



Maryland Youth Advisory Council
c/o Governor's Office for Children
100 Community Place,
Crownsville, MD 21032

Noureen Badwi, *Chair*
Carmelli Leal, *Vice-Chair*
Aidan Douglas, *Secretary*
Christina Drushel Williams, *Advisor*

February 17, 2020

The Honorable Maggie McIntosh
Appropriations Committee
Room 121, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Guy Guzzone
Budget and Taxation Committee
3 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Anne R. Kaiser
Ways and Means Committee
Room 13, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky
Education, Health, and Environmental
Affairs Committee
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: HB 1300/SB 1000
Position: Support with Amendments

Dear Chairwoman McIntosh, Chairwoman Kaiser, Chairman Guzzone, and Chairman Pinsky

On behalf of the Maryland Youth Advisory Council, I am pleased to have the opportunity to offer support with amendments regarding HB 1300/SB 1000 Blueprint for Maryland's Future – Implementation bill.

The Maryland Youth Advisory Council (the Council), established through State Legislature (Chapter 559, Acts of 2008, Chapter 69, Acts of 2009, and Chapter 620, Acts of 2016), prides itself on being a coalition of diverse young advocates and leaders from across the State, working to serve as a voice for youth in the State of Maryland. As leaders in our communities, and as appointees of the Governor, President of the Senate, Speaker of the House, Maryland Association of Student Councils, Maryland Higher Education Commission, and the University System of Maryland, we take every opportunity to address relevant issues by influencing legislation, spreading public awareness, and serving as a liaison between youth and policymakers regarding issues impacting youth.

HB 1300/SB 1000 is the education bill of our generation and will have a lasting impact on generations of Maryland students to come. The bill supports a much needed increase funding for schools systems to meet the growing needs of their student body and the administrators, educators, and other supportive staff in the schools' community. By increasing teacher pay and educational supports for teachers, you are ensuring that all of Maryland's student are receiving a high-quality education. By publically funding full-day prekindergarten, you are ensuring that all of Maryland's children are beginning their educational experience on solid footing and entering kindergarten ready to learn. These changes, and the many others included in the implementation of the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education, are necessary to provide a world-class education for all of the Maryland's students.

The Council is fully supportive of the recommendations of the Commission and urge the passage of this bill. However, the Council would like to offer the following amendments for consideration.

1. Youth Representation and Youth Voice – The Council requests that a student member be added to the Implementation Board membership. In addition to the student member, the Council urges the Implementation Board to continually seek youth voice and feedback during the implementation process.

Our council is a testament to the power, importance, and benefits of the youth voice, and we strongly believe that when the youth voice is included with fidelity, there yields great benefits. Moreover, when adults perceive young people as valuable resources that can inform many of the decisions that impact them, they also see an improvement in the quality of the decisions that are made (Zeldin, 2004; Zeldin, McDaniel, Topitzes, & Calvert, 2000).

We find often in our advocacy for youth leadership, that by serving as a bridge between youth and policymakers. We provide valuable input, insights, and information regarding the lives of young people and identify where there may be unmet needs in young people's lives, and develop solutions to address those needs. Our lived experiences provide a perspective that lends itself to effective youth policy, particularly when the lives of youth are ever-changing.

2. Role and Authority of the Implementation Board – The Council requests more detail regarding the Implementation Board's role and the cooperation with the current State Board of Education. The Council notes much overlap in both the membership and duties of each board. The Council urges the exploration of using the existing State Board structure to oversee the implementation of the bill. If a separate board is required, the Council asks that the same opportunities for public comment and review are required of the Implementation Board, as is existing practice for the State Board.

For these reasons, the Council supports **HB 1300/SB 1000** and respectfully requests a favorable report from the committees.

Sincerely,



Noureen Badwi, Chair
Maryland Youth Advisory Council