

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 1300 and Senate Bill 1000
The Blueprint for Maryland's Future**

**Senate Budget and Tax, Education and Health and Environmental Affairs Committees
House Appropriations and Ways and Means Committees
February 17, 2020**

As Education Committee co-chairs of the (NAACP) National Association for the Advancement of Colored People - Maryland State Conference (MSC), we strongly support House Bill 1300/Senate Bill 1000, the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, proposing to transform Maryland's early childhood, primary, and secondary education system to the levels of high-performing systems around the world.

The NAACP works to ensure that all disadvantaged students and students of color are on the path to college or a successful career by ensuring access to great teaching, equitable resources, and a challenging curriculum. We are dedicated to eliminating the severe racial inequities that continue to plague our education system.

Our ultimate goal is that every student of color receives a quality public education that prepares young people to be a contributing member of a democracy. To achieve these goals, the NAACP MSC Education Committee advocate around a four-prong strategy to improve educational achievement for disadvantaged students by:

- Increasing Resource Equity: Target funds to neediest kids
- Ensuring College & Career Readiness: A path to success after graduation for all students
- Improving Teaching: Growing our own great teachers now in underserved communities
- Improving Discipline: Eliminate zero tolerance; keep kids in school

Black and Latino/Latinx students make up the majority of Maryland's public-school students, and yet Maryland prepares far fewer of them for success than their white peers. These gaps are not incidental. Maryland has long given Black and Latino/Latinx Students the least of things that matter most. While the Commission's recommendations are a good start, much more is needed to address Maryland's opportunity gap. It is the General Assembly's responsibility to ensure that the Kirwan Commission's recommendations are in implemented in way that ensures that Maryland's Black and Latino/Latinx students finally get resources that they deserve.

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future (HB1300/SB1000) is necessary for Maryland's children because this legislation provides the resources necessary to ensure every child in Maryland receives a world class education. The Blueprint will drastically change the trajectory for struggling learners by implementing targeted interventions early, and throughout a child's schooling, so every child can see the possibilities of a bright future.

Not only does the Blueprint allocate resources more equitably to the students who need them most, this plan holds school systems accountable to more rigorous outcomes for student achievement that better reflect the new workforce needs of our evolving economy.

In the implementation of this legislation, the NAACP MSC joins the Maryland Alliance for Racial Equity in Education, Strong Schools Maryland and Maryland Education Commission in calling upon the General Assembly (GAM) to:

- 1.) Ensure that the largest increases in funding go to the students with the highest needs (low income households, students receiving special education services and English Language Learners) by eliminating the unfair provisions of our current funding formula that redistribute state dollars to districts with the capacity to pay their local share.
- 2.) Require that districts address the inequitable access to strong teachers for students of color and students from low income backgrounds as we know that in Maryland, Black and Latino/Latinx students attend schools that are much more likely to rely on ineffective, inexperienced, or out of field teacher. In addition, GAM must support the quality preparation of teacher candidates to teach a diverse student population, including supporting the preparation and retention of more educators of color.
- 3.) Address disparities in access to rigorous coursework by addressing financial barriers and ensuring that high-achieving students are automatically enrolled in advanced courses, rather than relying solely on the recommendations of educators.
- 4.) Ensure that districts have the resources (operational and capital) to design and provide high-quality Career and Technical Education pathways aligned with the highest market demand and appropriate industry standards for all students.
- 5.) Increase access to high-quality early childhood education for children of color, children from low-income families, children with disabilities, and dual-language learners.

Equity can not be simply a buzz word when it comes to Maryland's children. Equity should be a means to providing access, opportunities and supports needed to help students reach their full potential by removing barriers to success that young people and their families face. In the words of Nelson Mandela: "There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children."

When we fully fund the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, not only will Maryland schools move from mediocre to world-class, we will provide a window into our soul and values concerning our children. For these reasons, we urge the committees to issue a favorable report for House Bill 1300 and Senate Bill 1000.

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