
R00A02

MSDE Aid to Education

Maryland State Department of Education

Response to the Analyst's Review and Recommendations

House Education & Economic Development Subcommittee –

February 20, 2025

Senate Education, Business & Administration Subcommittee –

February 21, 2025



Dr. Carey M. Wright
State Superintendent of Schools

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.

Performance Analysis: Managing for Results

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

MSDE should comment on the task force recommendations, including current issues with MCAP; timeline and costs associated with design, development, and implementation of new State assessments; and reasons for changing assessments after only a limited time using the current assessment.

MSDE Response

In February 2024, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) announced the formation of the Assessment and Accountability task force to examine the state's assessment and accountability systems to strengthen connections between school ratings and student achievement. The MCAP assessments were first introduced in the fall of 2021 and there were growing questions/concerns about the technical soundness of these assessments and their alignment to the state accountability system.

The task force was facilitated by the National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment (more commonly known as the Center for Assessment). A total of twelve task force meetings took place over seven months consisting of six in-person meetings and six virtual meetings. The task force discussed key aspects of assessment design and implementation and offered several recommendations for improvement to the current state assessment program. Broadly, recommendations included guaranteeing accessibility and fairness to a broad range of learners, securing a universally designed suite of assessments for consistency across grade levels and content areas, and ensuring total test length is no longer than practically necessary to produce valid, reliable, and useful scores.

MSDE was assisted in drafting the new assessment RFP by its technical advisory committee (TAC) which provided objective and expert evaluation about assessment vendors on psychometric and related technical considerations. This guidance will help create a common assessment system that can provide reliable results to inform valid instructional and accountability decisions. It is anticipated that a contract award recommendation will go to the Board of Public Works (BPW) for approval in Summer 2025 and generally expect the new assessment program should be less costly.

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 Analyst's recommendation.

Issues

1. Governor's Fiscal 2026 Budget Plan Proposes Changes to Blueprint Spending and Revenue Proposed Changes to Blueprint Spending in SB 429/HB 504

Collaborative Time

DLS recommends reducing SEED's budget by that amount to align with the fiscal 2026 State Share of the Foundation per pupil amount as proposed in SB 429/HB 504 contingent on that legislation.

MSDE Response

MSDE respectfully disagrees with the proposed cut and concurs with the Governor's Allowance.

Other Blueprint Spending Programs

New Blueprint Programs

Because the Maryland Leads Grow Your Own Staff program is ongoing, and MSDE is still in the process of measuring the impact of this program, DLS recommends reducing the fiscal 2026 allowance by \$14.0 million in Blueprint special funds to level-fund the Grow Your Own Educators program at \$19.4 million.

MSDE Response

For the following reasons, MSDE respectfully disagrees with this proposed reduction and concurs with the Governor's Allowance.

The Grow Your Own Educators program, established in Chapters 227 and 228 of 2024, has not been funded. The legislation provided the Governor flexibility in including this program in his annual budget. The GYO Program funded through Maryland LEADS is assisting with Education Support Professionals credentials through tuition and fees payments. However, that program was not designed with the flexibility to work with Institutes of Higher Education to design a program that works for the community it serves. This new program will provide this flexibility with a focus on on-the-job training and opportunities to "earn and learn."

Grow Your Own (GYO) programs are focused on recruiting and preparing community-based candidates to teach in their local schools. These programs increase retention and promote strong connections between teachers and the students and families they serve. This involves recruiting teacher candidates from nontraditional populations who are more likely to reflect the diversity of students in the district. Senate Bill 429 / House Bill 504 expands and fully funds the existing Grow Your Own Grant Program at a scale that we believe will have a sizable impact on the teacher shortage in the next five to ten years.

