
R00A02

MSDE Aid to Education

Maryland State Department of Education

Response to the Analyst's Review and Recommendations

House Education & Economic Development Subcommittee –

February 21, 2024

Senate Education, Business & Administration Subcommittee –

February 22, 2024



Dr. Carey Wright
Interim State Superintendent of
Schools

Performance Analysis: Managing for Results 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.

2. Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program Mathematics Scores Show Majority of Students Beginning and Developing Learners

In MSDE's fiscal 2025 submission for this performance measure, prior and current mathematics scores for Algebra II, which had been reported in previous years, were omitted. **MSDE should comment on the reason for the omission of the Algebra II data in the fiscal 2025 Managing for Results (MFR) submission.**

MSDE RESPONSE: The College and Career Readiness and College Completion Act of 2013 required the Maryland State Department of Education, in collaboration with local education agencies (LEAs) and institutions of higher education, to determine whether students were ready for college level, credit-bearing coursework no later than eleventh grade. A stakeholder group outlined assessments that LEAs should use to determine student readiness; for math, the PARCC Algebra II test was the main state assessment recommended for this purpose.

In 2022, as mandated by the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, the State Board of Education passed an interim College and Career Readiness (CCR) standard that students should meet by the end of grade 10. While the interim standard allowed students multiple assessments to meet the standard, most students identified as CCR met the standard on the Algebra I test by the end of grade 9. The current CCR standard that replaced the interim standard only allows the Algebra I assessment, not the Algebra II or Geometry assessments, as an assessment option for meeting the standard. Due to these changes, the importance and implications of the Algebra II test have been de-emphasized.

It should also be noted that the Algebra II test was never a test universally administered to all students in a grade, similar to the grade 5 math assessment. The Algebra I test is also not a test specific to a grade level, but most students take it at some point in their schooling, typically between grades 7 and 9; this is not true for the Algebra II test as only a fraction of students take the test each year. Because the sample of students tested in Algebra I is limited and not representative of all students, trends in test results from year to year could be unreliable and misinterpreted as improvements or worsening of teaching and learning when, instead, they are due to the selection of students taking the test.

3. More Students Score as Proficient or Distinguished in English/Language Arts Compared to Mathematics

The Department of Legislative Services (DLS) recommends adopting committee narrative requesting a report on MCAP scores and LEA progress on remediation of COVID-19-related learning loss.

MSDE RESPONSE: MSDE concurs with the request to provide by November 1, 2024, a status update report on MCAP assessments and expenditures similar to the report submitted November 1, 2023, as required in the Joint Chairmen's Report of 2023 (p 180-181).

FY 2023

DLS recommends that MSDE comment on the high number and amounts of encumbrances in fiscal 2023.

MSDE RESPONSE:

\$185.7 million in general funds for Students with Disabilities for pending grant obligations in the Nonpublic Placement program. These encumbrances include grants to LEAs, and to the Maryland School for the Deaf and the Maryland School for the Blind for enhanced services and public-private partnerships. All of these grants include the State share of medical assistance payments. The Nonpublic Tuition Assistance Program, Enhanced Services, and Public-Private Partnerships are current year funded programs and are not fully reconciled until after the close of the fiscal year. These grants were all reconciled by October 2023.

\$122.7 million encumbrances are for the Special Ed formula grants that involve the MSDE and the Maryland Department of Health (MDH). The State Aid formula grants for special education also include the State share of medical assistance and require a final reconciliation prior to closing out encumbrances. In order to provide the State match for Medicaid payments, the Department uses an intergovernmental transfer process in which the anticipated state match is identified and the final payments to the LEAs are withheld pending final invoicing of Medicaid reimbursement. Therefore, the final reconciliation does not occur until after the close of the fiscal year.

\$6.3 million encumbrances are for the Autism waiver (AW) expansion program. The Autism Waiver program's use of funds is driven by participant utilization and provider billing. The total cost is dependent on the Q4 billing processed by MDH. The reconciliation process is not concluded until after the close of the fiscal year.

