



BLUEPRINT FOR
Maryland's Future

Accountability &
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March 30, 2026

The Honorable Ben Barnes
Chair, Appropriations Committee
Maryland House of Delegates

The Honorable Jheanelle K. Wilkins
Chair, Committee on Ways and Means
Maryland House of Delegates

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Senate of Maryland

RE: HB 490/SB 311 Education - The Blueprint for Maryland's Future - Revisions

Dear Chair Barnes, Chair Wilkins, and Chair Feldman,

Thank you for your careful consideration of HB 490/SB 311 Education - The Blueprint for Maryland's Future - Revisions. We appreciate your thoughtful amendments, including those the AIB and MSDE requested, particularly with regards to the pause to the Expert Review Team Program and the delineation of the collaborative and transparent process by which the AIB and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) are to develop recommendations for a methodology by which to count economically disadvantaged students to inform the compensatory education formula.

The pause to MSDE's Expert Review Team (ERT) Program for the 2026-2027 school year will provide time for the AIB and MSDE to evaluate and restructure the program. Based on lessons learned and feedback from Local Education Agencies (LEAs), starting with the first year of full implementation in 2023, the AIB and MSDE will be able to streamline the program based on feedback and make changes that will enhance the deployment of ERTs and better support schools in their implementation of the Blueprint. The AIB and MSDE's request that the ERT funds be transferred to the Academic Excellence Fund (AEF) will ensure that schools and educators receive targeted support during this timeframe to support students and improve student outcomes. We appreciate the Senate's

amendment to allow the ERT funds to be used for AEF purposes; if the House is not amenable to that position, we have proposed language that would allow MSDE to request a budget amendment to exchange general funds for Blueprint funds, enabling general funds to go toward AEF and the reallocation of ERT Blueprint funds to an existing Blueprint program.

The extension of the current enrollment count methodology used to calculate compensatory education enrollment for LEAs participating in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) beyond this current fiscal year provides reliability in funding for high-needs student populations until a more accurate methodology is identified. As you know, the AIB proposed amendments that will extend these provisions for three (3) years, through FY 2029. We appreciate the House's willingness to provide the three-year extension and access to resources to support the work. The Senate provided a one-year extension. We are concerned that completing the work by December 31, 2026, particularly with the detailed and public process outlined in the House amendments, will be difficult to achieve; however, we stand ready to work hard to meet the final agreed-upon deadline.

Thank you again for your consideration. We would be happy to provide more information as you continue your deliberations.

Thank you,



Rachel Hise
Executive Director