

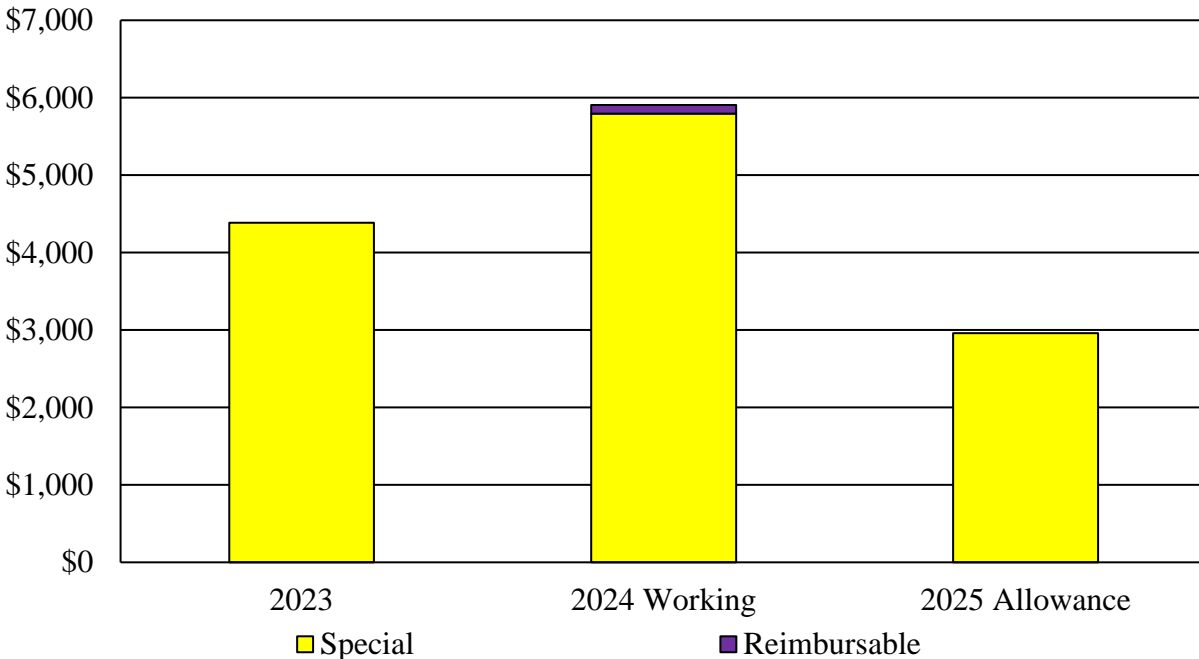
R12 Accountability and Implementation Board

Program Description

The Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB) was established as part of Chapter 36 of 2021, the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future – Implementation (Blueprint). AIB is an independent agency responsible for the oversight of Blueprint implementation and evaluation of its outcomes. AIB is led by a seven-member board appointed by the Governor for staggered terms of six years.

Operating Budget Summary

Fiscal 2025 Budget Decreases \$2.9 Million, or 49.9%, to \$3.0 Million (\$ in Thousands)



Note: The fiscal 2024 working appropriation includes deficiencies. The fiscal 2024 impacts of statewide salary adjustments appear in the Statewide Account in the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), and adjustments are not reflected in this agency’s budget. The fiscal 2025 impacts of the fiscal 2024 statewide salary adjustments appear in this agency’s budget. The fiscal 2025 statewide salary adjustments are centrally budgeted in DBM and are not included in this agency’s budget.

- AIB is primarily funded with special funds from the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future Fund (Blueprint Fund), which was created as part of Chapter 36. The agency receives just under \$3.0 million from the Blueprint Fund in the fiscal 2025 proposed budget.