\$6.8 million encumbrances are for the Student with Disabilities Infant and Toddlers program. This program services young children with developmental delays and disabilities and their families. The GF in the program serves the same purpose as the Special funds in the program. The program was enhanced under the Blueprint law, and the supplemental funding comes as Blueprint funds. The CLIG (Consolidated Local Implementation Grant) is designated to serve as the single mechanism through which local jurisdictions receive grants of federal and State funds to implement local early intervention programs in compliance with federal and State regulations, policies, and procedures. The encumbrances are established in the year the grant is issued. As of now, the majority of the general fund's encumbrance has been reconciled and closed.

\$86.3 million in federal funds for Educationally Deprived Children. The Educationally Deprived Children program includes Title I Part A Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Education Agencies, Title I Part C Migrant Education, and Title I Part D Negligent and Delinquent programs. These federal grants are subject to the Tydings provision enabling LEAs 27 months to fully utilize the funds.

\$71.6 million in federal funds in Aid to Students with Disabilities. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) part B and C grants are also subject to the Tydings provision enabling LEA's 27 months to fully utilize these funds.

\$50.3 million in Elementary and Secondary Emergency Relief (ESSER) federal stimulus funds in Innovative Programs. This balance includes several programs issued under the State Share of ESSER II and ESSER III funds as well as the American Rescue Plan Emergency Assistance to Nonpublic Schools Program. The encumbrances are open due to the varying end dates for the grants. ESSER II issued through the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CCRSA) which ended on September 30, 2023, and the American Rescue Plan Act which ends on September 30, 2024.

\$21.5 million in federal funds for Teacher Development. The open encumbrances are associated with the federal Title II Grants, which are intended to increase the academic achievement of all students by improving the quality and effectiveness of educators. These federal funds are subject to the Tydings provision and are available for 27 months. The encumbrance balance includes funds for the LEAs as well as State activities supporting content-specific learning labs and statewide professional development.

\$10.0 million in special funds in Students with Disabilities for the Autism Waiver program, which were transferred funds from the DPA. As noted above, the encumbrances remain open until the final reconciliation of the current year's billings. Any balance available in special funds will revert to GAD.

Fiscal 2024 Implementation of Legislative Priorities

MSDE should comment on whether the grant funding provided for Thread, Inc. and the Gwynn Park High School FFA program has been distributed or the timing for distribution if it has not yet been distributed.

MSDE RESPONSE:

Thread, Inc.

The grant funding for Thread Inc. was awarded on January 22, 2024. MSDE solicited the organization's budget narrative and project plan August 28, 2023. The Original application was reviewed and sent back to Thread for revisions on 11/22/2023. On 12/20/2023 Thread submitted their updated application with all necessary revisions. To date there are no reported expenditures for reimbursement.

Gwynn Park High School FFA Program

MSDE is communicating with the project leads at Gwynn Oak High School and Prince George's Public Schools to obtain the organization's budget narrative and project plan. Funds will be awarded along with the technical assistance that may be required for administration.

Issues

1. Continued Concerns Regarding Maryland State Department of Education's Free and Reduced-price Meal Count Affect Compensatory Education and Concentration of Poverty Programs

Due to the issues stated in the second submission of fiscal 2024 FRPM data, DLS does not recommend release of funds at this time. However, DLS recommends that MSDE continue to work to resolve these issues prior to the end of the fiscal year to allow for a release of funds.

MSDE respectfully disagrees. The department has prepared the requested reports, provided the data, and explained the process for collecting the data used for the calculation of the Compensatory Education and Concentration of Poverty programs. As noted below, the Department believes it has provided all of the required information and respectfully requests these funds be released to the Department.

Free and Reduced-price Meal School-level Enrollment Count Issues Affect Concentration of Poverty Data

MSDE should comment on concerns in the fiscal 2024 and 2025 enrollment counts for the compensatory education and CPG programs. In particular, MSDE should comment on the following concerns:

- **concerns in the CPG count as stated in the previous bulleted list;**
- **omission of the required greater than comparisons;**
- **omission of number of students identified through direct certification in each eligibility category;**
- **omission of information as to how Medicaid-eligible students are included in the total direct certification; and**
- **omission of data needed to confirm accurate CEP counts, including FRPM percentages for every school from the prior fiscal year of eligibility and eligibility year.**

DLS further recommends adding language to restrict funds pending a report on MSDE's process to collect data and determine FRPM enrollment counts for fiscal 2025 for the compensatory education and CPG programs.

