set target; need baseline data.
Student Support Personnel	Student-counselor ratio in schools.	Student-counselor ratio of 290 to 1 (current ratio is 307 to 1).
	Percentage of schools with one or more school psychologists or school social workers.	Wait to set target; need baseline data.

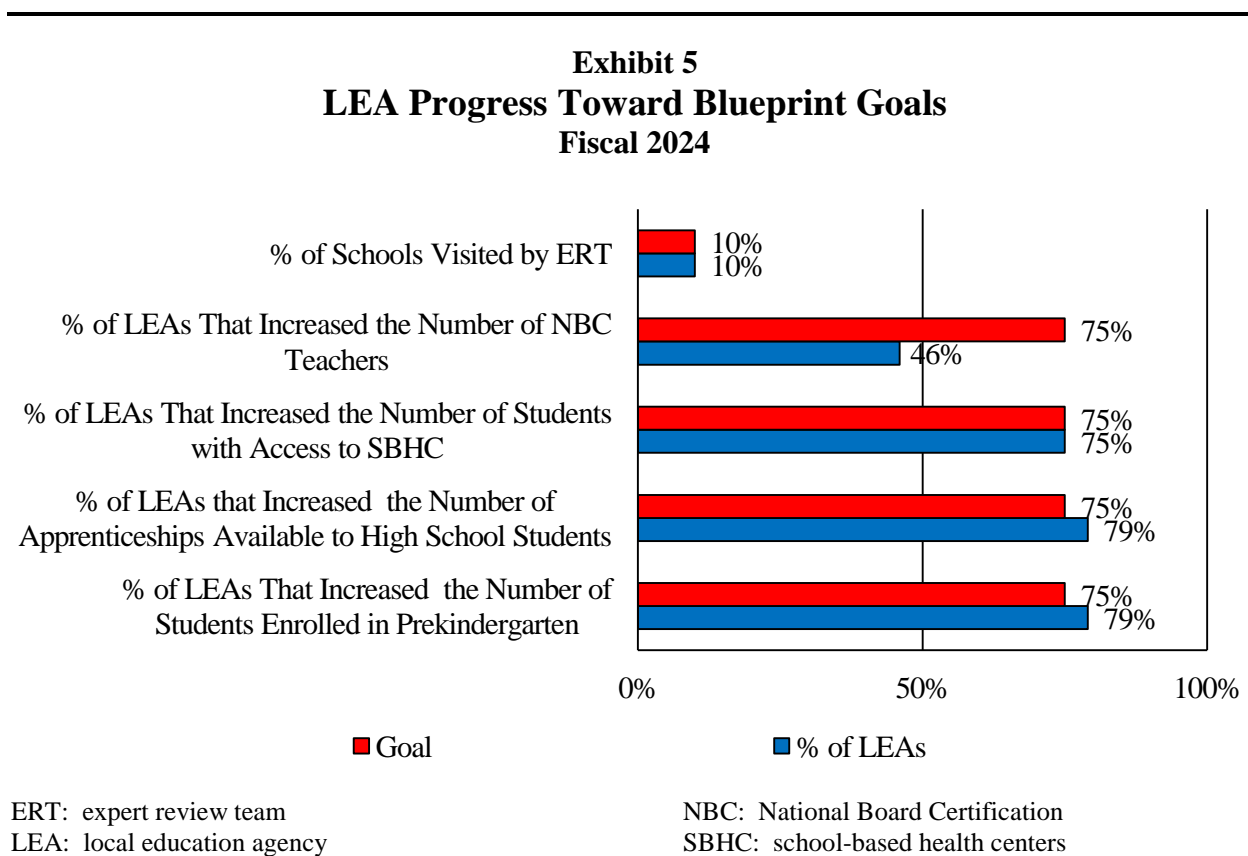
Source: Accountability and Implementation Board; Maryland State Department of Education

AIB should comment on the status of each outcome measure in progress and a timetable for finalizing all baseline data and goals.

