



Maryland Education Coalition

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BILL: [SB1030](#)

TITLE: **The Blueprint for Maryland's Future**

POSITION: SUPPORT

DATE: March 6, 2019

COMMITTEE: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

& Budget and Taxation

The Maryland Education Coalition (MEC) is a group of organizations and individuals dedicated for over thirty years to improving outcomes for all students in Maryland public schools by promoting equal access to high-quality programs and services, adequate and equitable funding for public education, and vigorous systemic accountability for its estimated 900,000 students from Allegany to Worcester and all public schools in between. We believe and evidence shows that public schools are essential for teaching the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for our children to be contributing members in our communities, without discrimination.

We work to promote successful education outcomes for all public-school students, **regardless of jurisdiction, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, gender identity, English language learner status, or disability**. We believe Maryland must fully fund public education programs to realize its constitutional guarantee that all children in the state have access to "*a thorough and efficient system of public education*" and we oppose the use of public funds for non-public schools, except for state approved private special needs schools.

MEC supports the Maryland General Assembly leadership proposed funding plan to add \$325 million in FY 2020 and \$750 million in FY 2021 to support **Senate Bill 1030 - The Blueprint for Maryland's Future**, based on the Maryland Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education interim report recommendations for 2019.

It is significant that the Commission and this legislation support additional funding for struggling learners and children in poverty, including early education for three-year-olds from low-income families. Remediating the adequacy gap in shortfalls in funding even from the current formula should be a priority.

MEC supports this legislation, but offers the following concerns or suggestions:

- **Chapter 361 of the Acts of 2018, Section 2, page 21** – MEC is concerned that due to contract delays, the new reporting date of December 1, 2019 for the ***independent study of the individualized education program (IEP) process in the State*** will not provide enough time to complete a quality study that will meet each of its goals and objectives.
- **Teacher Salary Incentive Grant Program, page 23** – MEC agrees and supports the need for many Maryland School Systems to increase the salary of many of their staff, but this program and legislation lacks flexibility for those school systems whose higher priority may be to add additional staff to fill core subject area classroom needs such as the arts or student services positions, which could include counselors, psychologists or social workers.
- **Section 6, 2, (i), page 28** – Change to "*...priority given for evidence-based reading screening, intervention and supports*"

MEC is also concerned that the legislation lacks some categories to support the needs of all students, especially in less wealthy school systems with high poverty, special needs, or high percentages of children of color. This may include, but is not restricted to additional supports or funding for Career Technology Education, English Language Learners, evidence-based primary reading, additional health care staff, school counselors, psychologist and social workers based on national standards, as well as restorative practices in support of the Maryland Commission on the School-to-Prison Pipeline and Restorative Practice recommendations. We are committed to working with the General Assembly, professionals, and advocates to meet these objectives when the full formula is developed.

We ask for a favorable report on SB1030.

Advocates for Children and Youth, American Civil Liberties Union of MD, Arts Education in Maryland Schools, CASA, Decoding Dyslexia Maryland, Disability Rights Maryland, League of Women Voters of MD, Let Them See Clearly, Maryland Coalition for Community Schools, Maryland Out of School Time Network, Maryland PTA, Maryland NAACP, Parents Advocacy Consortium, Rick Tyler, Jr., Right to Read MD, School Social Workers of MD, Sharon Rubinstein