MSDE respectfully disagrees with the recommendation to withhold funds from the Department. The Department has responded to the General Assembly's requests for data multiple times, verbally and in writing, and was led to believe that DLS staff understood the information provided by the Department and that the data would meet the request of the General Assembly. Currently, the Department is reviewing the FY 2025 FRPM data provided to DBM and DLS in December to ensure the calculations are accurate and will provide updated data, if necessary, to DBM and the General Assembly.

The following information summarizes the data provided to the General Assembly in response to the request for information regarding the calculations of the Compensatory Education and Concentration of Poverty grant programs. It is important to note that schools and LEAs primarily use Free- or Reduced-Price Meal eligibility data to ensure all eligible students receive the meals they are entitled to receive.

The Compensatory Education Program uses student eligibility for Free or Reduced Meals (FRPM) as a *proxy* for identifying economically disadvantaged students. The Compensatory Education program student count also informs the Concentration of Poverty Program.

According to §5-222 of the Education Article, the student count for Compensatory Education is defined as the greater of the number of students eligible for FRPM in the prior fiscal year or for schools or districts participating in CEP, the percent of students eligible for FRPM in the year prior to entering CEP multiplied by the current-year enrollment. As stated above, ***a student is deemed eligible for FRPM by either the USDA form, direct certification or a school/district operating in CEP.***

The Department's data collection process begins with the 9/30 enrollment collection each year and identifies students in that count in grades K-12 that are also eligible for FRPM. A student is determined to be eligible for FRPM through either a USDA eligibility form submitted to the school by the student's parent/guardian or through Direct Certification by a comparison of LEA enrollment data and data from other State Agencies including TANF and Medicaid. If a student is directly certified as eligible for FRPM, it can be from one or several of the means-tested programs included in the Direct Certification process. Some schools and districts in the State operate the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) which enables a school or district to provide meals to all students in the school based on the poverty percentage of the total school. The CEP program removes the student-level FRPM identification since all students are served meals, and therefore, considered eligible, regardless of the family income.

The Department's data collection process requires LEAs to report the number of students in grades K-12 who are included in the 9/30 enrollment data and eligible for FRPM. This is the total universe of students eligible for FRPM through either a USDA form or Direct Certification. Next, for schools/districts operating CEP, the data collection requires the % of students eligible for FRPM in the year prior to entering CEP. This percentage is multiplied by the 9/30 enrollment to identify the number of students eligible for FRPM in the next fiscal year.

The Department's "*greater of*" calculation starts with FRPM count compared to direct certification plus USDA forms for all schools, regardless of the CEP status. In this comparison, the FRPM count should be equal to or higher than the direct certification plus USDA forms count. For example, direct certification is a means of identifying students as eligible for FRPM but would not include all students that are eligible in a given school. If the Direct Certification plus the USDA forms count is higher than the FRPM Count, the Department assumes the Direct Certification plus USDA forms count includes either PreK students or students who are eligible for FRPM, but not included in the 9/30 enrollment count.

Next, the Department compares the FRPM count to the total enrollment minus PreK at the school to ensure PreK students are not included in the FRPM count for all schools. As a result, the final FRPM count is the greater of the FRPM count or the CEP count. The average final FRPM count for the three prior years is used to determine eligibility for the Concentration of Poverty Program. The FRPM

count in the second prior year serves as the per pupil count for the Concentration of Poverty per pupil count.

2. Pathways in Technology Early College High School Enrollment Counts Require Clarification

MSDE should describe LEA collection procedures and data elements necessary for accurate enrollment counts for P-TECH students as it relates to the enrollment count required for the Foundation program. DLS also recommends committee narrative requesting a status update on enrollment procedures, projected enrollment, and costs for this program.

MSDE concurs with the request for a report on the P-Tech program. With respect to the enrollment count used in the Foundation program. The Department recognizes errors made in FY 2023 and FY 2024. The Department's Accountability team includes P-Tech students in year one through four as one full-time equivalent (FTE) student. The P-Tech programs includes students in the enrollment count in the two years following high school. Students in years five and six are counted in the enrollment count used for the Foundation program to the extent that the students are taking courses in high school; two in year five and one in year six. As a result, the student's FTE count is reduced by .5 in year five and by .75 in year six. The process is as follows, the LEA includes the P-Tech student as 1.0 FTE and also flags the student's record if the student is in year five or year six. The flag triggers the data system to deduct the proportional amount of the FTE based on the student's year in the program.