DLS recommends adopting committee narrative requesting that AIB submit a report summarizing the agency’s progress on all deliverables and actions associated with the agency operations and oversight of Blueprint implementation.

3. AIB Reports Initial Data on Managing for Results Measures

Exhibit 5 shows AIB’s performance measure for MFR Goal 1, which is to monitor LEA progress toward Blueprint goals. In fiscal 2024, which is the first year of data, 79% of LEAs increased the number of students enrolled in prekindergarten and apprenticeships available to high school students, 75% of LEAs increased the number of students with access to school-based health centers (SBHC), 46% of LEAs increased the number of NBC teachers, and 10% of schools were visited by expert review teams (ERT). Fiscal 2024 goals for all measures were 75%, except for the percentage of schools visited by ERTs, which was 10% and is based on the number of site visits in a year that ERTs are able to accomplish with current resources. Of the five reported measures, four met or surpassed the target in fiscal 2024.

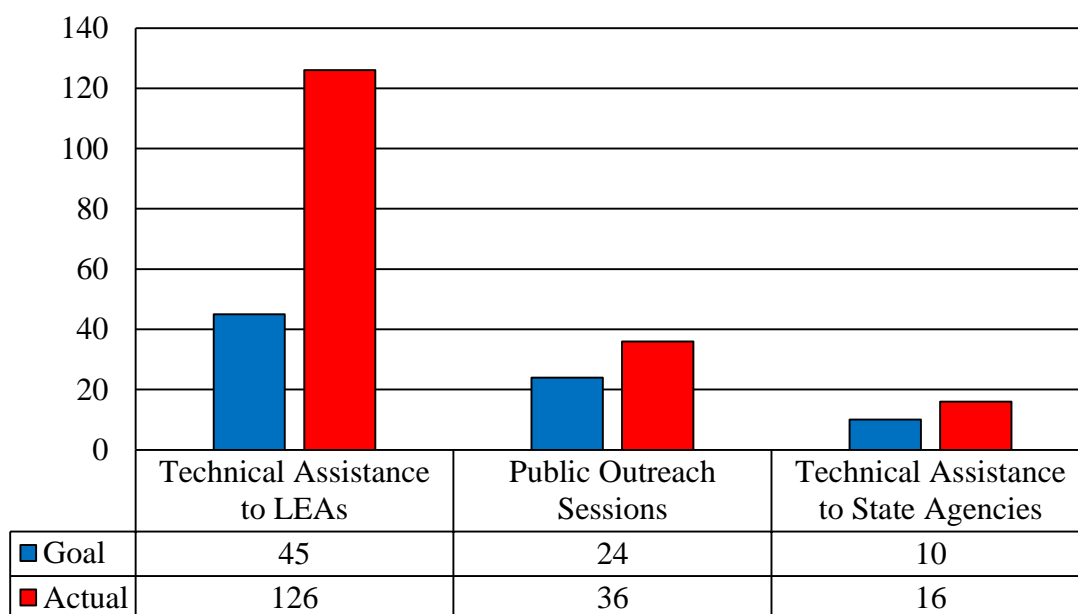


Source: Department of Budget and Management; Accountability and Implementation Board

Exhibit 6 shows AIB’s performance measures for Goal 2, which is timely and transparent support and information on Blueprint implementation progress. In fiscal 2024, AIB provided:

- 126 LEA technical assistance sessions, exceeding the agency goal of 45 sessions by 81, or 180%;
- 36 public outreach sessions, which exceeded the goal of 24 sessions by 12, or 50%; and
- 10 State agency and government technical assistance sessions, which exceeded the goal of 16 sessions by 6, or 60%.

Exhibit 6
AIB Blueprint Implementation Support
Fiscal 2024



AIB: Accountability and Implementation Board
LEA: local education agency

Source: Department of Budget and Management; Accountability and Implementation Board

AIB should discuss the reasons for setting LEA goals at 75%, rather than 100%, for measures of LEAs increasing the numbers of NBC teachers, students enrolled in prekindergarten and apprenticeships, and students with access to SBHCs.