Fiscal 2024

Funding for AIB is mandated in Chapter 36 at \$4.8 million each year through fiscal 2024. Of this amount, \$3.0 million is required for technical assistance grants to local education agencies (LEAs) and the Career and Technology Education (CTE) committee to develop Blueprint implementation plans, and \$1.8 million is designated for AIB operating expenses. In fiscal 2022, 2023, and the 2024 working appropriation, respectively, the agency received \$4.8 million each year, which met the mandated funding level. Starting in fiscal 2025 and beyond, Chapter 36 mandates AIB funding at \$1.8 million. Although not required in statute, AIB’s primary funding source to date has been the Blueprint Fund.

Because AIB was not operational for most of fiscal 2022, the agency’s fiscal 2022 spending totaled only \$119,675, with \$4.7 million canceled at the end of the year including funds for technical assistance grants. In fiscal 2023, the agency received the mandated \$4.8 million. Of this amount, the agency spent \$2.3 million on technical assistance grants and \$2.1 million on administrative expenditures. AIB canceled \$400,000 at the end of fiscal 2023 primarily due to savings on personnel costs from vacant positions. Unspent fiscal 2023 funds for technical assistance grants were encumbered for that purpose.

AIB’s fiscal 2024 working appropriation provides \$5.8 million including \$3.0 million for technical assistance grants; \$1.8 million for administrative expenses; and \$1.0 million in a proposed deficiency allocation for an independent evaluation of the State’s progress implementing Blueprint, as required in Chapter 36. The total of \$4.8 million for technical assistance grants and the administrative expenses meets the mandated allowance.