The amendments to the existing program allow for more flexibility and prioritize programs that emphasize paid, on-the-job training such as teacher apprenticeships and teacher residencies. A registered teacher apprenticeship is an "earn and learn" model that provides structured, paid, on-the-job learning experiences combined with related instruction. Teacher residency programs integrate teacher preparation coursework with training in the classroom as part of their curriculum. Both models require a partnership between the local education agency and the educator preparation program and emphasize clinical experience under the guidance of a mentor

teacher.

Maryland must invest in teacher recruitment initiatives and flexible GYO teacher preparation programs that allow local education agencies to develop recruitment pathways for nontraditional populations like ESPs, career changers, and community members to ensure Maryland students have access to diverse and highly qualified teachers. Having GYO programs that leverage flexible models of teacher preparation is critical to the success of recruiting ESPs into the teaching profession.

Because of redundancies in the proposed legislation with current programs, and/or appropriations that appeared duplicative to current program funding, in the MSDE Headquarters budget analysis, DLS recommended reducing funding in fiscal 2026 for the Maryland School Leadership Academy by \$3.2 million to level-fund that program with Blueprint Training for Leaders and reducing administrative costs for the CPG program by \$1.0 million.

In the Aid to Education budget, DLS recommends eliminating funds for the Academic Excellence Fund as the program is duplicative to the Blueprint Training for Teachers program and other LEA professional development programming.

MSDE Response

For the following reasons, MSDE respectfully disagrees with the proposed reductions and supports the allocation in SB 429/HB 405.

The School Leadership Academy is a completely different program from the Blueprint Training for Leaders Program through the Blueprint. The Training for Leaders Program is geared toward system-level leaders, i.e. local superintendents, local board members, chief academic officers.

Since we know effective school leadership drives teacher retention and student outcomes, one of the highest-leverage investments Maryland can make is providing training and mentoring for our existing and future school leaders with a focus on instructional leadership and professional learning, and teacher retention. An essential component of the Leadership Academy is mentorship, which is vital to developing effective school leaders. Finally, the Academy will focus on the neediest schools and students by prioritizing leaders and promising leaders currently working or with a desire to work in community schools and low-performing schools.

MSDE should comment on the projected administrative costs and number of personnel needed for the MSDE Headquarters budget for administration of new Blueprint programs proposed in SB 429/HB 504.

MSDE Response

The administrative costs included in SB 429/HB504 for MSDE for the Community Schools Program will support robust learning opportunities and on-the-ground implementation support. Technical assistance will build on existing work with Institutes of Higher Education and bring in national experts to provide tiered support in implementing best practices. The funds will also support a multi-year evaluation of the program, including implementation practices, school, and community outcomes, and most importantly, student outcomes. Finally, the funds provide additional staffing for MSDE's current two-position staff working with community schools. The additional positions will manage the work of the evaluation and the technical assistance partners and will enable the Department to provide differentiated support across all LEAs.

2. Nonpublic Placement Program Costs Exceed Appropriation in Fiscal 2024 and 2025; 2025 Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act Proposes Change to State-Local Cost Share

MSDE should comment on why program overspending in fiscal 2024 was not reported to the Comptroller as required. Due to continued uncertainty in funding, DLS recommends that MSDE continue to submit a closeout report for this program.

MSDE Response

The Nonpublic Placement program is a current-year funded program that is fully reconciled by the fall. As such, the actual expenditures for the program in a given fiscal year are not known by year-end close. In fiscal 2024, the Department obligated the entire \$145.6 million NPP appropriation, which did not require any reporting to the Comptroller. It is important to note that any reconciling expenditures are recorded in the current fiscal year, but paid against the prior fiscal year appropriation. As a result, looking only at fiscal year expenditures likely includes expenditures from the prior fiscal year.

3. Autism Waiver Costs Projected to Increase with Additional Slots

DLS notes that our records show that in fiscal 2023, out of the \$10.0 million transferred by budget amendment from the DPA to the Autism Waiver program, \$7.4 million was reverted. MSDE should comment on this discrepancy and the reason that the fiscal 2023 actuals total \$40.7 million.