Operating Budget Recommended Actions

1. Adopt the following narrative:

Status Report on Blueprint Implementation: The committees request that the Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB) submit a report by September 1, 2025, on agency actions to implement Blueprint for Maryland’s Future (Blueprint). This report shall include a timeline and detailed information on the progress in completing and/or implementing the following programs, reports, and measures:

- calendar 2025 and 2026 local education agency (LEA) Blueprint implementation plans and current status relative to minimum school funding requirements;
- calendar 2024 and 2025 State agency Blueprint implementation plans;
- collaboration with the Maryland State Department of Education, the State Board of Education, the Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board, and the teacher preparation workgroup to revise teacher preparation program requirements;
- targeted training on Blueprint and any changes to training and/or funding for 2025-2026 school year;
- progress on the independent evaluation of Blueprint implementation and outcomes;
- LEA and Career and Technology Education Committee technical assistance Phase I and II grants, including use of funds; roles and responsibilities of strategic facilitators; categorized expenditures by LEA; and AIB collaboration, training, and accountability measures for grantees;
- LEA career ladder implementation plans;
- LEA career counseling programs for middle and high school students and accompanying fiscal reports;
- monthly Blueprint financial reporting on minimum funding requirements; and
- progress to determine Blueprint final outcome measures, baseline data, and targets for early childhood education; college and career readiness; career ladder; student support personnel; or any other outcome measures under development.

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Information Request	Author	Due Date
Status report on Blueprint implementation	AIB	September 1, 2025

Appendix 1

Description of Accountability and Implementation Board

Purpose and Charge

The rationale for AIB was founded on lessons learned from the implementation of recommendations of the Commission on Education, Finance, Equity, and Excellence (Thornton Commission, calendar 1999 to 2001), which asked Maryland taxpayers to increase spending on education to improve student performance outcomes. In the following 15 years, the cost of education in Maryland increased substantially but without significant increases in student performance. One of the goals of the subsequent Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education (Kirwan Commission, calendar 2016 to 2019) was to examine this result and find a solution that increased governance and accountability for the next revision of Maryland's education funding model and policies.

After studying other top-performing countries, the Kirwan Commission realized that Maryland needed a governmental mechanism that coordinated functions across departments responsible for educational excellence. This charge fell under the Kirwan Commission's Policy Area 5, Governance and Accountability, which was included as a goal to ensure gaps that developed between policy and practice after the Thornton Commission did not materialize after Kirwan Commission recommendations were implemented. The Kirwan Commission recommended an independent board or unit of State government that worked across agencies responsible for the education of Maryland students and had the authority to ensure that the commission's recommendations were successfully implemented and produced the desired results. In keeping with this charge, Chapter 36 established AIB to:

- develop a comprehensive implementation plan, including intended outcomes, for Blueprint that all units of State and local government will follow;
- hold State and local governments accountable for this plan;
- monitor the plan and ensure that it is implemented; and
- evaluate outcomes achieved during implementation.

As part of this charge, AIB is intended to provide equal access to high-quality education with equitable outcomes for each student regardless of the student's race, ethnicity, gender, address, disability status, socioeconomic status, or the language spoken in the student's home.

Roles and Responsibilities

As an independent unit of State government, AIB's role is to oversee and monitor State educational agencies and LEAs in implementing Blueprint policies. In this role, AIB has plenary authority, which means that in the event of a conflict between AIB and other agencies, AIB's decision or policy is considered final. AIB has the authority to adopt regulations to carry out provisions of the law; adopt bylaws for the conduct of its business; sue or be sued; accept loans, grants, or assistance of any kind; enter into contracts as necessary, including with independent experts to fulfill its duties; subpoena data needed to complete its functions and duties; and appoint an executive director and hire staff to carry out its powers and duties. State agencies are required to collaborate or consult with AIB on Blueprint implementation, and AIB can withhold State funds from LEAs and State agencies if a plan is not being implemented as requested. AIB can also develop appeals processes, monitor LEA expenditures to ensure that minimum school funding requirements are being met, and offer grants for innovative programs that further AIB's purpose or goals.

