

House Bill 1555: Education: Blueprint for Maryland's Future – Oversight Requirements
Position: FAVORABLE
Hearing Date: March 12, 2026
House Ways and Means Committee

Chair Wilkins, Vice Chair Feldmark, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 1555 – Education: Blueprint for Maryland's Future – Oversight Requirements.

The [Blueprint for Maryland's Future](#) represents one of the most ambitious education reforms in our state's history. Over the next decade, Maryland will invest tens of billions of dollars into public education with the goals of improving early childhood education, strengthening the educator workforce, expanding college and career readiness, and ensuring greater equity for all students.

Because this reform represents such a significant public investment, strong oversight and transparency are essential. HB 1555 strengthens legislative review of Blueprint implementation and provides a mechanism for reviewing enforcement decisions that can significantly affect school funding and local governance.

The Blueprint created the [Accountability and Implementation Board \(AIB\)](#) to monitor implementation, review local plans, and evaluate progress toward the law's goals. The AIB is an independent entity charged with overseeing the Blueprint's execution.

However, there are valid concerns regarding the AIB appointment process and governance structure. The Board consists of seven members appointed by the Governor with Senate confirmation, serving staggered six-year terms. Members are first nominated by a committee appointed by the Governor, Senate President, and Speaker of the House, and the Governor selects from that slate. While designed to ensure expertise, this means that an appointed body, rather than the legislature itself, ultimately makes decisions that could affect billions of dollars in education funding and the operations of Local Educational Agencies (LEAs).

As recently as March 10, 2026, it is reported that approximately half of Maryland's school districts have not yet reached the Blueprint requirement to raise minimum teacher salaries to \$60,000 by July 1, 2026. State Superintendent Dr. Carey Wright [acknowledged these LEAs challenges](#), stating: *"I think they're doing the very best that they can to meet the needs of everything that they've got going on in their district[s]."*

Local governments responsible for funding schools have expressed concerns about the fiscal pressures created by Blueprint implementation. In the [2026 Frederick County Legislative Package](#), County Executive Jessica Fitzwater stated: *"The requirements of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future further exacerbate county education funding struggles. No one can argue the pillars of the Blueprint shouldn't be an aspiration for students and educators... Instead, it needs to be tweaked after so many years."*

Maryland's Constitution assigns responsibility for public education to the General Assembly under Article VIII, requires a "thorough and efficient system of free public schools." Maryland case law and federal precedent reinforce the legislature's responsibility and limits on delegation.

- *Hornbeck v. Somerset County Board of Education* (1979) emphasized that the General Assembly retains primary responsibility for establishing and maintaining the public education system.
- *J.W. Hampton, Jr. & Co. v. United States* (1928) and *Gundy v. United States* (2019) clarify that legislative powers cannot be delegated without clear standards and oversight.

These principles establish that while administrative bodies like the AIB may assist with implementation, ultimate authority over public education must remain accountable to the legislature. HB 1555 ensures that the General Assembly can provide oversight of AIB decisions, particularly those with major fiscal and policy impacts.

LEAs are responsible for managing school systems, budgets, and programming. When an appointed board has authority to withhold funding from local systems, legislative oversight is essential to preserve balance, accountability, and public trust.

HB 1555 does not weaken the Blueprint; rather, it ensures that its implementation remains transparent, accountable, and constitutionally sound. By requiring legislative oversight of enforcement decisions, HB 1555 protects the public interest, preserves constitutional responsibility, and allows Maryland to pursue bold education reforms with accountability at every level.

When an appointed board can withhold funding from school systems struggling to meet state mandates, it is not just a policy question, it is a constitutional one. HB1555 ensures that the General Assembly retains ultimate responsibility under Article VIII, consistent with *Hornbeck v. Somerset County Board of Education*, and that delegated authority is exercised with oversight, accountability, and transparency.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 1555.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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