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BLUEPRINT FOR MARYLAND'S FUTURE

**House Bill 770 – Publicly Funded Full-Day PreK Program – Tier I Child – Alteration of Definition
Delegate Atterbeary at the request of the Accountability and Implementation Board**

Testimony in Support

**Vice Chair William E. Kirwan
Executive Director Rachel Hise
February 22, 2023**

The Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB) has focused on laying a solid foundation for the successful implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future in its first year since being established. Foremost, this involved an 8-month process to develop the Initial Blueprint Comprehensive Implementation Plan to guide Blueprint implementation over the next 10 years. The process is described in more detail in the initial plan, which was adopted by the AIB in December 2022. The plan and related materials are available at aib.maryland.gov. More than 1,000 hard copies have already been distributed. Hard copies are available to the public at the State House Public Information Desk and upon request (Google form on AIB website).

In developing the Initial Blueprint Comprehensive Plan, the AIB solicited and received significant public feedback regarding implementation considerations. All of the feedback was reviewed and much of it has been included in the initial plan as well as needed technical assistance to support LEAs and State agencies in identifying innovative and creative approaches to implement the Blueprint as intended. In this first year, then, the AIB limited its legislative recommendations to technical corrections that are needed to implement the law. Recommendations for substantive changes will be considered by AIB if or when it has been determined that the Blueprint cannot be implemented as required or intended.

Chair Atterbeary introduced HB 770 at the request of the AIB with the technical amendment to the Blueprint law to incorporate the legislative intent regarding the full-day prekindergarten funding formula. Specifically, the bill implements the Blueprint statute that gives priority for full-day preK slots to children with disabilities, children who live in a home where English is not the primary language spoken, and children experiencing homelessness regardless of income, in addition to Tier I children (from households with income up to 300% of the federal poverty level. Currently only Tier I children are being funded in the formula, despite the priority requirement. The bill corrects this by including these additional children in the enrollment count if they are enrolled in full-day preK. This means that local school systems that follow the legislative prioritization will not be penalized by not receiving per pupil funding for the enrolled children. A number of these children will be income eligible beginning in fiscal 2025, when Tier II children (between 300 and 600% of federal poverty level) are funded in the formula, but there is an ongoing cost to provide State funding for priority children regardless of income as intended. Thank you for your commitment to the Blueprint for Maryland's Future and a world class education for every student.