



Maryland Education Coalition



INSPIRES ACTION & POSITIVE CHANGE SO MARYLAND'S STUDENTS SUCCEED

Rick Tyler, Jr., Chair

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DATE: March 15, 2021

BILL: HB1372

COMMITTEE: House - Appropriations and
Ways and Means Committees

TITLE: Blueprint for Maryland's Future - Revisions
**REVISED - Recommended Amendments or
Comments with Rationale**

The Maryland Education Coalition (MEC) thanks the General Assembly leaders and each committee member for the opportunity to submit revised written testimony with recommended amendments or comments for HB1372- Blueprint for Maryland's Future – Revisions. Originally MEC was led to believe we only had less than 3 days to review and submit without a fiscal note or legislative briefing. Below you will find our updated, more definitive statement including amendments based on evidence to add clarity or accountability. We urge acceptance.

1. MEC supports the additions to the Foundation program for digital tools expenses, but the proposed decrease in weights for the Compensatory, English Limited Language and Special Education formulas who are the 3 major student groups most impacted by the pandemic, digital equity and learning loss. It may delay funding adequacy and equity of historically underfunded districts with high enrollment of these students.
 - **MEC recommends amending by striking the decrease for ELL, Compensatory Education, & Special Education.**
2. MEC thanks the General Assembly for the more rapid increase of the Concentration of Poverty grant Program.
 - **MEC urges the GAM to amend by directing MSDE to accelerate implementation of the State alternative income eligibility form to ensure more accurate collection, reporting and use of related data.** Delays will result in underfunding some school districts due to undercounting of all lower income students.
3. MEC believes, and evidence shows that accountability will not be accomplished if the report is limited to a description of only “the amount of funding spent on student instruction and interventions.” The more basic question is: How was the money spent – on evidence-based programs/assessments and with what outcomes and effectiveness? The amendment will require this information to be reported – things that are reported can be tracked and accountability measures applied. **MEC proposes the following amendment:**
 - **SECTION 3, p. 31, lines 20-21** after the words “including a description of the amount of funding spent on, ADD - EVIDENCE-BASED-INSTRUCTION, INTERVENTIONS AND ASSESSMENTS, AND INCLUDES OUTCOMES AND EFFECTIVENESS OF FUNDS SPENT DIRECTLY ON STUDENTS’ INSTRUCTION, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE SUMMER SCHOOL, TUTORING AND SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTION PROGRAMS UNDER SECTION 4.
4. Evidence in research supports aligning and integrating tutoring and other supplemental instruction within the prevention and intervention frameworks – commonly known as Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) and Response to Intervention (RTI) – that are already required by the state in some form and are commonly used by local districts. **MEC proposes the following amendment:**
 - **SECTION 4, p. 32, line 29: revise section (6) to read:** OCCURS DURING THE SCHOOL DAY AND IS ALIGNED WITH ESSA AND MULTI-TIERED SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT (MTSS) FRAMEWORKS FOR TIERED INTERVENTIONS FOR STRUGGLING LEARNERS, TO THE EXTENT PRACTICABLE.

(over)

Advocates for Children and Youth, American Civil Liberties Union of MD, Arts Education in Maryland Schools, Arts Every Day, Attendance Works, CASA, Decoding Dyslexia of MD, Disability Rights MD, League of Women Voters of MD, Let Them See Clearly, Maryland PTA, MSC-NAACP, Maryland Coalition for Community Schools, Maryland Coalition for Gifted & Talented Ed, Maryland Out of School Time Network, Maryland School Psychologists' Association, Parent Advocacy Consortium, Public Justice Center, Right to Read Maryland, School Social Workers of MD, Barbara Dezmon, Kalam Hettleman, David Hornbeck, Rick Tyler, Jr., Shamoyia Gardiner, Sharon Rubinstein

5. Accountability (including evaluation of effectiveness) can only be achieved if the basic elements of the tutoring models are reported and if the literacy continuum addressed by these programs are clearly explained to parents and caregivers and results shared with them. **MEC proposes the following amendment:**
- **SECTION 4, p. 33, lines 26 and 28:**
 - a. ~~Delete section (2) the method the county board used to identify students for tutoring;~~ and
 - b. **Revise section (4) to read:** TUTORING PROGRAMS PROVIDED TO STUDENTS, INCLUDING THE GENERAL GUIDELINES AND PRACTICES PERTAINING TO IDENTIFICATION AND GROUPING OF STUDENTS; TUTOR TO STUDENT RATIO (GROUP SIZE); FREQUENCY OF SESSIONS, DURATION (HOW MANY WEEKS), PROGRESS MONITORING ASSESSMENTS & FREQUENCY, THE AMOUNT OF TIME PER SESSION AND THE NUMBER OF SESSIONS; PARENT/CAREGIVER EDUCATION AND NOTIFICATION PRACTICES AND”
6. Accountability for, and evaluation of, the outcomes require disaggregation of the data beyond just the tutoring model. MEC proposes the following amendment:
- **p. 33, line 29: revise section (5) to read:** DATA ON STUDENT OUTCOMES, DISAGGREGATED BY THE TUTORING MODEL OR SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTION OR INTERVENTIONS USED TO PROVIDE THE TUTORING OR INTERVENTIONS AND BY THE GRADE OF THE STUDENTS AND SUBJECT AREAS.
7. **As required by ESSA to ensure stakeholder participation in the decision-making process, MEC requests adding a new provision to the bill with the proposed amendment language below:**
- MSDE SHALL ESTABLISH STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEES AS IT PLANS AND IMPLEMENTS -- INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO ITS SUPERVISORY GUIDANCE OF LOCAL PROGRAMS -- THE FUNDING PROGRAMS UNDER SECTIONS 3, 4 AND 5. NO LATER THAN 30 DAYS AFTER THE PASSAGE OF THIS BILL, MSDE SHALL REPORT TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ITS PLAN FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEES.
8. **MEC also strongly supports that expansion of social-emotional learning with additional training of more staff, that includes but should not be restricted to students with trauma or behavioral issues.**
- **MEC notes that data provided by MSDE shows that all school systems are significantly understaffed with qualified student service personnel** (school counselors, school social workers and school psychologists) and urges increased funding over time to support the additional roles and responsibilities of these professionals to lower the staff to student ratios in all school districts closer to the national standards.
9. **MEC strongly objects the authority given to the Accountability and Implementation Board that would permit the withholding of funds from a LEA.** This policy was in the Bridge for Excellence Act (Thornton) Act and used several times with unnecessary harm to under-funded LEAs. We fear that this authority could be used subjectively without considering and implementing other more positive and productive solutions and believes such authority should be approved of the actual appropriators.

In conclusion, MEC in general supports HB1372, but urges the committee and the General Assembly to carefully consider all options that could more rapidly, adequately, and equitably provide sufficient resources to meet the needs of all LEA's, their staff and all 900,000 students, especially those LEAs with low wealth, high poverty, special needs, and ELL students including high numbers of students of color.

Respectfully yours,
Rick Tyler, Jr. Chair

Rick Tyler, Jr.