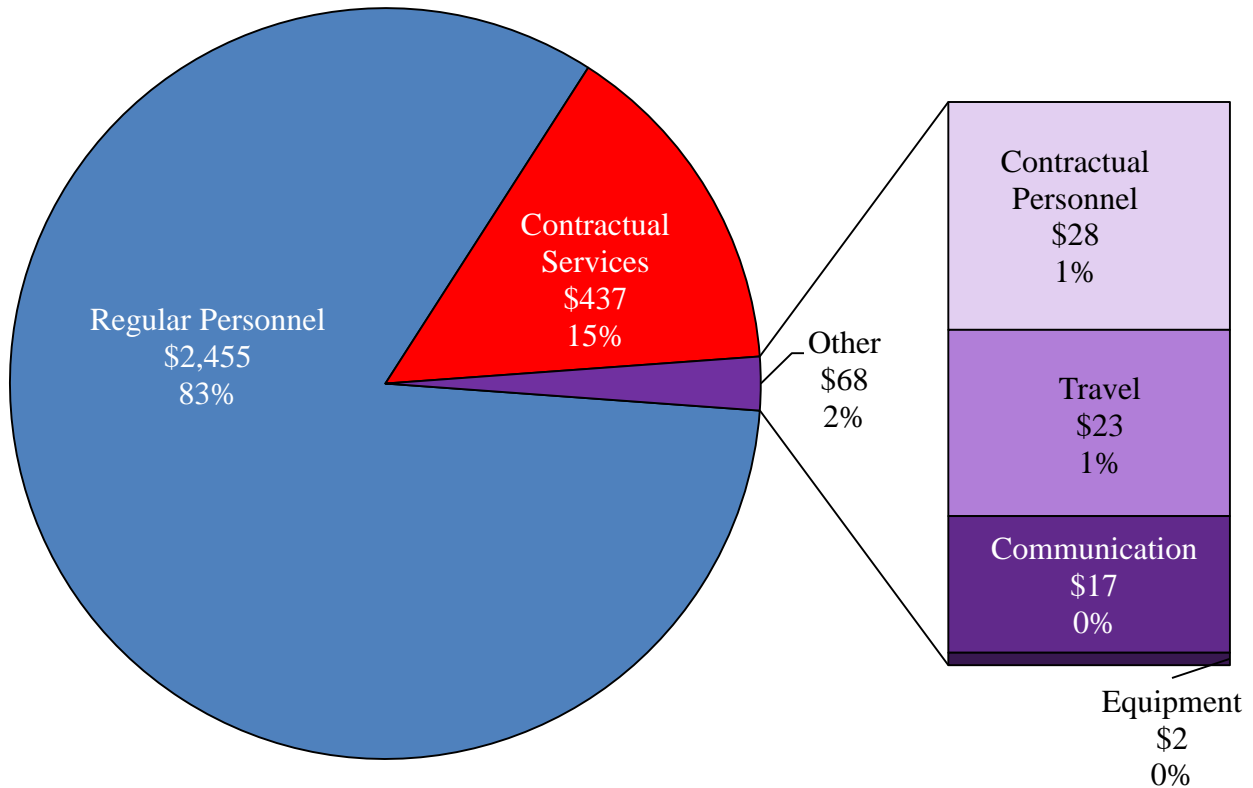
Proposed Deficiency

The fiscal 2025 proposed budget includes a fiscal 2024 deficiency for AIB totaling \$1.0 million for an independent evaluation of the State’s progress in implementing Blueprint. This evaluation is a requirement in Chapter 36 and is due to the Governor and General Assembly by December 1, 2024.

Fiscal 2025 Overview of Agency Spending

In the fiscal 2025 proposed budget, AIB receives a total of \$3.0 million. **Exhibit 1** displays this budget by object. In fiscal 2025, salaries and wages for regular personnel account for the majority of AIB’s funding with \$2.5 million, or 83%, of funds allocated for this purpose. Contractual services account for \$437,000, or 15%, of which \$200,000 is allocated to contracts for management consultants and \$115,000 is allocated to memoranda of understanding (MOU) with other agencies implementing Blueprint programs. The remaining allowance totals \$68,000, or 2%, of AIB’s budget and supports other operating costs. **AIB should provide additional detail on proposed expenditures for contractual services and MOUs with other agencies.**

Exhibit 1
Overview of Agency Spending
Fiscal 2025 Allowance
(\$ in Thousands)



Note: The fiscal 2025 statewide salary adjustments are centrally budgeted in the Department of Budget and Management and are not included in this agency’s budget.

Source: Governor’s Fiscal 2025 Budget Books

Proposed Budget Change

The fiscal 2025 allowance reflects a net decrease of \$2.8 million in special funds, which accounts for most of the overall \$2.9 million decrease compared to the fiscal 2024 working appropriation. As shown in **Exhibit 2**, expenditures increase by \$315,000 for personnel and \$355,000 for consultants and operating expenses. These increases are offset by decreases of \$1.9 million for technical assistance grants, which end in fiscal 2025; \$1.0 million for a proposed fiscal 2024 deficiency allocation for an independent evaluation of Blueprint; and \$675,000 in other expenses and reimbursable funds.

Exhibit 2
Proposed Budget
Accountability and Implementation Board
(\$ in Thousands)

How Much It Grows:	Special Fund	Reimbursable Fund	Total
Fiscal 2023 Actual	\$4,384	\$0	\$4,384
Fiscal 2024 Working Appropriation	5,795	113	5,907
Fiscal 2025 Allowance	<u>2,960</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2,960</u>
Fiscal 2024-2025 Amount Change	-\$2,835	-\$113	-\$2,947
Fiscal 2024-2025 Percent Change	-48.9%	-100.0%	-49.9%

Where It Goes:	Change
Personnel Expenses	
Salary increases and associated fringe benefits including fiscal 2024 COLA and increments	\$309
Turnover rate decrease from 2.03% to 1.79%	5
Other Changes	
Management studies and consultants	200
MOUs with other agencies for Blueprint implementation	115
Contractual payroll and fringe benefits for a decrease of 0.75 full-time contractual position.....	-39
Reimbursable funds from the Department of Labor for the Career and Technical Education Committee.....	-113
Contracts for management consulting services related to agency administration..	-250
Office equipment and supplies	-274
Fiscal 2024 deficiency allocation for an independent evaluation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, required in Chapter 36 of 2021	-1,000
Chapter 36 LEA and CTE technical assistance grants ending in fiscal 2024	-1,942
Routine operating expenses.....	40
Total	-\$2,947

COLA: cost-of-living adjustment
 CTE: career and technical education
 LEA: local education agency
 MOU: memoranda of understanding

Note: Numbers may not sum to total due to rounding. The fiscal 2024 working appropriation includes deficiencies. The fiscal 2024 impacts of statewide salary adjustments appear in the Statewide Account in the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), and adjustments are not reflected in this agency’s budget. The fiscal 2025 impacts of the fiscal 2024 statewide salary adjustments appear in this agency’s budget. The fiscal 2025 statewide salary adjustments are centrally budgeted in DBM and are not included in this agency’s budget.