MSDE Response

MSDE requested additional appropriation for the Autism Waiver program in both fiscal years 2023, 2024 and 2025. The programs costs are increasing due to additional eligible services and broader eligibility for providers. Both of these changes were implemented during the pandemic and have been made permanent by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid.

The fiscal 2023 actuals provided by the Department represents the expenditures for the program for that fiscal year.

MSDE should discuss the number of slots that it will be able to support in fiscal 2026 with the \$58.7 million provided in the allowance. Given the potential underfunding in fiscal 2026, DLS recommends adopting committee narrative requesting an update on this program.

MSDE Response

The Department will be able to serve 1,914 slots consistently in fiscal 2026. As participants vacate the program, the slot will be filled from the waiting list.

MSDE is happy to provide an update on the program.

4. Continued Concerns Regarding Enrollment Counts for Compensatory Education, Career Ladder, and College and Career Readiness Programs

Free and Reduced-price Meals Enrollment

MSDE should comment on (1) if Dorchester County's compensatory education funding has been realigned; (2) steps the department is taking to rectify concerns with Baltimore City's school-level CEP %; and (3) the reason the department decided to audit enrollment data on a triannual instead of biannual basis.

MSDE Response

The Department was unable to repurpose available appropriation to provide the additional compensatory education funding to Dorchester County.

Through the ENOUGH Act of 2024, the Governor's Office of Children is required to submit a report on the neighborhood indicators of poverty that includes different methods used to calculate indicators of poverty by October 1, 2025. The AIB is required to submit a methodological recommendation by December 1, 2025. Based on these requirements, and since Baltimore City serves some of the neediest students in the State, the Department made the decision to accept system-level poverty data.

The Department's audit team has included the Blueprint programs into its standard major State Aid audit program. As a result of these additional programs, the team is not able to visit six LEAs in a year. The teams will visit LEAs one every three years, all three years of enrollment and program activities are included in the triannual audit.

CCR Student Count

MSDE should comment on the reasons for the expanded CCR standard and what steps the department and LEAs are taking to ensure that all Maryland students are college and career ready by the end of grade 12.

MSDE Response

As required in the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, the State Board of Education conducted an empirical study of the CCR standard. In the study, the contractor recommended that Maryland revise its CCR standard to assess CCR more accurately and equitably. Specifically, the recommendation asked Maryland to provide multiple measures for students to demonstrate college and career readiness, including a GPA measure. This recommendation was a result of findings from postsecondary stakeholders, literature on bias in assessments, prior research on predictive validity of measures, and predictive validity of the interim standard and alternative standards.

The State Board acted on this recommendation and adopted the new CCR Standard in January 2024 that includes an option for students to meet the CCR Standard by earning a 3.0 GPA and displaying math mastery, or alternatively through scoring a proficient score on the ELA 10 and Algebra I MCAP assessments. The State Board believes that this newly adopted CCR Standard is a better predictor of post-secondary success and is more inclusive.

To support students who have not yet met the CCR Standard by the end of 10th grade, and for students in younger grades who are not on track to meet the CCR Standard on by the end of 10th grade, MSDE provides supports through a number of different avenues.

One of these supports is MSDE's CCR Supports Development Guide, which, along with the research-based "Menus of Best Practices," informs how LEAs create plans that address each student's academic skill needs, especially in reading, writing, and mathematics. The frameworks provide a road map for diagnosing academic gaps, selecting relevant interventions, and ensuring students receive ongoing assistance until they attain CCR standards. This individualized approach is anchored in a Multi-Tiered System of Supports, which MSDE incorporates into its guidance so that customized interventions can be folded into Tier 2 or Tier 3 supports. The Blueprint law mandates that these individualized plans not only meet students' immediate academic needs but also incorporate essential career and technical exploration.

