
TO: House Ways and Means Committee

BILL: House Bill (HB) 1396 - Commission on Blueprint Fiscal Sustainability and Student Achievement - Establishment

DATE: March 12, 2026

POSITION: Oppose

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) respectfully opposes **HB 1396, Commission on Blueprint Fiscal Sustainability and Student Achievement - Establishment** which would create a new Commission on Blueprint Fiscal Sustainability and Student Achievement that would contain 28 members and has a scope of work to study and make recommendations on topics including the Blueprint for Maryland's Future funding formulas, programmatic requirements such as the career ladder ratios, the impact of National Board Certification, and other structural elements of the Blueprint. The required members of the new Commission include members of the General Assembly, representatives from State agencies, local officials, advocates, parents, and students. The Commission is required to submit two reports, one by December 2026 and another by December 2027.

MSDE shares the goal of ensuring all students have access to an equitable and world-class education that is supported by effective and efficient governing bodies. However, MSDE believes that this bill would establish redundant and burdensome oversight structures over the Blueprint, create additional administrative work for MSDE, AIB, and LEAs, and detract from the important work focused on academics. Additionally, there is already a comprehensive Blueprint evaluation being conducted by an external party that is due to the MGA by December 1st of this upcoming year.

If enacted, the scope of work for the new Commission would be similar to that completed by the Kirwan Commission, which produced its recommendations after more than four years, with the help of at least ten staff members and additional consultants. This legislation gives this new Commission six months to complete a similar amount of work and produce an interim report of similar rigor, depth, and breadth. The bill requires MSDE to provide staffing and support for the newly established commission, which would require two additional full-time contractual staff positions as well as significant additional time and capacity from other MSDE staff. MSDE also estimates that the Commission would require a significant investment to contract with outside experts to conduct the analysis needed for a high-quality report. The bill does not provide an adequate timeline for procurement to support this work.

MSDE, the local education agencies (LEAs), and the AIB already regularly present their progress and plans for future implementation at public local school board meetings, State Board of Education meetings, and AIB board meetings. As part of these public board meetings, investigative questions and inquiries are made into the progress being made and the alignment to the goals of the Blueprint and established outcome measures.

When progress is not satisfactory, adjustments and corrective actions are required.

The AIB and the State Board of Education have established a regular cadence of joint meetings to support a shared and aligned vision for education in Maryland. These discussions are grounded in the statutory requirements and goals of the Blueprint. Establishing additional oversight bodies that may also seek to define the State's education vision could create confusion for practitioners and slow implementation progress.

The State Board and MSDE believe the governance structures necessary for effective and efficient Blueprint implementation are already in place and look forward to continuing to work with members of the General Assembly to ensure the best outcomes for Maryland students.

We respectfully request that you consider this information as you deliberate **HB 1396**. For further information, please contact Laurel Cratsley, Interim Executive Director of Government Affairs, at Laurel.Cratsley@maryland.gov.