Personnel Data

	<u>FY 23 Actual</u>	<u>FY 24 Working</u>	<u>FY 25 Allowance</u>	<u>FY 24-25 Change</u>
Regular Positions	15.00	15.00	15.00	0.00
Contractual FTEs	<u>1.00</u>	<u>0.75</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>-0.75</u>
Total Personnel	16.00	15.75	15.00	-0.75

Vacancy Data: Regular Positions

Turnover and Necessary Vacancies, Excluding New Positions	0.27	1.79%
Positions and Percentage Vacant as of 12/31/23	6.00	40.00%
Vacancies Above Turnover	5.73	

- The fiscal 2025 proposed budget provides AIB 15 regular positions. The agency’s fiscal 2025 budgeted turnover rate is 1.79%, and vacancies above turnover total 5.73 as of December 31, 2023. This budgeted turnover rate allows the agency to fill 5 positions in fiscal 2025.
- As of December 2023, AIB had filled 7 regular positions: executive director; policy director; implementation plan director; finance director; executive assistant; deputy director of operations; and a policy analyst for equitable student supports. The agency had also filled a position for an assistant Attorney General, which is shared with the Interagency Commission on School Construction (IAC) but is not included in AIB’s personnel count because it is budgeted in IAC through an MOU.
- In fiscal 2024, the agency plans to hire 5 additional staff:
 - 1 outreach and communications director;
 - 1 research and accountability director;
 - 1 research and data analyst;
 - 1 policy analyst for early childhood; and
 - 1 policy analyst for CTE.
- Remaining positions to be hired in fiscal 2025 include 2 policy analysts, which includes 1 position for a high quality and diverse educator policy analyst and 1 position for a college and career readiness policy analyst, and 1 administrator. Also in fiscal 2025, contractual personnel decreases by a 0.75 full-time equivalent position for a management associate.

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AIB should comment on the reasons for the high vacancy rate of 40% as of December 31, 2023, and provide a timetable to fill vacant positions in calendar 2024.

Key Observations

1. AIB Approves LEA Blueprint Implementation Plans; Other Agency Activities and Reporting Delayed

Chapters 36 and 55 also require AIB to take certain actions and meet certain requirements. Reporting requirements include submission of the agency’s annual report; updates to the comprehensive plan; and the interim evaluation report. Actions include review of LEA and State agency implementation plans; review of teacher preparation requirements; and Blueprint training. Although AIB was able to review, provide feedback, and approve all 24 LEA Blueprint implementation plans in calendar 2023, other statutory requirements and reports have been delayed. **Exhibit 3** shows actions taken by AIB in calendar 2023 and upcoming deadlines in calendar 2024.

**Exhibit 3
AIB Reports and Actions
Calendar 2023-2024**

<u>Requirement</u>	<u>Due Date</u>	<u>Actions</u>
Calendar 2023		
LEA Blueprint Implementation Plan Review	March 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● LEA and State agencies submitted Blueprint implementation plans; ● AIB reviewed, provided feedback and technical assistance, and approved all LEA plans on July 27, 2023.
State Agency Blueprint Implementation Plan Review	March 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● MSDE, CCCS, CTE Committee, and MHEC submitted agency Blueprint implementation plans; ● AIB approved the CTE Committee plan in October; ● AIB is currently reviewing remaining plans (delayed); ● In future years implementation plans are due June 15.

