



Carroll County Public Schools

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Building the Future
Cynthia McCabe, Ed.D.
Superintendent

April 1, 2025

Mr. Isiah Leggett
Chairperson
Accountability and Implementation Board

Dear Chair Leggett:

On behalf of the Board of Education of Carroll County, please accept this official request for a waiver for fiscal year 2026 (FY26) from the provisions of Joint Implementation Policy #2 of the Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB) and the Maryland State Board of Education, which is based on the requirements of §5-234 of the Education Article, *Annotated Code of Maryland*. Specifically, our waiver request is of the timeline in Joint Policy #2 for achieving fiscal compliance under Joint Implementation Policy #2 in the Blueprint program areas of compensatory education and multilingual learners (ML).

Relevant Background Information

The Carroll County Public Schools (CCPS) faced an unprecedented decade of budget reductions from FY09 to FY19. This budget crisis resulted in the school system cutting over \$40 million in expenditures, mostly through position and program reductions, and including closing three schools.

This decade of budget cuts was predicated mainly on a period of protracted declining student enrollment. Our student enrollment declined from a peak 28,492 before ending at 24,822, a total change of -3,670. The enrollment decline resulted in annual losses in State education funding totaling over -\$16 million. Local funding was unable to fill the void of declining student aid, while meeting CCPS's ongoing operating costs. There were few system improvements, most notable our employees went seven fiscal years with no step increment or cost of living allowance salary increases. Appendix A highlights the decline in enrollment as well as the losses in State aid.

In many ways, the system has never recovered from that decade, and likely never will fully recover. In addition to closing three schools, multiple programs were eliminated, all budget categories were cut, and 375.5 positions were eliminated. As our workforce is overwhelmingly instructional staff, educator positions were reduced commensurate with the decline in enrollment. However, disproportionately administrative and supervisory (A&S) roles and instructional support roles were cut. The net result is that, using the latest data source from the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), on a per pupil basis we have the lowest ratio of A&S staff and the second lowest ratio of other instructional staff. In essence, in that decade we met the Blueprint vision of reducing central office and A&S staff. However, those roles were eliminated rather than reallocated. Appendix B provides those comparisons.

CCPS consistently performs at or near the top of all LEAs in Maryland on the Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP). With that said, CCPS recognizes that achievement gaps exist between the all student group and special education, ML, and compensatory education student groups in CCPS.

Fidelity with Blueprint Implementation

It is within this recent fiscal history that CCPS confronted Blueprint implementation. Notably, Carroll County Government worked to fund us at a level that could help offset the dramatic loss in State aid, meet our inflationary increases, and fund much needed and deserved employee compensation increases. With the exception of the first full pandemic year, we have received local funding well above maintenance of effort and even further above combined local Blueprint shares. Appendix A illustrates that consistent funding history.

With this commitment, we have worked hard to implement the Blueprint with fidelity in multiple ways. We eliminated a needed Cabinet position to create a Blueprint Administrator role that can focus on the educational and student program aspects of Blueprint. This role has been instrumental in aligning our local comprehensive Blueprint implementation plan and serving as a liaison and coordinator for the AIB's strategic facilitator making Blueprint actionable as a continuous improvement model. The Blueprint Administrator also has the lead role in facilitating the career counseling partnership with the local workforce development board, which has been an early Blueprint success.

One major success of the work with the AIB strategic facilitator has been a partnership with Dr. Nancy Grasmick and Towson University surrounding new teacher induction. This emerging initiative will begin with school year 2025-26 and will serve as a bridge to full career ladder implementation.

In addition to their support with the operating budget, Carroll County Government also is supporting our efforts to meet the Pre-K expansion under Blueprint. Without any State capital participation, local capital funding is supporting a phased plan to expand Pre-K classrooms at all existing Pre-K sites to meet our projected requirements for Blueprint Pre-K expansion.

Perhaps our greatest Blueprint success has been our work with our unions on career ladder development and implementation. We were one of the first LEAs in the State to submit our initial career ladder model for both our teachers and our A&S union. Additionally, we met with the Blueprint minimum teacher salary of \$60,000 effective with FY25, which was much needed to stabilize our staffing. This feat was only possible with additional funding for FY25 from Carroll County Government.

We are eager to return to the work of completing our career ladder models with our unions. We are excited for the possibilities this work may mean for teaching and learning in our schools. It has been paused while we have been working with our unions on the processes surrounding Blueprint fiscal compliance. However, with approval of this waiver request, we believe that significant career ladder modeling can be achieved in many schools by maximizing the process of fiscal compliance. Accordingly, in Appendix C you will find an endorsement of this waiver request from our teacher and A&S unions.

