



**Testimony for SB0915 -The Blueprint for Maryland's Future -
Performance Standards - Clarifications
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
March 9, 2021**

POSITION: SUPPORT

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The ACLU of Maryland works to ensure that all children are provided a "thorough and efficient" education as guaranteed by Maryland's constitution. To ensure that students receive the education they deserve, we believe all Maryland schools: must be adequately and equitably funded; have full staffing and comprehensive programming; are safe, healthy, and conducive for learning; and have a positive school climate, which includes fair and effective discipline policies.

To that end, the ACLU of Maryland strongly supports SB 915 - Blueprint for Maryland's Future - Performance Standards - Clarifications. SB 915 provides context and a definition for the term "performance standards" used in the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. This clarification will align new performance standards promulgated by the Blueprint with existing Maryland COMAR Regulations, under Title 13A State Board of Education¹.

To reach the educational goals intended by the Blueprint — and to ensure that the state is meeting its constitutional obligation of providing a "thorough and efficient" education for Maryland public schoolchildren — it is imperative for the state to set standards that are specific, defined and measurable such as those developed under Title 13A of the COMAR statute. The alignment of Performance Standards in the Blueprint and COMAR regulations, eliminates confusion and provides clear guidance to school systems for developing their instructional programs.

¹ Maryland COMAR Regulations,
http://www.dsd.state.md.us/COMAR/subtitle_chapters/13A_Chapters.aspx, Accessed March 4, 2021



Maryland

This technical change is consistent with Maryland's *Every Student Succeeds Act Consolidated Plan* approved by the USDE² to ensure all students within all student subgroups have access to a well-rounded curriculum in all grades. This technical amendment is also consistent with the charge and intent of the Kirwan Commission³:

- determining how the federal Every Student Succeeds Act will affect primary and secondary education in the State;
- determining how the State can better prepare students for postsecondary education and to be competitive in the workforce and with other high performing countries in the global economy.

State government officials, leading nongovernmental advocates and experts, and community advocates have debated, collaborated, and spent years on many of these COMAR standards, which are based on extensive research and evidence-based best practices. They were developed to make Maryland's public school system excellent. Let's not fall short and disregard the significant amount of time and expertise invested in the development of these standards.

For these reasons, we respectfully request a favorable vote on SB 915.

Thank you.

² Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Consolidated State Plan
<http://marylandpublicschools.org/about/Documents/ESSA/ESSAMDSUBMISSIONConsolidatedStatePlan091718.pdf>, Accessed March 4, 2021

³ Charge of the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education, Department of Legislative Services,
http://dls.maryland.gov/pubs/prod/NoPblTabMtg/CmsnInnovEduc/09-29-2016_Charge_of_Commission.pdf. Accessed March 4, 2021