Because the Statute states the enrollment count "adds" P-Tech students, former staff added the proportionate share of P-Tech students in years five and six, rather than subtracting them. Since the Accountability system already includes these students, and then subtracts the proportionate share, these students were double counted in fiscal years 2023 and 2024. The Department is working with its internal Audit office to resolve these issues. For the fiscal year 2025 data collection, the Department appropriately subtracted the proportionate share of P-Tech students in years five and six from the FTE count.

3. Autism Waiver Costs Expected to Increase with Additional Slots

DLS notes that if the \$16 million from the DPA is used in fiscal 2024, the fiscal 2025 budget will be inadequate to fund the expansion and a deficiency appropriation will be required. If the expansion is delayed until fiscal 2025 and the \$16 million is used to supplement the fiscal 2025 budget, the available State funds are only adequate to support about 2,300 children for the entire year rather than the 2,950 authorized slots the State is seeking.

MSDE should discuss (1) the reason that the individuals on the waitlist are considered for Autism Waiver services on a first-come, first-served basis; (2) the current status of the registry and a timetable for onboarding additional slots; (3) the intended use and timing of the remaining DPA funds if slots become available in fiscal 2024; and (4) the number of slots that will be filled in fiscal 2025 given the limitations in the budget. Due to the ongoing changes to the Autism Waiver program, DLS recommends committee narrative on this program.

MSDE RESPONSE: Maryland's approved application to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid identifies the process for on-boarding participants as first-come, first-served.

Enrollment through other means would require an update to the application and subsequent approval by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid, as well procedures, protocols, and staff required to conduct eligibility determination upon entry to the waitlist as well as a mechanism to determine priority status for every individual on the registry/waitlist on an ongoing basis.

In alignment with the “[End the Wait](#)” legislation, the Maryland Department of Health (MDH), in collaboration with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), amended the Autism Waiver (AW) application effective July 1, 2023, to increase the number of AW slots in fiscal 2024 from 1600 to 2950 by adding an additional 1,350 opportunities. The amendment was open for public comment from June 26, 2023, through July 27, 2023, and MDH reports it was submitted and approved by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

As a result of a state-wide effort to decrease substantial wait times and increase the number of individuals served through waiver programs administered by MDH, Senate Bill 0636 (SB636): Maryland Department of Health - Waiver Programs - Waitlist and Registry Reduction (End the Wait Act) went into effect on 10/1/22 and Senate Bill 0622 (SB622): Medicaid Waiver Programs – Waitlist and Registry Reduction (End the Wait Act) went into effect on 6/1/23.

SB636 required MDH, in consultation with Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), to “develop a plan to reduce the registry for the Autism Waiver (AW) that included conducting eligibility determinations of individuals on the registry and, beginning in Fiscal Year (FY) 2024, providing services to at least 50% of individuals determined eligible” while SB622 authorized funding to expand the current AW by 1,350 slots.

Beginning in January 2022, MDH and MSDE implemented the required plan by screening files of over 6000 children on the registry. Screening for preliminary technical eligibility involved identifying each child/Individualized Education Program (IEP)/Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) case record and reviewing pertinent information to verify the child met initial eligibility. As of January 1, 2024, the registry/waitlist decreased by 35% from the over 6,000 that were on the registry in July 2023. The current registry/waitlist is 4,999; this includes new registrants that are added monthly. This decrease was due in part to screening for technical eligibility, but also due to sending invitations to apply.

In fiscal 2024, MSDE has worked collaboratively with the MDH to send 1,100 invitations to apply for the AW to families from the Registry/Waitlist. It is notable that the application and onboarding process of a child invited to apply is extensive and requires the engagement of multiple stakeholders to assess the child’s technical, financial, and medical eligibility for AW services. Autism Waiver contacts are reporting that families are needing an increased level of support to complete the Autism Waiver application packet including the Medicaid financial application.

