
TO: House Committee on Appropriations

BILL: Senate Bill 311 – Education - The Blueprint for Maryland's Future - Revisions

DATE: April 1, 2026

POSITION: Support

The Maryland State Board of Education (State Board) and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) extend this letter of support for *SB 311 – Education - The Blueprint for Maryland's Future - Revisions*, which makes a number of adjustments to the Blueprint for Maryland's Future to better support students, educators, and school and district staff.

The State Board and MSDE are grateful for the General Assembly's thoughtful review of SB 311 and for incorporating amendments that help clarify program requirements and support practical implementation. As amended, the legislation continues to reflect several shared priorities between the State Board and the Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB), including streamlining State oversight of Career and Technical Education (CTE); expanding the ways teacher candidates may demonstrate essential pedagogical knowledge; allowing funds for high-poverty schools to be used for academic purposes; delaying implementation of the requirement that new principals obtain National Board Certification prior to licensure; and ensuring that resources are appropriately allocated to the State's highest-need schools.

The bill also includes an amendment for MSDE to suspend Expert Review Teams and redirect allocated funding to the Academic Excellence Program. The Academic Excellence Program initiative will deploy state instructional coaches aligned with the Science of Reading to help educators build the skills and confidence needed for high-quality instruction. Research shows that coaching drives lasting improvement by embedding support directly in classrooms. Given the design of the Expert Review Team program, which relies on snapshot visits, these reviews provide only a limited understanding of a school's strengths and areas for growth and are not structured to provide sustained support for teachers. By contrast, supporting teachers in continually strengthening their instruction through job-embedded coaching will improve student outcomes and is critical to the Blueprint's success.

These modifications to various parts of the Blueprint will allow schools and school districts to focus their efforts and resources on the work that will have the greatest impact on student academic achievement. We look forward to partnering with the AIB and the General Assembly to ensure effective implementation and sustained progress for students across the State.

The State Board and MSDE respectfully request that the committee consider this information as it deliberates on **SB 311**. Please contact Laurel Cratsley, Interim Executive Director of Government Affairs, at laurel.cratsley@maryland.gov, if you would like any additional information.