

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT

Testimony to the Appropriations Committee

In support of

House Bill 1450: Blueprint for Maryland's Future – Implementation Plans and Fund – Alterations

March 8, 2022

Strong Schools Maryland urges a speedy, favorable vote on House Bill Blueprint for Maryland's Future – Implementation Plans and Fund – Alterations

When the Maryland General Assembly overrode Governor Hogan's unnecessary 2020 veto of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, the body quickly followed up by passing House Bill 1372 (Blueprint 2.0) which updated implementation timelines in response to the veto and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic's impact on school communities. We were appreciative of the legislature's commitment to the Blueprint vision—that of a world-class system of public schools for our state's students—and see the passage of House Bill 1450 (Blueprint 3.0, if you will) as a continued demonstration of that commitment.

The bill will:

- Shift the due date of the statewide Blueprint Comprehensive Implementation Plan to December 1, 2022. This would give the Blueprint Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB) sufficient time to evaluate the status of implementation, engage and align with those who will implement the various provisions of this once-in-a-generation effort, and meaningfully engage the public in the deliberative process of plan development.
 - While this does represent a 9 month delay in the formalization of accountability metrics and local planning, we believe it is necessary for the AIB to take time to develop the best implementation plan they are capable of constructing, particularly given the various unnecessary delays they've already experienced in appointment, funding, staffing, and numerous other aspects of creating a brand-new state level agency.
- Shift the due date for the development of local implementation plan approval criteria to September 1, 2022. This will allow the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) sufficient time to engage locals, the AIB, and the public as planning continues throughout this calendar year.
- Shift the due date for local implementation plans to March 15, 2023. This, beyond offering additional time for local actors to develop their own plans, allows for communication, training, and mutual buy-in to occur amongst state and local Blueprint actors before hard measures of accountability are finalized. This is a necessary approach to take, as it is unlikely anyone truly understands the demands of local school system administration, governance, or day-to-day school operations better than the practitioners, students, and families themselves.
 - We hope to see local education agencies and all Blueprint actors take advantage of this additional time to engage students, families, and educators in the co-creation of Blueprint implementation plans.
- Modifies revenue streams for the Blueprint for Maryland's Future special fund.

Strong Schools Maryland looks forward to the full-scale, long-term implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future and its sustainable funding at the state and levels for the duration of implementation. These last several years have been a labor of love and investment in our collective future for our

organizational staff, supporters, and Teams of 10 across the state, as we know it has been for many of you. In that spirit, we urge a fast, favorable vote on House Bill 1450, for the future.

If you have questions or requests for additional information, you can email:

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