Initial Work on Blueprint Fiscal Compliance

It was clear to CCPS leadership from the onset of Blueprint that, in light of the fiscal history above, compliance with funding in compensatory education and ML would be challenging. As a result, CCPS took initial steps to mitigate the impact. However, the unexpected inflation of compensatory education enrollment experienced by the State in FY23, including CCPS, compounded the compliance gap.

Nevertheless, in FY24, in light of the dramatic increase in funding, CCPS restricted new compensatory education funding, which totaled \$11.3 million. A system plan was developed to provide targeted resources to meet the needs of compensatory education learners at the 16 CCPS schools with the highest percentage enrollments in compensatory education. These resources were focused in the 16 schools across all levels in differentiated services including:

- Additional classroom teachers to establish a personalized learning environment with specific students needing interventions;
- Mental health and behavior resources;
- Additional reading specialists and mathematics resource teachers to support teaching and learning;
- Additional resources to promote school-to-home connections;
- New teacher mentoring at those schools; and
- After-school tutoring and interventions, including pupil transportation.

The process of restricting new compensatory education program funding has continued. For FY26, we plan to focus an additional \$2.7 million into the next tier of schools with higher compensatory education populations.

Early efforts in program compliance for ML are also underway. This is one of the few program areas where we have recorded instructional resources centrally. We are working on the back-end processes to record ML instructional resources at the school level. Once complete, this action would close the ML compliance gap by \$1 million. We also have begun restricting new ML funding effective with FY26. Lastly, we are developing a revised ML delivery model. We will be intentional with staffing, beginning in FY26, to begin to match ESOL dual-licensed classroom teachers in classes with higher concentrations of ML students, in addition to our more traditional model of pushing in ESOL licensed teachers.

After the AIB and MSBE adopted Joint Implementation Policy #2 in May, 2024, the Superintendent responded immediately to form a workgroup of county-wide stakeholders to develop a compliance plan. The workgroup was formed in the summer and charged with producing a final report by January 2025 in order to align with the timelines for budget development and collective bargaining. The workgroup included central staff, school leaders, union leaders (including teachers), and County government staff. We also engaged two facilitators for the work, one with extensive background in Maryland school system budgeting and the other with a background in labor relations. The workgroup report is included as Appendix D.

The workgroup confirmed our overall finding that the adjusted fiscal compliance gaps for compensatory education and ML total \$44 million, which represents 10% of our entire unrestricted operating budget. Stated differently, that total is more than all but two of the 13 major categories that comprise our annual operating budget. Only the instructional salaries and special education categories exceed that amount.

As a result, the workgroup's strategies to achieve compliance are significantly impactful at the school level. In a two-step approach, the plan reallocates a large number of classroom teachers, shifting them from certain schools to other schools. This movement results in limited course offerings for students, particularly at the middle and high schools. It also results in class sizes well over 30 at our schools with lower concentrations of compensatory education students.

Secondly, the plan reduces instructional resource roles at our lowest compensatory education schools in order to free those resources to be spent in the required program areas. As noted above, during the

decade from FY09 to FY19, we had stripped our other instructional resources and many A&S staff from our system. Therefore, these changes from the compliance plan result in the elimination of roles such as reading specialists, mathematics resource teachers, interventionists, etc. from our schools with lower compensatory education students.

The workgroup report and plan was shared publicly on January 8, 2025, and additional implementation details were released in late January and early February. Given the amount of change on the prescribed timeline, the reaction from our stakeholders has been passionate in its opposition. That reaction, though directed at system leadership, has reached the State level including the AIB and the General Assembly. Our communities are calling for a more measured and reasonable approach to this process.

Waiver Request from Joint Implementation Policy #2

We are seeking a waiver from the timeline prescribed in Joint Implementation Policy #2. That timeline is found only in Joint Implementation Policy #2 and not codified in the Education Article, *Annotated Code of Maryland*. Accordingly, we are requesting that the AIB waive its policy timeline for CCPS in order to allow for a more measured approach to compliance, and one that is more likely to regain the confidence of our many stakeholders in the Blueprint as a whole.

Since the public reaction to our compliance plan, we have worked closely with the executive director and AIB staff. Their support has been meaningful and positive to our efforts to support this process. One immediate outcome was the offer from the AIB staff to provide us with resource allocation consultants to examine our plan and underlying data, and make additional recommendations to maximize the process of fiscal compliance.

We have accepted that offer and work is already underway with a team from APA consultants. They will be working with us to review our plan, offer additional recommendations, and interact with key stakeholders. We look forward to this process and their final recommendations, which are due by mid-FY26. We are optimistic that this work will inform further action steps in our compliance plan.

