
R00A02

Aid to Education

Maryland State Department of Education

Response to the Analyst's Review and Recommendations

House Education and Economic Development Subcommittee –
February 23, 2017

Senate Education, Business, and Administration Subcommittee –
March 6, 2017



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The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) welcomes this opportunity to share with the Committee some of its success stories and to address questions raised by the analyst.

Graduation Rate Increases

MSDE should comment on the impact of raising the compulsory attendance age on graduation and drop-out rates.

MSDE Response: MSDE cannot definitively say that increasing the compulsory age of attendance has an impact on graduation rates; however, the extra time school systems have to provide additional support and programs for these students may impact their decision to stay in school and complete the requirements for graduation.

State Aid to Education

MSDE should comment on whether there will be any revisions in enrollments or formula aid for fiscal 2018.

MSDE Response: Each year, subsequent to the first calculation of State Aid for the upcoming fiscal year, the Department may receive updated information on data that is used in these calculations. For the FY 2018 calculations, MSDE is currently aware of a few changes in data that would impact these formulae. MSDE has provided the revised enrollment counts to the Department of Budget and Management.

Pathways in Technology Early College High School Program

MSDE should comment on whether any funding for P-TECH planning grants has been provided to Prince George's County as specified in fiscal 2017 budget language and, if so, from what source.

MSDE Response: The \$200,000 P-TECH grant award for Prince George's County Public Schools was issued on February 14, 2017. The Administration and the Department are committed to P-Tech and as such, funds were realigned within Aid to Education programs to cover the P-Tech grant to Prince George's County Public Schools. The adjustment within programs is an annual matter (up and down – depending on the year) and in no way reduces Aid to Public Schools funding in FY 2017.

DLS recommends adding budget bill language to specify where P-TECH schools should be located in the 2017-2018 school year, as well as a transfer of \$0.2 million from the MSDE Headquarters budget to provide planning grant funding for P-TECH schools in Prince George's County.

MSDE Response: MSDE concurs with the recommendation to add budget bill language specifying where P-TECH schools should be located in the 2017-2018 school year as planning grants have been issued to the P-TECH schools for the locations noted in the analysis.

MSDE respectfully disagrees with the recommendation to transfer \$0.2 million from the MSDE Headquarters budget as the funds were available within the MSDE Aid to Education budget, per the response noted above.

MSDE should comment on potential locations and industry partners for the six new P-TECH schools to receive planning grants in fiscal 2018. DLS recommends that funding for the new funding mechanism and for planning grants for the new schools should be contingent on the enactment of SB 319 or HB 413.

MSDE will be issuing a competitive request for grant proposals when funds for the planning grants become available. Since the grants are competitive, MSDE does not know which locations will be funded. The industry partners will be identified as part of the competitive grant process.

Teacher Preparation and Retention

MSDE should comment on the timeline for the delivery of the workgroup's final report and how its recommendations might be affected if funding for programs established under the TIRA Act is reduced.

The workgroup is on track to complete the final report as required by November 1, 2017. The workgroup anticipates that its recommendations will create partnerships between Institutes of Higher Education and the PreK-12 community to provide a continuum of services to teachers throughout their careers. While funding reductions may present challenges to new induction models or new incentive initiatives, other recommendations would likely have no fiscal impact. Examples include strengthening teacher preparation programs, reducing barriers to certification, revising the minimum qualifications for mentor teachers and developing a statewide professional development system.

MSDE should comment on best practices for teacher preparation programs in Maryland and how it will provide assistance to the commission as it addresses teacher preparation and retention.

MSDE Response: The workgroup is prepared to share its findings and recommendations with the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education. The workgroup has had robust discussions regarding the redesign of teacher preparation programs. The three areas of focus are: the internship component of preparation, emphasizing cultural competencies, and increasing professional development/induction opportunities for the continuation of learning throughout the career of a teacher.

Workgroup and committee members believe that strong partnerships between Institutions of Higher Education and the PreK-12 community are essential to strengthen teacher preparation

programs. Through better partnerships, student interns would have more meaningful and diverse internship experiences including participating in school opening and closing activities, placement in low performing and high poverty schools, and an extended teaching experience. By increasing a student's exposure to different student populations and school communities during their preparation program, first year teachers will be better prepared to teach in environments that may be different than their direct life experiences. Extending the induction timeframe and differentiating professional development throughout the career will increase teacher confidence and skills. The goal of these changes is to smooth the transition from college to career for young teachers and to improve retention rates through career-long, individualized professional development opportunities.

In order to accomplish these goals, significant revisions to the Institutional Performance Criteria must be completed. That work is currently under way by a subcommittee of the workgroup. While ambitious, it is the workgroup's goal to finish these revisions for inclusion in the final report due by November 1, 2017.

Nonpublic Placements

MSDE should comment if the basic cost calculation will lead to savings in fiscal 2017 and whether it believes the allocation, after the \$5.0 million reversion, to be an accurate reflection of its fiscal 2017 costs based on enrollment trends and anticipated costs per student. DLS recommends reducing the fiscal 2018 allowance for NPP by \$5.0 million due to lower expected costs for NPP based on declining enrollment in the program.

MSDE Response: The revised basic cost calculation methodology more accurately reflects the basic cost and the local share of basic cost of educating a non-disabled student, and results in reduced costs to the State. MSDE believes the revised allocation for FY 2017 (\$121,618,000) is sufficient to cover the costs in this program. However, the FY2017 data provided represents a mid-year snapshot, and MSDE does not expect a decline in enrollment over the prior year.

MSDE respectfully disagrees with the recommended (\$5,000,000) adjustment to the FY 2018 allowance. This program is current-year funded and the costs are variable in that they are based on student placements and the cost of specific services. MSDE will monitor expenditures and advise DBM and DLS of any changes throughout the year.

DLS recommends adopting language reducing funding for NPP by \$733,821, to reduce the provider increase to 1.0%. This language would be contingent on a provision in the BRFA of 2017 limiting the maximum amount that IRC may increase provider rates to 1.0%.

MSDE Response: MSDE respectfully disagrees. The Department supports the funding provided in the Governor's Allowance.

Other Recommended Actions

1. Add the following language: Provided that the Maryland State Department of Education shall notify the budget committees of any intent to transfer the funds from program

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MSDE Response: MSDE Concur.

5. Add the following language to the general fund appropriation: Further provided that \$803,000 of this appropriation made for the purpose of providing Pathways in Technology Early College High Schools grants shall be contingent upon the enactment of SB 319 or HB 413.

MSDE Response: MSDE Concur.

7. Delete new funding for an unspecified purpose under current law provided in the budget for innovative schools. 1,000,000 GF

MSDE Response: MSDE respectfully disagrees. The Department supports the funding provided in the Governor's Allowance.

8. Delete new funding provided for a Linking Youth to New eXperiences School in Frederick County, as funding for the school is not mandated. This can only help address the State's out-year structural shortfall. 336,599 GF

MSDE Response: MSDE respectfully disagrees. The Department supports the funding provided in the Governor's Allowance.