MSDE facilitates professional learning for counselors, teachers, and content specialists who align interventions with a new 6-Year Graduation Plan that charts the four high school years plus two postsecondary years. A key element of this strategy is the 6-Year Graduation Plan, which begins in grade 7 to establish an early foundation for success in high school and beyond. By initiating this planning process in middle school, LEAs and counselors can guide students through career exploration and academic goal-setting, ensuring that any skill deficits or scheduling needs are addressed before the student enters high school. The plan itself continues through grades 9–12 and extends into the first two years of postsecondary education or training, offering a long-range view of the student's academic trajectory. MSDE's guidance ensures that each plan is closely linked to early warning indicators, so that students who exhibit risk factors in middle school can receive prompt interventions.

MSDE is also committed to ensuring that Local Education Agencies (LEAs) effectively implement a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) to meet the academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs of all students. MTSS provides a proactive, data-driven framework for equitable support, ensuring that every student has access to high-quality instruction and interventions tailored to their needs. MSDE enhances LEAs' capacity by developing regional and district-level structures to support effective MTSS implementation. This includes building leadership teams, equipping local trainers and coaches, and leveraging existing educational frameworks to provide robust technical assistance and evaluation. MSDE supports LEAs with proven MTSS initiatives, such as Response to Intervention (RTI), Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Restorative Practices, and SEL. Through data-driven decision-making and tiered interventions, MSDE ensures all students receive the necessary support to achieve CCR standards in literacy and math.

Additionally, MSDE provides tailored support to LEAs based on their specific needs and contexts. This includes targeted professional development, technical assistance, coaching, and resources. Recognizing the importance of literacy, MSDE offers comprehensive support to educators in this critical area.

In literacy, MSDE emphasizes the role of literacy coaching, Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), and assessment literacy to enhance ELA instruction. MSDE collaborates with LEAs to develop and deliver professional development opportunities that strengthen educators' understanding and implementation of effective literacy practices. This support includes guidance on using assessment data to inform instruction and providing differentiated support through MTSS to meet diverse student needs. In addition, the MSDE has partnered with the Maryland Initiative for Literacy Equity to ensure that LEAs have access to thought partners, technical

assistance and support for ensuring that they have support on effective, quality core instruction.

Finally, the Blueprint also requires that the MSDE develop “curriculum standards and curriculum resources for each subject at each grade level, which build on one another in logical sequence, in core subjects that may be used by local school systems and public-school teachers [...] to inform high-quality instruction that will ultimately result in students meeting the college and career readiness standards.” (MD Code, Education, § 7-202.1). To develop these curriculum resources, Maryland must have a system to identify high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) and tools that outline the elements of outstanding curricula in the core subjects of English, mathematics, science, and social studies. The MSDE team has been developing a long-term statewide strategy, with a short-term focus on signaling quality curricula. MSDE has defined what HQIM means at the state level and is developing an educator-led system to identify quality instructional materials. Instructional materials will be rated by a group of Maryland educators to ensure the materials are high quality. The Maryland State Board of Education adopted frameworks for High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) at their April 30, 2024, meeting. These frameworks codify and define the key elements that must be present in instructional materials to qualify them as high quality. The HQIM systems will then help to inform the curriculum resources that create the basis for strong instruction, leading to students meeting the College and Career Readiness Standard. Together with the other supports described above, MSDE is committed to continuing support the LEAs with ensuring that all students meet the CCR Standard.

Career Ladder NBC Teacher Counts

MSDE should comment on the reasons that (1) 16 LEAs do not have an NBC teacher in a low-performing school; (2) 2 LEAs have no NBC teachers in any school; and (3) what steps the department and LEAs are taking to encourage NBC teachers to move to low-performing schools.

MSDE Response

16 LEAs do not have an NBC teacher in a low-performing school

The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future established salary increases associated with National Board Certification (NBC) in February 2021. As of October 2023, there were 1,626 NBC teachers (NBCTs) actively teaching in Maryland schools. Between October 2023 and October 2024, the number of NBCTs increased by 40% to a total of 2,279. In December 2024, an additional 1,098 Maryland educators earned an NBC, all of whom are now eligible to move into a teaching position that qualifies for the salary stipends.