At this time, we have 100 of those 1,100 applicants actively enrolled and another 242 Authorizations to Participate (ATP) at MDH’s Eligibility Determination Division (EDD) waiting to be processed for enrollment. The remaining applications are in one of many steps to determine eligibility. We continue to partner with MDH/EDD to streamline processes to ease the financial eligibility screening process and strengthen interagency communication.

As a result of the factors noted above, MSDE cannot determine with certainty how many participants will be on boarded from the September and November invitations and how quickly this will happen.

DPA funds would be used to pay the State share of services delivered to individuals served through the AW.

Please see the chart below with updated Q1 and Q2 figures to reflect actual expenditures and projections for Q3 and Q4 based on enrolling 1350 additional participants.

Fiscal 2024 (2950 anticipated participants: 1600 in Application + 1350 new slots)

	StatePlan	Pharmacy	Gray Area Services	Non-gray	Total of State Plan+Pharmacy+ Services	Provider Recoveries	Anticipated Amount Charged by MDH	Amount paid by MSDE(non-gray and gray)	FY24 Quarterly Projections
Quarter 1	\$523,454.78	\$54,484.78	\$4,658,398.21	\$4,994,861.35	\$10,230,999.10	\$0.00	\$10,230,999.10	\$10,230,999.10	\$10,230,999.10
Quarter 2	\$459,542.56	\$56,992.58	\$4,634,754.54	\$4,871,029.85	\$9,822,319.53	\$0.00	\$9,822,319.53		\$9,822,319.53
Quarter 3	\$678,711.00	\$113,118.50	\$4,750,977.00	\$5,769,043.50	\$11,311,850.00	\$10,000.00	\$11,301,850.00		\$11,301,850.00
Quarter 4	\$863,814.00	\$143,969.00	\$6,046,698.00	\$7,342,419.00	\$14,396,900.00	\$10,000.00	\$14,386,900.00		\$14,386,900.00
Total	\$2,525,522.32	\$368,564.86	\$20,090,827.75	\$22,777,163.70	\$46,762,068.63	\$20,000.00	\$46,742,068.63		\$46,742,068.63
							Total FY 2024		\$46,742,068.63

Note: Information in pink is based on actual figures. Information in blue is a projection.

As stated, it is difficult to predict billing for AW services. Total costs vary predominantly due to factors such as utilization of services. Service utilization may be impacted by a number of factors including, but not limited to individual family needs, willingness or ability to access service, accessibility, provider capacity to provide service, etc. Some children use as few as one Autism Waiver service per month, while others maximize their usage of Autism Waiver and State plan services.

True service utilization costs for new participants may not be actualized until at least 6 months after their enrollment date for the following reasons; it takes time 1) to process enrollment paperwork at EDD; 2) for families to find a provider; 3) for the provider to find staffing; 4) for the staff to build a relationship with the participant and begin working all need hours; and 5) for the provider to actually bill for the services rendered. Therefore, it is impossible to anticipate how quickly these additional participants will be onboarded, begin to utilize services, or have providers who will bill for these services. As noted, MSDE cannot determine with certainty how many participants will be on-boarded from the September and November invitations and how quickly this will happen. Therefore, our estimates for Q3 and Q4 have been adjusted accordingly to account for staggered enrollment.

MSDE has put plans in place to address the requirements of the “[End the Wait](#)” legislation by 2025 which would mean serving 2950 participants through the Autism Waiver in 2025 unless directed to limit enrollment.

4. Local Education Agencies Continue to Spend Federal Stimulus Funds, but Deadline Approaching

DLS recommends adding language restricting funds for Somerset County Public Schools until the late reports related to the RELIEF Act, as required in Chapter 55, are submitted.

MSDE RESPONSE: MSDE concurs.

DLS also recommends committee narrative requiring all 24 LEAs to submit a final closeout report on COVID-19 expenditures in the same format as the Chapter 55 reporting requirements.

MSDE RESPONSE: MSDE concurs.