FY26 Fiscal Compliance Actions

In FY26, we will move forward with the continued process of restricting and deploying new program funding in compensatory education and ML in the schools with the highest student populations. This work is important to compliance and in providing additional resources to the student populations as Blueprint intends. It also mitigates the overall fiscal compliance gaps in those program areas. With FY26, we are moving forward in good faith with our fiscal compliance plan by implementing the planned changes for A&S staff. Seven high school administrator of athletics and facilities positions are being converted to classroom teacher positions that will teach half-time in order to mitigate the impact on class sizes in our plan. The role of athletic director will become an extra-duty assignment with a stipend, as is the case in other Maryland LEAs.

Our secondary core content coordinators, which have been central office roles, will be moved to the school level in FY26. They will be assigned to a K-12 role to facilitate academic achievement across all school levels, with a focus on improving student outcomes for compensatory education students. In addition, we are eliminating one elementary assistant principal, our only coordinator of instructional technology, and our coordinator of career and technology education positions. The resources funding these roles will be reallocated to the compensatory education fiscal gap.

Subsequent Years of Implementation

As noted, a key aspect of our waiver request is for time to allow the work to take shape with the AIB's resource allocation consultants. One area in which we are most excited by this work is the possibility of further career ladder implementation at our schools with the highest compensatory education students. With the amount of resources already deployed in these schools and the amount to be added through the remaining fiscal compliance plan, we believe there are opportunities to maximize the resource allocation process to achieve some significant aspects of the career ladder. We had to suspend our career ladder committee with the unions to focus on the fiscal compliance workgroup. We are now poised to restart that work and integrate it into our planning with the AIB's resource allocation consultants.

Overall, we are eager to work with APA consultants to arrive at any additional or revised recommendations. The timeline for a final report at mid-FY26 aligns well with our FY27 operating budget process, as well as with collective bargaining timelines. Stakeholder engagement from this process also will be critical to help broaden understanding of Blueprint intentions and to restore confidence in Blueprint implementation in CCPS.

We are optimistic that the work with APA consultants will lead to a revised plan that offers new opportunities to maximize the process of fiscal compliance and resource allocation. We are hopeful that by pausing school-level changes for this work to conclude that we can continue to educate the community and find strategies and a timeline that will mitigate immediate impact and build greater consensus. It will also allow our Board of Education to work with our County Commissioners on a multi-year funding strategy to support implementation.

Our original plan called for 100% compliance in all secondary schools in FY26 followed by 100% compliance in all elementary schools in FY27. Ultimately, pending the APA report, we would envision a revised strategy where we focus first on the necessary changes to instructional support positions at the secondary level in FY27 followed by the same changes at the elementary schools in FY28. Lastly, we would implement the classroom teacher changes in the next two years. By then, between recommendations from APA and continued work with our County Commissioners, we may be able to moderate the class sizes from the levels projected in our current plan.

Public Engagement Process

CCPS has worked hard to provide a transparent process surrounding fiscal compliance and involves as many key stakeholders as possible. The workgroup itself included not only staff, but leaders of our two certificated unions, who they selected. Also included were the County Administrator, Deputy County Administrator, and the Director of Management and Budget from the Carroll County Government.

The workgroup report was presented publicly at a Board of Education meeting on January 8, 2025. At that same time, we established a website to serve as the key communication hub. The website remains available here: [CCPS Blueprint Fiscal Compliance](#). The website contains a special email address so that citizens can email and provide comment or ask questions specific to Blueprint fiscal compliance.

Additional public meetings in which the fiscal compliance plan was presented include:

- January 29, 2025 special Board of Education meeting;
- February 12, 2025 Board of Education meeting;
- March 4, 2025 Employee Town Hall;
- March 5, 2025 Community Town Hall;
- March 6, 2025 Board of County Commissioners meeting;

- March 12, 2025 Board of Education meeting;
- March 25, 2025 Board of County Commissioners; and
- April 2, 2025 Planned Second Community Town Hall meeting.

In addition to these formal meetings of the Board of Education or County Commissioners, we have engaged with key stakeholder groups in other forums. This includes a meeting of the Board of Education’s Citizens Advisory Council, a meeting of the CCPS Teacher Advisory Council, a meeting of the leadership of the local NAACP chapter, and multiple meetings of the Carroll County Council of Parent Organizations. Articulation with our unions has continued before, during, and after the workgroup to present.

The response from our stakeholders has been consistent across all communities in Carroll County. They have urged us to take a more measured approach to the process of resource reallocation in the fiscal compliance plan. They have demanded that we seek this waiver of the timelines in Joint Implementation Policy #2.