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<u>Requirement</u>	<u>Due Date</u>	<u>Actions</u>
Teacher Preparation Program Requirements	June 30	● Deadline for AIB to collaborate with SBOE and PSTEB to revise teacher preparation program requirements (delayed).
Blueprint Training	June 30	● Deadline for MSDE and AIB to provide targeted training on Blueprint to superintendents, school administrators and senior instructional staff, and local boards of education (delayed).
AIB Comprehensive Plan	August 1	● Annual changes to AIB’s Comprehensive Plan.
AIB Annual Report	November 1	● Annual report on progress to implement Blueprint (delayed).
Calendar 2024		
LEA and State Agency Blueprint Plans	March 15	● Annual update of Blueprint implementation plans from LEAs and State agencies.
AIB Comprehensive Plan	August 1	● Annual changes to the agency Comprehensive Plan.
Blueprint Interim Evaluation Report	October 1	● Deadline to report to the board on the independent evaluation of the State’s progress in implementing Blueprint and reaching expected outcomes.
AIB Annual Report	November 1	● Annual report on progress to implement Blueprint.
Blueprint Interim Evaluation Report	December 1	● Deadline for AIB to report to the Governor and General Assembly on the independent evaluation outcomes and assessment of the State’s progress toward specific outcomes.

AIB: Accountability and Implementation Board
 CCCS: Consortium on Coordinated Community Supports
 CTE: Career and Technical Education
 LEA: local education agency
 MHEC: Maryland Higher Education Commission

MSDE: Maryland State Department of Education
 PSTEB: Professional Standards of Teaching and Education Board
 SBOE: State Board of Education

Note: Does not include State or LEA reports or actions, as required in Chapters 36 and 55 of 2021 and revised in Chapter 33 of 2022, that are not subject to AIB participation or review.

Source: Accountability and Implementation Board; Department of Legislative Services

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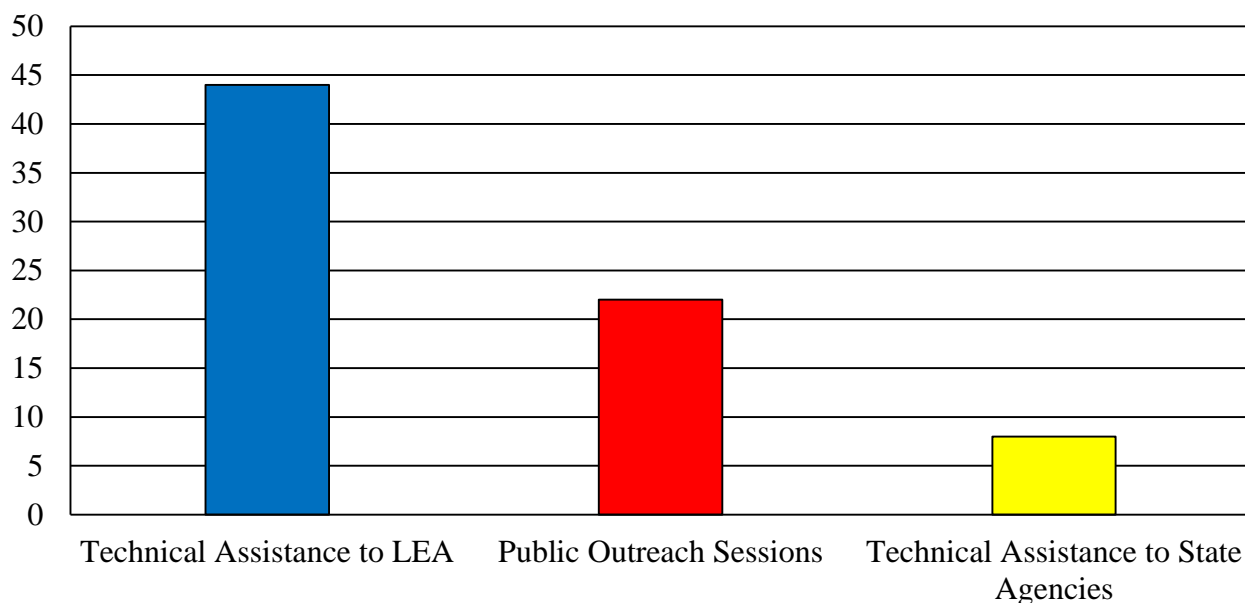
AIB reports that the agency is taking the following steps regarding delayed reports and requirements:

- working with MSDE on a timetable and plan for Blueprint training;
- reviewing new regulations for teacher preparation requirements and State agency implementation plans;
- submitting the agency’s annual report at the beginning of February 2024; and
- developing a contract for the independent evaluation; however, the agency expects the process to take up to 18 months to complete, which may postpone the delivery of that report until calendar 2025.

