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of Howard County**

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**Board of Education of Howard County  
Testimony Submitted to the Maryland Senate,  
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
March 5, 2025**

**SB0852: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS  
Blueprint for Maryland's Future – Alterations**

The Board of Education of Howard County (the Board) supports **Blueprint for Maryland's Future – Alterations** with an amendment to include requirements for the development of regulation and policy by educational oversight bodies.

As local school systems have continued to implement the expansive requirements set forth in the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, SB0852 includes several [proposals offered by the Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland](#) (PSSAM) in key areas of the law that would benefit from legislative changes. Each of the bill's provisions – spanning from the recognition of multilingual learners and special education students within the definition of Tier I for prekindergarten funding purposes, to changes to the career ladder to align with the established bargaining structures in school systems, to giving local school systems flexibility in the use of funds for career counseling and post-college and career readiness pathways – are supported by the Board as measures to reasonably amend the law without altering the goals of the Blueprint to create a world-class educational system.

Two additional provisions within SB0852 would require state-level studies that could guide future steps in the use of National Board Certification (NBC) and the adequacy of Maryland's special education funding. Critical questions around the effectiveness of NBC in teacher recruitment and student achievement would be addressed through the bill's proposed study. With costs for special education consistently exceeding federal, state, and local funding, the adequacy of those allocations would also be addressed.

As a legislative priority on the Blueprint, and in alignment with PSSAM's recommendations under Pillar 5, the Board supports the addition of a requirement in statewide legislation for the timely development of regulation and policy by education oversight bodies. Such provisions would not only give the State a reasonable timeline for development following the effective date of the bill, but mutually respect workloads by allowing local school systems to implement in the school year following the actual promulgation of regulations. This would address the persistently changing guidance in all areas of the Blueprint and the essential need for planning and execution lead-time to put new practices in place. Regulations allow new policies to be vetted by the public and local school systems. They also allow for a reasonable amount of time to implement initiatives following final adoption of the new regulations.

The Board recommends an amendment specifying that all new legislation should be drafted with a clear distinction between the new law's effective date, the timeline for adoption of new or amended policies aligned with implementation, and the school year in which full implementation is to begin. For initiatives that do not require the promulgation of regulations, oversight bodies should be required to provide guidance and/or reporting templates in draft form six months before it is due, or in final form, no later than four months before a deadline.

With this addition, we urge a FAVORABLE report on SB0852 from this Committee.