

BILL: House Bill 1372
TITLE: Blueprint for Maryland's Future - Revisions
POSITION: SUPPORT
DATE: March 15, 2021
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means Committee
Appropriations Committee
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The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all of the State's local boards of education, strongly supports the immediate passage of this emergency legislation.

MABE committed to the success of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future Act (House Bill 1300 of 2020) passed by veto override earlier this session. Therefore, MABE supports this "Blueprint Revisions" legislation to update the Blueprint law to extend implementation dates, make technical changes, secure local maintenance of effort funding, correct for declining enrollment counts in the fall of 2020, increase funding to close the digital divide, and address the paramount needs for summer school and other supplemental services in response to the COVID pandemic.

MABE believes the provisions of this "Blueprint Revisions" legislation are clearly aligned with and essential to a successful launch of 13 years of continuous improvement and innovation in the delivery of elementary and secondary education in Maryland's public schools. Our nearly 1 million public school students deserve nothing less.

MABE led the advocacy effort to create the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education precisely so that an updated adequacy study and other funding and accountability issues could be debated and transformed into legislation to update and improve Maryland's school finance system. The Blueprint for Maryland's Future Act represents the culmination of these efforts. MABE views the Kirwan Commission's recommendations and the Blueprint for Maryland's Future legislation as a resounding "Call to Action" for the building of a world class education system in Maryland.

This legislation guarantees the fulfillment of the key policy and funding provisions in the following major policy areas, to ensure that each student, in every school, in every community, is provided with:

- High-quality early childhood education programs for 3 and 4 year-olds;
- High-quality and increasingly diverse teachers and principals;
- Access to college and career readiness pathways (including advanced college prep programs and career and technical education that leads to employment); and
- The significant additional state and local resources needed to ensure that each and every student is afforded every opportunity to succeed.

This legislation meaningfully expands the scope of the original Blueprint law by directing local school systems to utilize the wealth of available State and federal funding to fund summer school and tutoring programs across the State to meet the learning needs of students compounded by the challenges to teaching and learning throughout the pandemic.

MABE believes that the significant funding increases and policy reforms in the Blueprint, and enhanced in this legislation, are vital to fulfilling Maryland's constitutional duty to provide equitable access for all students to an excellent education. MABE also continues to believe that local boards must be at the helm, fulfilling the responsibility to govern school systems in accordance with the Blueprint and in the best interests of all students. For these reasons, MABE urges a favorable report on House Bill 1372.