To be eligible for a \$10,000 salary stipend, an NBCT must meet the definition of “teacher” in Md. Code, Education Article 6-1001, which includes spending a minimum of 60% of their working time teaching in the classroom. To be eligible for the additional \$7,000 salary stipend, an NBCT must work in a low-performing school.

Maryland public schools earning a 1 or 2-star rating in the Maryland Accountability System for two of the last three available years of data meet the State definition of a low-performing school. Additionally, each local school system may include up to 10 percent of the low-performing schools

within their district based on local circumstances and priorities. For these reasons, not all LEAs have low-performing schools, some only have one or two, and some have many. 15 of 24 LEAs have state identified low performing schools (Allegany, Anne Arundel, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Charles, Cecil, Dorchester, Harford, Howard, Montgomery, Prince Georges, St. Mary's, Somerset, Washington, Wicomico). Of these, three districts are on the list for the first time as of April 2024 (Allegany, Charles, Cecil). This provides a limited opportunity for NBCTs to move to these schools given the recency and negotiated transfer windows.

Furthermore, the number of NBCTs in each LEA varies significantly. While some LEAs invested in the State and Local Fee Incentive Program for National Board Certification (old statute Md. Code Ed Article 6-112) prior to 2021, not all participated. Large districts like Baltimore City Schools and smaller districts on the Eastern Shore did not participate in the program that provides funding for an NBC candidacy for employees in the LEA; therefore, it is no surprise that the numbers of NBCTs in those districts are lower than in districts that have invested in NBC prior to the Blueprint.

In summary, given the variability in the number of low-performing schools in an LEA paired with the fact that about half of Maryland LEAs only began investing in NBC in FY2022, there is inconsistency across the state regarding how many NBCTs work in low-performing schools.

2 LEAs have no NBC teachers in any school

Dorchester County Public Schools currently has 2 part-time NBCTs who work across the district. Neither qualifies for the salary increases based on assignment. Additionally, Dorchester's one full-time NBCT retired last year. In December 2024, two teachers achieved NBC.

Kent County Public Schools has one part-time NBCT who works across the district. Additionally, six teachers achieved NBC in December. It should be noted that Kent County is Maryland's smallest county with only 158 total teachers.

Steps the department and LEAs are taking to encourage NBC teachers to move to low-performing schools.

One of the ways LEAs encourage NBCTs to move to low-performing schools is by sharing the MSDE Low Performing School List and associated salary incentives during transfer and recruitment events. MSDE posts the Low Performing School List and information regarding salary increases on our [MSDE website](#). Additionally, MSDE manages the NBC Support Program, which provides funding to LEAs through the Maryland NBC Support Grant. In FY 24, 20 of 24 LEAs applied and were awarded funds. These funds are used to support LEA candidates pursuing NBC. LEAs are using these funds to provide support to their candidates working in low-performing schools. For example, some LEAs are using these funds to build cohorts of NBC candidates in their low-performing schools. Other LEAs are taking a more general support approach for all candidates intending to increase the number of NBCTs in their low-performing schools once they achieve.

DLS recommends that MSDE submit a report on FRPM, CCR, and NBC teacher enrollment and counts addressing these concerns.

MSDE Response

MSDE concurs with the recommendation.

5. Local Education Agencies Receive Extension to Spend Remaining Federal Stimulus Funds through March 2026

MSDE should provide updated information on ESSER funding through the end of calendar 2024 including a breakout by expenditure type.

MSDE Response

MSDE concurs with the recommendation.

Due to remaining balances for RELIEF Act expenditures, DLS recommends committee narrative for LEA final reports on program funding.

MSDE Response

MSDE respects the Legislature's request.