On behalf of the Board of Education, I submit this waiver request and petition for the opportunity for an oral argument before the AIB. As addressed above, Appendix C serves as an endorsement of this waiver from our two labor unions most impacted. Additionally, the Carroll County Commissioners have provided their letter of support in Appendix E and the Carroll Delegation in Appendix F.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important request. We look forward to hearing from you and working with you. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I may answer any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. McCabe', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Cynthia A. McCabe, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Enclosures

c: Board of Education Members
File

Appendix A

CCPS History of State and Local Funding FY07 to FY25

	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25
Enrollment (State Verified)	28,491.75	28,319.00	27,989.25	27,628.50	27,418.00	27,060.75	26,785.75	26,318.00	25,948.50	25,504.50	25,162.50	24,860.50	24,934.75	24,822.75	24,968.25	24,019.00	24,799.67	25,323.25	25,618.50
Enrollment Change	286.90	(172.75)	(329.75)	(360.75)	(210.50)	(357.25)	(275.00)	(467.75)	(369.50)	(444.00)	(342.00)	(302.00)	74.25	(112.00)	145.50	(949.25)	780.67	523.58	295.25
Enrollment Date	9/30/2005	9/30/2006	9/30/2007	9/30/2008	9/30/2009	9/30/2010	9/30/2011	9/30/2012	9/30/2013	9/30/2014	9/30/2015	9/30/2016	9/30/2017	9/30/2018	9/30/2019	9/30/2020	9/30/2021	9/30/2022	9/30/2023
State Funding	\$ 120,566,110	\$ 135,930,344	\$ 139,030,915	\$ 133,642,773	\$ 132,585,421	\$ 136,118,362	\$ 135,475,290	\$ 133,340,660	\$ 130,236,314	\$ 128,821,010	\$ 130,667,969	\$ 128,220,928	\$ 128,532,644	\$ 136,374,065	\$ 138,273,133	\$ 138,549,676	\$ 148,804,990	\$ 171,839,258	\$ 181,917,477
State Funding Change	\$ 12,930,047	\$ 15,364,234	\$ 3,100,571	\$ (5,388,142)	\$ (1,057,352)	\$ 3,532,941	\$ (643,072)	\$ (2,134,630)	\$ (3,104,346)	\$ (1,415,304)	\$ 1,846,959	\$ (2,447,041)	\$ 311,716	\$ 7,841,421	\$ 1,899,068	\$ 276,543	\$ 10,255,314	\$ 23,034,268	\$ 10,078,219
Local Funding	\$ 140,738,438	\$ 146,370,927	\$ 157,298,822	\$ 165,793,857	\$ 164,530,683	\$ 162,654,400	\$ 167,790,400	\$ 168,330,938	\$ 167,562,400	\$ 176,008,200	\$ 181,703,000	\$ 186,737,400	\$ 192,391,000	\$ 197,251,500	\$ 198,407,702	\$ 204,617,860	\$ 213,022,400	\$ 225,930,000	\$ 239,001,610
Local Funding Change	\$ 8,114,850	\$ 5,632,489	\$ 10,927,895	\$ 8,495,035	\$ (1,263,174)	\$ (1,876,283)	\$ 5,136,000	\$ 540,538	\$ (768,538)	\$ 8,445,800	\$ 5,694,800	\$ 5,034,400	\$ 5,653,600	\$ 4,860,500	\$ 1,156,202	\$ 6,210,158	\$ 8,404,540	\$ 12,907,600	\$ 13,071,610
MOE Amount	\$ 132,464,450	\$ 139,885,119	\$ 144,666,566	\$ 155,271,417	\$ 164,530,683	\$ 162,386,887	\$ 165,007,236	\$ 166,001,947	\$ 166,698,284	\$ 165,758,420	\$ 173,648,036	\$ 179,522,203	\$ 187,295,122	\$ 191,526,878	\$ 198,407,702	\$ 198,407,702	\$ 204,617,860	\$ 209,810,723	\$ 228,564,158
Diff to MOE	\$ 8,273,988	\$ 6,485,808	\$ 12,632,256	\$ 10,522,440	\$ -	\$ 267,513	\$ 2,783,164	\$ 2,328,991	\$ 864,116	\$ 10,249,780	\$ 8,054,964	\$ 7,215,197	\$ 5,095,878	\$ 5,724,622	\$ -	\$ 6,210,158	\$ 8,404,540	\$ 16,119,277	\$ 10,437,452