Operating Budget Recommended Actions

1. Add the following language:
, provided that \$50,000 of this appropriation made for the purpose of education State aid for the Somerset County Public Schools in the Aid to Education budget may not be expended until the agency submits two reports by July 1, 2024, to the Department of Legislative Services and the Accountability and Implementation Board in accordance with requirements in Chapter 55 of 2021, HB 1372, Chapter 55(3(c)) of 2021 (MSAR # 13771), Use of Federal COVID-19 Funding and State Funding for Blueprint for Maryland's Future Funding, and HB 1372, Chapter 55(4(d)) of 2021 (MSAR # 13527), Blueprint for Maryland's Future Revisions, Tutoring.

The budget committees shall have 45 days from the date of the receipt of the reports to review and comment. Funds restricted pending the receipt of reports may not be transferred by budget amendment or otherwise to any other purpose and shall revert to the General Fund if the report is not submitted to the budget committees.

Explanation: Chapter 55 of 2021 required local education agencies to submit three reports in calendar 2022 and 2023 (a total of six reports) on tutoring and transitional supplemental instruction, summer school, and COVID-19 federal stimulus fund expenditures. Due to overdue reports, this language restricts a portion of the aid to Somerset County Public Schools pending submission of the overdue reports by July 1, 2024.

MSDE Response: MSDE concurs.

2. Add the following language:
, provided that \$500,000 of this appropriation made for the purpose of the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Office of the State Superintendent may not be expended until the agency submits to the budget committees by August 1, 2023, a report on the agency's enrollment collection procedures for free and reduced-price meal (FRPM) students for fiscal 2025 (2024-2025 school year) and an accompanying dataset. This report and dataset should include the following enrollment data by local education agency (LEA) and school:

- (1) the number of eligible students (eligible enrollment);
- (2) the number of free, reduced-price, and paid meal students;
- (3) the number of direct certification students, including counts of students in all eligible categories, including students eligible for Medicaid benefits between 185% and 189% of the federal poverty level;
- (4) Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) enrollment, including the percentage of FRPM students in the fiscal year prior to entry into CEP; and
- (5) greater than comparisons by LEA and school used to calculate compensatory education enrollment.

The report should also include:

(1) procedures used by LEAs to collect and review enrollment data to check for omissions, errors, or other irregularities prior to submission to MSDE;

(2) procedures used by MSDE to check for omissions, errors, or other irregularities prior to submission to the Department of Legislative Services and the Department of Budget and Management to determine education State aid funding;

(3) procedures used by MSDE's Audit Office to audit these data biannually; and

(4) if applicable, a description of changes to MSDE's enrollment collection procedures for fiscal 2026.

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 revert to the General Fund if the report is not submitted to the budget committees.

Explanation: MSDE is responsible for accurate counts of FRPM students to determine student eligibility for FRPM benefits as well as funding of the compensatory education and concentration of poverty grant programs. Due to issues involving enrollment counts in recent audits and submitted fiscal 2025 data, this language directs MSDE to submit a report regarding actions the agency is taking to resolve these findings.

Information Request	Author	Due Date
Report on FRPM enrollment	MSDE	August 1, 2024

MSDE Response: MSDE Concurs

3. Adopt the following narrative:
Report on the Nonpublic Placement Program: The committees are concerned about costs for the Nonpublic Placement program; implementation of nonpublic school special education teacher pay parity related to the Teacher Pay Parity Act (Chapter 648 of 2023); and actions taken by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to implement this program. The committees request that MSDE submit a report by October 1, 2024, including (1) program closeout data for fiscal 2024 by provider, including annual reimbursement costs and documentation on potential remaining discrepancies at the end of the fiscal year; (2) actions taken in calendar 2023 and 2024 to implement Chapter 648; and (3) planned actions related to implementation of Chapter 648 and efforts to achieve pay parity in future years.

Information Request	Author	Due Date
Report on the Nonpublic Placement program	MSDE	October 1, 2024

MSDE Response: MSDE Concurs

4. Adopt the following narrative:
Status Update on the Autism Waiver Program: The committees are concerned about the Autism Waiver program, which currently has a registry of more than 6,000 individuals and is managed by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). The committees request that MSDE submit a status update on this program by September 1, 2024, that provides the following information:
- the current number of waiver slots requested and approved.
 - procedures to contact individuals on the registry when slots become available.
 - a timeline for the addition of slots from fiscal 2025 through 2029.
 - projected costs for Autism Waiver services, considering anticipated changes in the management of the Autism Waiver registry for fiscal 2025 through 2029.

