

BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Brandon M. Scott
Mayor, City of Baltimore

Johnette A. Richardson
Chair, Baltimore City Board
of School Commissioners

Dr. Sonja Brookins Santelises
Chief Executive Officer

**Testimony of the
Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners
Support with Amendments
House Bill 1450
Blueprint for Maryland's Future – Implementation Plans Fund- Alterations**

March 29, 2022

The Baltimore City Public School System (City Schools) supports House Bill 1450 with amendments to ensure strategic implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

City Schools is deeply appreciative of the work of the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education, in conjunction with the efforts of the Maryland General Assembly, which led to the passage of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future – an historic education reform package that the state is only now beginning to implement. The Blueprint will ultimately provide \$4 billion per year to public education overall, while directing significantly increased support to schools serving children in communities with high concentrations of poverty.

As drafted, HB 1450 seeks to update certain Blueprint timelines by altering plan due dates to reflect the realities of implementation. City Schools supports the proposed timeline adjustments, but respectfully requests the following amendments:

- **Extend the College and Career Readiness Implementation Timeline**

The Blueprint requires school districts to develop two College and Career Readiness (CCR) pathways to best serve students – “post-CCR pathways” for students who have successfully demonstrated college and career readiness by the end of tenth grade, and “CCR support pathways” for those who have not.

While current law requires the post-CCR pathways to be implemented by the 2022- 23 school year and the CCR support pathways to be implemented by the 2023-24 school year, we respectfully request that both timelines be extended by one year to the 2023-24 and 2024-2025 school years, respectively.

City Schools believes extension of this timeline is critical to ensuring local school systems have the appropriate time necessary to develop significant new structures, course offerings, staffing and training, as well as individualized support plans for what is expected to be large numbers of students in order to meet the Blueprint's requirements. The expanded timeline will also allow for more purposeful employer and community engagement, as well as the development of necessary partnerships with local institutions of higher education.

- **Adjust the Automatic Withholding of Funds Language**

City Schools respectfully requests the committee's consideration in ensuring that the timeline changes proposed in HB 1450 do not inadvertently lead to a delay in the receipt of critical implementation funds by school districts. Specifically, we request the following modifications:

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The Blueprint requires a portion of the increase in the State share of major education aid to be automatically withheld from local school systems in FY23 until the AIB determines that the school district has received approval for its initial implementation plan. However, the timeline changes proposed in HB 1450 will delay the AIB's approval of school systems' initial implementation plans until well into the second half of FY23. **As such, we respectfully request that this requirement be adjusted from FY23 to FY24.**

Similarly, the Blueprint also requires MSDE to automatically withhold 25% of the increase in the State share of major education aid over the amount provided in the current fiscal year. We believe this may have been an inadvertent drafting error, as alternate sections of the bill define the amount to be withheld as a portion of the increase over the current fiscal year. **As such, we respectfully request that HB 1450 be amended to replace "current" with "prior".**

City Schools is committed to ensuring successful implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. With these amendments, HB 1450 will help local school districts implement the Blueprint's requirements with fidelity. For all these reasons, we respectfully urge a favorable with amendments committee report.

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