AIB is not intended to usurp or abrogate the operational authority of agencies that are also involved in the delivery of public education in the State or the lawful collective bargaining process. It is subject to the Public Information Act, the Open Meetings Act, and the Maryland Public Ethics Law, and members will be required to file an annual financial disclosure form with the State Ethics Commission. Open meetings of the AIB must be made available to the public through live video streaming and archived on the Internet for at least five years.

Membership

Chapter 36 as amended details the criteria for nomination and membership of AIB. The Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Delegates jointly appoint the AIB chair, and the seven members serve six-year terms. Member terms are staggered; on the current board, two members have terms that expire on July 1, 2025; two members have terms that expire on July 1, 2026; and three members have terms that expire on July 1, 2030.

Appendix 2

2024 Joint Chairmen’s Report Responses from Agency

The 2024 *Joint Chairmen’s Report* (JCR) requested that AIB prepare one report. Electronic copies of the full JCR response can be found on the DLS Library website.

- ***Report on Delayed Activities Supporting Blueprint Implementation:*** Language in the fiscal 2025 Budget Bill restricted \$150,000 in Blueprint special funds until AIB submitted a report with a timeline and planned agency action to complete actions required by Blueprint, including submission of reports, grant administration, required training, and other administrative tasks. AIB reported that the agency was updating MFR outcome measures and data prior to the fiscal 2026 submission, reviewing State agency Blueprint plans, revising teacher preparation requirement with SBOE and PSTEB, collaborating with MSDE to provide targeted training on Blueprint, securing a vendor for the independent evaluation, and facilitating LEA and CTE Committee technical assistance grants. On November 4, 2024, the restricted special funds were released. Further discussion of this information can be found in Key Observation 1.

Appendix 3
Object/Fund Difference Report
Accountability and Implementation Board

<u>Object/Fund</u>	<u>FY 24 Actual</u>	<u>FY 25 Working Appropriation</u>	<u>FY 26 Allowance</u>	<u>FY 25 - FY 26 Amount Change</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>
Positions					
01 Regular	15.00	16.00	16.00	0.00	0%
02 Contractual	0.75	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.0%
Total Positions	15.75	16.00	16.00	0.00	0%
Objects					
01 Salaries and Wages	\$ 1,470,388	\$ 2,604,721	\$ 2,820,524	\$ 215,803	8.3%
02 Technical and Special Fees	55,816	27,500	23,540	-3,960	-14.4%
03 Communication	16,011	16,500	20,000	3,500	21.2%
04 Travel	5,073	22,500	22,500	0	0%
08 Contractual Services	1,770,466	437,040	398,596	-38,444	-8.8%
09 Supplies and Materials	1,969	141,500	141,500	0	0%
10 Equipment – Replacement	6,569	0	10,000	10,000	N/A
12 Grants, Subsidies, and Contributions	2,473,818	1,100,000	0	-1,100,000	-100.0%
13 Fixed Charges	0	0	1,698	1,698	N/A
Total Objects	\$ 5,800,110	\$ 4,349,761	\$ 3,438,358	-\$ 911,403	-21.0%
Funds					
03 Special Fund	\$ 5,675,610	\$ 4,349,761	\$ 3,438,358	-\$ 911,403	-21.0%
09 Reimbursable Fund	124,500	0	0	0	0.0%
Total Funds	\$ 5,800,110	\$ 4,349,761	\$ 3,438,358	-\$ 911,403	-21.0%

Note: The fiscal 2026 allowance does not include statewide salary adjustments budgeted within the Department of Budget and Management.