



OPPOSE: House Bill 1421
Accountability and Implementation Board - Scope of Authority

House Appropriations and Ways & Means Committees
March 5, 2025

The Blueprint Coalition, a 30+ member organization representing hundreds of thousands of Marylanders and co-led by Strong Schools Maryland and the Maryland State Education Association, strongly opposes House Bill 1421. This bill fundamentally weakens the Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB) by placing it under the authority of the Maryland State Board of Education (MSDE), undermining the very purpose for which the AIB was created.

The AIB was designed to function as an independent body to ensure the full and equitable implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. The need for such a board was widely recognized after years of systemic challenges in education funding and accountability. The Blueprint set clear goals for improving educational outcomes, especially for historically underserved students, and the AIB was created to ensure that these goals would be met without political interference or bureaucratic stagnation. Our concerns with HB 1421 are:

- **Placing the AIB Under MSDE Eliminates Independent Oversight:** The AIB was created because Maryland's education system needed an independent body to enforce accountability. Transferring its oversight to MSDE, which is itself subject to Blueprint mandates, creates an inherent conflict of interest. The AIB is supposed to ensure compliance and implementation across multiple agencies, including MSDE. If AIB is no longer independent, who ensures MSDE remains accountable? This bill would effectively neutralize the AIB's ability to enforce necessary changes.
- **Systemic Reform Requires Stability, Not Just New Leadership:** Some may argue that recent leadership changes at MSDE make this transition feasible. But the structure of an effective accountability system cannot be based on who happens to be in charge at any given moment. The AIB was created precisely because the existing oversight mechanisms were failing. Weakening its power now ignores the systemic need for sustained, independent oversight of Blueprint implementation.

We support a thoughtful review of the AIB's operations, but this is not the solution. There is value in refining the relationship between MSDE and AIB to improve Blueprint implementation, providing better guidance to local education agencies.

Instead of dismantling AIB's independence, adjustments should be made to strengthen its ability to enforce equity and focus on student outcomes and the long-term success of the Blueprint. That means ensuring AIB has the capacity to fully execute its mandate, including:

- Evaluating whether state and local agencies are meeting their Blueprint responsibilities;

- Assessing whether allocated funds are sufficient for full Blueprint implementation; and
- Recommending legislative changes to address gaps in implementation and funding.

Rather than eliminating the AIB's authority, we urge lawmakers to focus on refining its role so it can better fulfill its critical mission: holding Maryland's education system accountable for delivering the high-quality education all students deserve.

For these reasons, the Blueprint Coalition strongly urges an unfavorable report on HB 1421.

Please contact Riya Gupta at riya@strongschoolsmaryland.org for additional questions.