
TO:	House Ways and Means Committee
BILL:	House Bill (HB) 1278 – Maryland Positive Youth Development Commission and Fund - Establishment
DATE:	March 11, 2026
POSITION:	Support with Amendments

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) supports House Bill (HB) 1278 – Maryland Positive Youth Development Commission and Fund - Establishment, with amendments. HB 1278 allows for the creation of the Positive Youth Development Fund, which will be triggered if and when Maryland realizes proceeds from a settlement of multi-state litigation regarding harms to youth caused by practices of social media companies.

A settlement will lead to the creation of the Maryland Positive Youth Development Commission. MSDE will convene and staff the Commission. In addition to the State Superintendent, members will be appointed by the Governor, several state agencies and other stakeholder groups. The Commission's charge under HB 1278 is to develop systems for soliciting grant applications, evaluation and approval of grants, fiscal and programmatic monitoring, data collection, and program evaluation.

Support with Amendments:

MSDE supports investments that expand Maryland students' access to programs that promote positive youth development, mental health, and enrichment outside of the school day. High-quality programming of this nature provides safe environments for students, strengthens social and emotional skills, and offers opportunities for support and enrichment. MSDE currently also administers the Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant Program, funded by the U.S. Department of Education. In a typical year, between \$20 million and \$25 million is available to support at least 50 grants for after-school and summer academic enrichment programs, with priority given to programs serving high-poverty schools.

As the Committee deliberates HB 1278, MSDE offers the following amendments for consideration:

Members of the Commission:

- Where the State Superintendent is named as co-chair of the Commission (page 5) add "or the Superintendents designee," as is the case when the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee is listed as a member of the Commission (page 3).
- Include additional representatives from Maryland public schools, such as:
 - Two local superintendents, recommended by the Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (Large and small LEA, or urban and rural LEA)
 - Two principals, one each recommended by the Maryland Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP) and the Maryland Association of Elementary School Principals (MAESP).
 - Two educators, one each recommended by the Maryland State Education Association and

- o the Baltimore Teachers Union.
- o One representative selected by the Maryland Association of Student Councils.
- Clarify the role of named members, who will determine the framework and vote on matters as appropriate, and advisory members.

Grant Management and Implementation

- Revise the scope of the Commission's charge to state that the Commission shall develop a framework for the awarding of grants made by the Fund. The Framework will include:
 - o Priorities (absolute or competitive) for grants to be awarded.
 - o Areas of need to be addressed within the broad mission of the Fund described on page 3.
 - o The role of needs assessment and how to prioritize grant-making to serve educationally disadvantaged students.
- Clarify that the Department will develop procedures for the complete grant cycle: marketing funding opportunities, technical assistance, evaluation of grant applications, monitoring of active grants, and evaluation of grant programs based on the approved framework.
- Add to the Department's responsibilities:
 - o Review with the Commission the results of each grant cycle, lessons learned, and recommendations, to inform the Commission's review and revision of the framework.
 - o Report to the Commission on the utilization of the 10% set aside for administration and grants management.

Timing

- Per Section 2(a), the formation of the Commission is contingent on execution of a final settlement. There should be a timeline by which the Commission will be named, and by which the Department will present a plan for convening the Commission and a projected date for initiation of the first grant cycle.
- Determine an upper limit of the amount of settlement proceeds that would go to the Fund. Any proceeds in excess of this threshold should go the State General Fund to be used at the discretion of the Governor and the General Assembly.

Other

- Clarify, if needed, that any proceeds of a settlement in which an LEA or jurisdiction is a party (not the State) are proceeds to that LEA or jurisdiction, not the Fund.

With these amendments, the State Board and the Department respectfully request a favorable report on **HB 1278**. For further information, please contact Laurel Cratsley, Interim Executive Director of Government Affairs, at laurel.cratsley@maryland.gov.