Operating Budget Recommended Actions

	<u>Amount Change</u>
	-\$ 1,969,251 GF
<i>1. Reduce fiscal 2026 State Share of the Foundation general funds for discretionary grants to Garrett and Dorchester counties because these grants are not mandated.</i>	

MSDE Response

MSDE respectfully disagrees with the recommended reduction and concurs with the Governor's Allowance. These funds are provided to ensure that no LEA receives less State funding than what was received in the prior year.

2. Add the following language to the general fund appropriation:

~~, provided that this appropriation shall be reduced by \$92,937,289~~ \$185,874,577 contingent upon the enactment of legislation altering the local share of teacher retirement costs.

Explanation: This action increases the amount of the reductions in general funds to \$185.9 million for Aid for Local Employees Fringe Benefits, R00A02.03, that is contingent on the enactment of legislation that reduces the State share of annual employer pension contributions for members of the Teachers' Retirement System/Teachers' Pension System employed by local school systems and community colleges.

MSDE Response

MSDE supports the Governor's Allowance.

3. Add the following language to the general fund appropriation:

~~, provided that this appropriation for the School for Educational Evolution and Development shall be reduced by \$241,102 contingent upon the enactment of SB 429 or HB 504 delaying the implementation of the collaborative time per pupil amount.~~

Explanation: This action specifies that \$241,102 in general funds for the School for Educational Evolution and Development in Children at Risk, R00A02.04, subprogram 0465, is reduced contingent on the enactment of SB 429 or HB 504 delaying the collaborative time per pupil amount as funds are not required if funds to implement collaborative time are provided in the fiscal 2026 budget.

MSDE Response

MSDE supports the Governor's Allowance.

4. Adopt the following narrative:

Report on the Nonpublic Placement Program: The committees request a report on 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, 2025, including (1) program closeout data for fiscal 2025 by provider, including annual reimbursement costs and any

costs that could not be covered within the fiscal 2025 appropriation; (2) actions taken in calendar 2024 and 2025 to implement Chapter 648; (3) planned actions related to implementation of Chapter 648 and efforts to achieve pay parity in future years.

<u>Information Request</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
<u>Report on the nonpublic placement program</u>	<u>MSDE</u>	<u>October 1, 2025</u>

MSDE Response

MSDE concurs.

5. Adopt the following narrative:

Report on the Autism Waiver Program: The committees request a report by November 1, 2025, on the Autism Waiver program, which is managed by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). This status update should provide information on the (1) current number of individuals on the Autism Waiver waitlist; (2) the number of slots utilized in fiscal 2025; (3) the number of slots in use in fiscal 2026; (4) a timeline for increasing utilized slots to the target level; and (5) projected costs for Autism Waiver services through fiscal 2031 by year based on the timeline for increasing utilized slots.

<u>Information Request</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
Report on the autism waiver program	MSDE	November 1, 2025

MSDE Response

MSDE concurs.

6. Add the following language to the special fund appropriation:

, provided that \$9,000,000 of this appropriation made for the purpose of Collaborative Time Innovation Demonstration Grants is contingent on the enactment of SB 429 or HB 504 delaying the implementation of the collaborative time per pupil amount.

Explanation: This action specifies that \$9.0 million in Blueprint for Maryland's Future special funds for Collaborative Time Innovation Demonstration Grants in Teacher Development, R00A02.55, subprogram 5589, is contingent on the enactment of SB 429 or HB 504 delaying the collaborative time per pupil amount as funds for a demonstration grant are not required if funds to implement collaborative time are provided in the fiscal 2026 budget.

MSDE Response

MSDE supports the allocation in SB 429/HB 504.

7. Reduce Blueprint for Maryland's Future
special funds for the Grow Your Own Educators program by \$14.3 million to level-fund the program with the fiscal 2025 working appropriation for the Maryland Leads Grow Your Own Staff program.