Managing for Results Measures

Exhibit 4 shows that AIB provided performance measures in the fiscal 2025 Managing for Results (MFR) submission for Goal 2: to support implementation of Blueprint for Maryland’s Future program. Although AIB did not submit data for all performance measures within this goal, AIB reported providing 44 LEA technical assistance sessions; 22 public outreach sessions; and 8 State agency and government technical assistance sessions. These measures contribute to agency objectives to (1) support development and implementation of Blueprint implementation plans and (2) provide information on AIB and Blueprint implementation progress.

**Exhibit 4
AIB Managing for Results
Fiscal 2023**



AIB: Accountability and Implementation Board
LEA: local education agency

Source: Department of Budget and Management; Accountability and Implementation Board

Through committee narrative in the 2023 *Joint Chairmen’s Report* (JCR), AIB was asked to submit performance measures for Goal 1: to oversee successful implementation of Blueprint for Maryland’s Future. The agency recently finalized these measures with board approval. Data for these measures will be collected by MSDE but reported in the AIB MFR. Although fiscal 2023 data has not been provided, measures submitted in the fiscal 2025 MFR include the percentage of:

- LEAs that increased the number of students enrolled in full-day prekindergarten;
- LEAs that increased the number of teachers with National Board Certification;
- LEAs that increased the number of apprenticeships available to high school students;
- LEAs that increased the number of students served by school-based health centers; and
- public schools visited by expert review teams.

LEA Technical Assistance Grants

As mandated in Chapter 36, in fiscal 2022 through 2024, AIB received \$3.0 million for LEA and CTE committee technical assistance grants each year. To date, AIB has taken the following actions regarding these grants:

- In fiscal 2023, AIB awarded \$2.3 million in \$100,000 grants to 22 LEAs and the CTE committee. As part of the grant program requirements, grantees selected a strategic facilitator whose role is to help LEAs and the CTE committee develop strategies to achieve the Blueprint goals; and
- In fiscal 2024, AIB is finalizing Phase 2 of the grant program. The application period is expected to open in late February 2024 or early March 2024, with the performance period starting July 1, 2024. AIB plans to encumber the grant funds based on these awards at the end fiscal 2024.

AIB should comment on the reasons for the delays for State agency implementation plan review; teacher preparation program requirements; Blueprint training; submission of AIB’s annual report; fiscal 2023 MFR data; and the independent evaluation. Additionally, AIB should comment on the status of distributing technical assistance grants awarded in fiscal 2023 and the agency’s plans to increase technical assistance to State agencies in fiscal 2024.

Due to these delays, the Department of Legislative Services (DLS) recommends adding budget bill language restricting funds until AIB submits a report to the budget committees on efforts that it is taking to complete its responsibilities by the statutory deadlines.

Operating Budget Recommended Actions

1. Add the following language to the special fund appropriation:

, provided that \$150,000 of this appropriation made for the purpose of administration may not be expended until the Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB) submits a report to the budget committees on agency actions to implement Blueprint for Maryland’s Future (Blueprint) grant programs. This report shall include a timeline and detailed information on the progress in completing the following programs, reports, and measures:

- (1) fiscal 2023 and 2024 Managing for Results performance data, including collaboration with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) for annual data collection and reporting of performance measures;
- (2) review of calendar 2023 and 2024 State agency Blueprint implementation plans;
- (3) collaboration with MSDE, the State Board of Education, and the Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board to revise teacher preparation program requirements;
- (4) collaboration with MSDE to provide targeted training on Blueprint to superintendents, school administrators, senior instructional staff, and local boards of education;
- (5) progress on procuring a vendor to complete the independent evaluation of Blueprint implementation and outcomes; and
- (6) allocation, facilitation, and review of local education agency (LEA) and Career and Technology Education Committee technical assistance grants in fiscal 2023 and 2024, including grant application procedures and documentation, use of funds, roles and responsibilities of strategic facilitators, categorized expenditures by LEA, and AIB collaboration, training, and accountability measures for grantees.