Information Request	Author	Due Date
Status update on the Autism Waiver program	MSDE	September 1, 2024

MSDE Response: MSDE Concurs

5. Adopt the following narrative:
Status Update on the Pathways in Technology Early College High School Program (P-TECH): The committees are concerned about enrollment and projected costs for the P-TECH program, which is managed by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and local education agencies (LEA). An accurate P-TECH enrollment count is important because P-TECH students are included in the full-time enrollment count for the State Share of the Foundation program. P-TECH

program costs are determined by a variety of factors, including student enrollment in community college courses and the costs for those courses in any given year. The budget committees request that MSDE submit a status update on the P-TECH program by August 1, 2023, that provides the following information:

- explanation of the process by which MSDE includes P-TECH students in the full-time enrollment count.
- current enrollment in all P-TECH programs by high school, community college, cohort, and entry year, including a breakout of fifth- and sixth-year students;
- projected enrollment in all P-TECH programs in the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 school years.
- the total number of students who left the program in any given year and reasons for departure.
- the total number of students who have graduated by program and the percentage completion rate.
- community college courses attended by P-TECH students with cost per course per semester.
- current cost for the program in fiscal 2025 and total projected cost for the program in fiscal 2026; and
- projected average cost by student, program, and LEA for fiscal 2025 and 2026, including supplemental school and college grants by institution and LEA.

Information Request	Author	Due Date
Status update on P-TECH	MSDE	August 1, 2024

MSDE Response: MSDE Concur

6. Adopt the following narrative:

Status Update on the Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP): The committees are concerned by disruptions to learning and learning loss due to the COVID-19 pandemic and costs for MCAP assessment development and implementation. The committees request that by November 1, 2024, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) submit a status update on MCAP assessments and expenditures, including but not limited to:

- a timetable for MCAP administration for all assessments for the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 school years, including field testing and pilots for new assessments.
- details on MCAP measurement of student learning loss in the 2024-2025 school year by local education agency (LEA), subject area, grade level, and assessment as well as additional steps taken, if any, by MSDE at the State level to measure student learning loss.
- details on MCAP administration in the 2024-2025 school year by LEA, program, grade level, and assessment, including alternative assessments and the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment.

- anticipated changes, if any, to assessments for virtual school students in the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 school years; and
- expenditures in fiscal 2024 and 2025 and anticipated allowances for fiscal 2026 for each MCAP assessment, assessments under development, and administration, including contractual expenditures by vendor.

Information Request	Author	Due Date
Status update on MCAP	MSDE	November 1, 2024

MSDE Response: MSDE Concur

7. Adopt the following narrative:

Reports on Local Education Agency (LEA) COVID-19 Federal Stimulus Fund Expenditures:

In fiscal 2021, 2022, and 2023, LEAs received a total of \$256.6 million as authorized in the RELIEF Act (Chapter 39 of 2021) and allocated in the fiscal 2022 Budget Bill (Chapter 357 of 2022) for tutoring, behavioral health, summer school, school reopening, and transitional supplemental instruction. As part of mandated reporting in Chapter 55 of 2021, the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future Program – Revisions, LEAs were required to report on expenditures of these funds to the General Assembly and the Accountability and Implementation Board through calendar 2023. Based on the reports submitted in calendar 2023 and the timeline for expenditures of federal stimulus funds distributed as part of the American Rescue Plan Act, which do not expire until September 2024, the committees are concerned that some LEAs have not expended all funds, and, for some LEAs, expenditures were not accurately reported. The committees request that the 24 LEAs submit a final report by December 1, 2024, consistent with the requirements of the previously mandated report on COVID-19 federal stimulus fund expenditures, which requested the following information:

- (1) the county board’s use of federal funding to address the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on education; and
- (2) State funding received to implement the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future, including a description of the amount of funding spent on student instruction.

Additionally, as part of this submission, LEAs should review previous reports for this purpose and document corrections in this final report.

Information Request	Author	Due Date
LEA reports on COVID-19 federal stimulus fund expenditures	LEAs	December 1, 2024

MSDE Response: MSDE Concur