Amount
Change
-\$ 14,334,000 SF

MSDE Response

For the reasons stated above, MSDE respectfully disagrees with the recommended reduction and concurs with the Governor's Allowance.

8. Eliminate Blueprint for Maryland's Future special funds for the Academic Excellence Fund because the program is duplicative to Blueprint Training for Teachers and other local professional development

Amount
Change
-\$ 19,310,000 SF

MSDE Response

For the reasons stated above, MSDE respectfully disagrees with the recommended reduction and concurs with the Governor's Allowance.

9. Adopt the following narrative:

Report on Enrollment and Counts for Blueprint for Maryland's Future Programs. The committees request a report by October 1, 2025, on Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) enrollment collection procedures for free and reduced-price meal (FRPM) students; teacher counts for national board certified (NBC) for the career ladder program; and student counts for the college and career readiness (CCR) program.

For FRPM student enrollment, this report should include data by local education agency (LEA) and school for the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), including the percentage of FRPM students in the fiscal year prior to entry into CEP; and greater than comparisons by LEA and school used to calculate compensatory education enrollment.

For NBC teachers counts, the report should include the following data by LEA and school-type (either low-performing and non-low-performing) if applicable:

- count of teachers eligible for a fiscal 2026 award and their year of NBC attainment;
- count of teachers who attempted NBC but did not attain it in either school year 2023-2024 or 2024-2025;
- count of teachers attempting NBC in school year 2025-2026; and
- steps taken by MSDE and LEAs to encourage NBC teachers to move to low-performing schools.

For CCR student counts, this report and data should include projected CCR counts and funding from fiscal 2027 through 2030 based on expanded CCR standard.

<u>Information Request</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
Report on enrollment and counts for Blueprint for Maryland's Future programs	MSDE	October 1, 2025

MSDE Response

MSDE concurs.

10. Adopt the following narrative:

Report on the Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP): The committees request a report on learning loss due to the COVID-19 pandemic and costs for MCAP assessment development and implementation. The committees request by November 1, 2024, that the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) submit a report on MCAP, which should include, but is not limited to:

- a timetable for MCAP administration for all assessments for the 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 school years, including field testing and pilots for new assessments;
- details on MCAP measurement of student learning loss in the 2025-2026 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 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 school years 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 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 school years;
- expenditures in fiscal 2025 and 2026, and anticipated allowances for fiscal 2027, for each MCAP assessment, assessments under development, and administration, including contractual expenditures by vendor;
- information pertaining to any formal review of MCAP assessments and standards in calendar 2026 and 2027 by MSDE, by curriculum and assessment, including any anticipated changes to MCAP assessments as a result of that review and the projected costs of those changes; and
- alignment of MCAP goals and outcomes with Blueprint for Maryland's Future outcome measures.

<u>Information Request</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
Report on MCAP	MSDE	October 1, 2025

MSDE Response

MSDE concurs.

11. 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 Recovery for the Economy, Livelihoods, Industries, Entrepreneurs, and Families Act (Chapter 39 of 2021) and allocated in the fiscal 2022 Budget Bill (Chapter 357 of 2021) 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. LEAs were to submit a report consistent with the requirements of the previous report by December 1, 2024, as part of committee narrative in the 2024 Joint Chairmen's Report. At the time of the submitted responses, LEAs reported carrying balances as the deadline for expenditures had not passed. Therefore, the committees request that the 24 LEAs submit a final closeout report by October 1, 2025, 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 Program, 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.

<u>Information Request</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
Report on LEA COVID-19 Expenditures	LEAs	October 1, 2025

MSDE Response

MSDE respects the legislature's request.

Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act Recommended Actions

1. Amend a provision to shift 100% of the fiscal 2026 increase in the State share of the Teachers' Retirement System costs to local jurisdictions rather than 50%.

MSDE Response

MSDE respectfully disagrees with the recommended provision and concurs with the Governor's Allowance.