The report shall be submitted by September 1, 2024, and the budget committees shall have 45 days from the date of the receipt of the report to review and comment. Funds restricted pending the receipt of a report may not be transferred by budget amendment or otherwise to any other purpose and shall be canceled if the report is not submitted to the budget committees.

Explanation: AIB is an independent agency of State government that is responsible for overseeing the implementation of Blueprint grant programs. Due to recent issues involving the timely submission of reports, grant administration, required training, and other administrative tasks, this language restricts funding budgeted for administrative purposes

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until AIB submits a report regarding the timeline and planned agency actions to complete the activities.

Information Request	Author	Due Date
Report on delayed activities supporting Blueprint implementation	AIB	September 1, 2024

Appendix 1
Description of Accountability and Implementation Board

Purpose and Charge

The rationale for AIB was founded on lessons learned from the implementation of recommendations of the Commission on Education, Finance, Equity, and Excellence (Thornton Commission, calendar 1999 to 2001), which asked Maryland taxpayers to substantially increase spending on education to improve student performance outcomes. In the following 15 years, the cost of education in Maryland increased substantially but without significant increases in student performance. One of the goals of the subsequent Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education (Kirwan Commission, calendar 2016 to 2019) was to examine this result and find a solution that increased both governance and accountability for the next revision of Maryland’s education funding model and policies.

After studying other top-performing countries, the Kirwan Commission realized that Maryland needed a governmental mechanism that coordinated functions across departments responsible for educational excellence. This charge fell under the Kirwan Commission’s Policy Area 5, Governance and Accountability, which was included as a goal to ensure gaps that developed between policy and practice after the Thornton Commission did not materialize after Kirwan Commission recommendations were implemented. The Kirwan Commission recommended an independent board or unit of State government that worked across agencies responsible for the education of Maryland students and had the authority to ensure that the commission’s recommendations were successfully implemented and produced the desired results. In keeping with this charge, Chapters 36 and 55 established AIB to:

- develop a comprehensive implementation plan, including intended outcomes, for Blueprint for Maryland’s Future that all units of State and local government will follow;
- hold State and local governments accountable for this plan;
- monitor the plan and ensure that it is implemented; and
- evaluate outcomes achieved during implementation.

As part of this charge, AIB is intended to provide equal access to a high-quality education with equitable outcomes for each student regardless of the student’s race, ethnicity, gender, address, disability status, socioeconomic status, or the language spoken in the student’s home.

Roles and Responsibilities

As an independent unit of State government, AIB’s role is to oversee and monitor State educational agencies and LEAs in implementing Blueprint for Maryland’s Future policies. In this role, AIB has plenary authority, which means that in the event of a conflict between AIB and other agencies, AIB’s decision or policy is considered final. AIB has the authority to adopt regulations to carry out provisions of the law; adopt bylaws for the conduct of its business; sue or be sued; accept loans, grants, or assistance of any kind; enter into contracts as necessary, including with independent experts to fulfill its duties; subpoena data needed to complete its functions and duties; and appoint an executive director and hire staff to carry out its powers and duties. State agencies are required to collaborate or consult with AIB on Blueprint for Maryland’s Future implementation, and AIB can withhold State funds from LEAs and State agencies if a plan is not being implemented as requested. AIB can also develop appeals processes, monitor LEA expenditures to ensure that minimum school funding requirements are being met, and offer grants for innovative programs that further AIB’s purpose or goals.

AIB is not intended to usurp or abrogate the operational authority of agencies that are also involved in the delivery of public education in the State or the lawful collective bargaining process. It is subject to the Public Information Act, the Open Meetings Act, and the Maryland Public Ethics Law, and members will be required to file an annual financial disclosure form with the State Ethics Commission. Open meetings of the AIB must be made available to the public through live video streaming and archived on the Internet for at least five years.

Membership

Chapter 36 details the criteria for nomination and membership of AIB. The Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Delegates jointly appoint the AIB chair, and members serve six years, which are staggered for initial members as follows: three terms expire July 1, 2024; two terms expire July 1, 2025; and two terms expire July 1, 2026.

Appendix 2
2023 Joint Chairmen’s Report Responses from Agency

The 2023 JCR requested that AIB prepare two reports. Electronic copies of the full JCR responses can be found on the DLS Library website.

- ***Report on Alternative Requirements for Private Prekindergarten Providers:*** Language in the fiscal 2024 Budget Bill required AIB to submit a report with recommendations for alternative quality requirements and structural elements for private prekindergarten providers to participate in publicly funded prekindergarten programs. AIB provided six recommendations to enhance the broader early childhood education system: explore continuing structural strategies; maximize available resources; create, strengthen, and disseminate information on early childhood employee pathways; alleviate barriers to higher education; explore additional pathways to certification; and increase guidance and support. AIB indicated that it would continue working with stakeholders to consider recommendations for changes to the quality requirements. Further discussion of publicly funded prekindergarten can be found in the R00A99 – MSDE – Early Childhood Development budget analysis.
- ***Status Update on Expenditures, Personnel, and Managing for Results Measures:*** AIB was established in fiscal 2022, with fiscal 2023 as the agency’s first full year of operations. The budget committees asked AIB to submit an update on agency progress and operations, including fiscal 2023 and 2024 expenditures; staff hirings, vacancies, and positions filled in fiscal 2022 to 2024; and MFR measures. AIB reported that the agency reverted funds in fiscal 2022 for technical assistance grants and carried over fiscal 2023 funds for that purpose to be spent in fiscal 2024; filled 7 staff positions and expected to hire 5 additional positions in fiscal 2024; and is in the process of refining MFR measures. Further discussion of this information can be found in Key Observation 1.

Appendix 3
Object/Fund Difference Report
Accountability and Implementation Board

<u>Object/Fund</u>	<u>FY 23</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>FY 24</u> <u>Working</u> <u>Appropriation</u>	<u>FY 25</u> <u>Allowance</u>	<u>FY 24 - FY 25</u> <u>Amount Change</u>	<u>Percent</u> <u>Change</u>
Positions					
01 Regular	15.00	15.00	15.00	0.00	0%
02 Contractual	1.00	0.75	0.00	-0.75	-100.0%
Total Positions	16.00	15.75	15.00	-0.75	-4.8%
Objects					
01 Salaries and Wages	\$ 670,024	\$ 2,140,176	\$ 2,454,721	\$ 314,545	14.7%
02 Technical and Special Fees	174,209	66,178	27,500	-38,678	-58.4%
03 Communication	3,648	25,000	16,500	-8,500	-34.0%
04 Travel	3,593	50,000	22,500	-27,500	-55.0%
08 Contractual Services	931,127	408,592	437,040	28,448	7.0%
09 Supplies and Materials	1,171	75,000	1,500	-73,500	-98.0%
10 Equipment – Replacement	0	200,000	0	-200,000	-100.0%
12 Grants, Subsidies, and Contributions	2,600,000	1,942,260	0	-1,942,260	-100.0%
Total Objects	\$ 4,383,772	\$ 4,907,206	\$ 2,959,761	-\$ 1,947,445	-39.7%
Funds					
03 Special Fund	\$ 4,383,772	\$ 4,794,706	\$ 2,959,761	-\$ 1,834,945	-38.3%
09 Reimbursable Fund	0	112,500	0	-112,500	-100.0%
Total Funds	\$ 4,383,772	\$ 4,907,206	\$ 2,959,761	-\$ 1,947,445	-39.7%

Note: The fiscal 2024 appropriation does not include deficiencies or across-the-board reductions. The fiscal 2025 allowance does not include cost-of-living adjustments.