Appendix B

State-Wide Comparison of Employee Groups on a Per Pupil Basis

Local Unit	Equated 2023 Enrollment	Instructional Teachers			Non-Instructional Staff*			Instructional Aides			Other Instructional Personnel#		
		Number	Ratio	Rank	Number	Ratio	Rank	Number	Ratio	Rank	Number	Ratio	Rank
Total State	885,809	64,771.50	13.7		40,114.80	22.1		14800.9	59.8		4116.9	215.2	
Allegany	8,092.00	652.6	12.4	7	375.10	21.6	13	168.9	47.9	12	28	289.0	16
Anne Arundel	84,176.50	9298.2	9.1	1	3,008.50	28.0	23	1130.8	74.4	21	401.5	209.7	12
Baltimore City	75,742.50	5298.3	14.3	19	3,300.40	22.9	15	1394.6	54.3	16	551.8	137.3	7
Baltimore	108,848.00	7750.8	14.0	17	5,131.20	21.2	11	1280.1	85.0	23	647.8	168.0	8
Calvert	15,152.50	1044.9	14.5	21	714.20	21.2	12	300.6	50.4	14	86.4	175.4	9
Caroline	5,676.00	419.0	13.5	14	314.40	18.1	5	142.3	39.9	8	23	246.8	15
Carroll	26,096.50	1936.9	13.5	13	907.80	28.7	24	415	62.9	17	33.2	786.0	23
Cecil	14,930.50	1132.8	13.2	12	608.70	24.5	17	236	63.3	18	50.5	295.7	17
Charles	27,708.00	1849.5	15.0	22	1,123.00	24.7	18	638	43.4	9	90	307.9	18
Dorchester	4,608.00	363.2	12.7	9	284.00	16.2	2	125	36.9	5	37	124.5	6
Frederick	47,567.50	3139.6	15.2	23	2,002.70	23.8	16	1221.8	38.9	7	383.1	124.2	5
Garrett	3,455.00	290.5	11.9	5	193.30	17.9	4	51.8	66.7	20	7.6	454.6	21
Harford	37,873.00	2786.9	13.6	15	1,444.50	26.2	20	788	48.1	13	186.4	203.2	10
Howard	57,190.00	4558.4	12.5	8	2,095.20	27.3	22	1515.6	37.7	6	3065	18.7	2
Kent	1,732.00	161.0	10.8	2	101.60	17.0	3	51.8	33.4	2	1	1732.0	24
Montgomery	159,088.00	12240.5	13.0	11	8,372.90	19.0	6	1835	86.7	24	680.5	233.8	14
Prince George's	130,980.00	9039.6	14.5	20	6,546.50	20.0	8	1719.8	76.2	22	255	513.6	22
Queen Anne's	7,428.00	537.0	13.8	16	281.90	26.3	21	111.5	66.6	19	36	206.3	11
St. Mary's	17,217.50	1116.2	15.4	24	684.90	25.1	19	341.5	50.4	15	76.5	225.1	13
Somerset	2,894.00	258.0	11.2	4	197.00	14.7	1	107	27.0	1	24	120.6	4
Talbot	4,482.50	347.2	12.9	10	234.00	19.2	7	94	47.7	11	12	373.5	20
Washington	22,545.50	1604.1	14.1	18	1,032.60	21.8	14	489.8	46.0	10	1435	15.7	1
Wicomico	15,086.00	1227.5	12.3	6	733.10	20.6	10	450	33.5	3	45	335.2	19
Worcester	6,848.00	624.8	11.0	3	338.50	20.2	9	188	36.4	4	59.5	115.1	3

* Central office administrators, principals, asst. principals, and other administrators

Staff developers, teacher trainers, remedial specialists, other school-level instructional professionals, and all support staff

Source: MSDE - *Staff Employed at School and Central Office Levels, October 2023*



Dear Mr. Leggett:

Celeste M. Jordan
PRESIDENT

Nathan J. Curtis
UNISERV DIRECTOR

On behalf of the Carroll County Education Association (CCEA) and the Association of Public School Administrators and Supervisors of Carroll County (APSASCCO), we are writing to offer our endorsement of the waiver request submitted by Superintendent McCabe from the timeline prescribed in Joint Implementation Policy #2 of the Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB) and the Maryland State Board of Education. Our organizations have been working with Superintendent McCabe and her staff on this topic for many successive months. We were included in the Carroll County Public Schools (CCPS) fiscal compliance workgroup where we gained a deeper understanding of the scope of the fiscal compliance gaps and the major impact that the process of compliance will have on our members and on labor management.

As the implementation of the workgroup's fiscal compliance plan has unfolded, we have remained engaged by CCPS leadership. We have been proactive in negotiating required provisions necessary to implement the plan and have worked on communication strategies with CCPS. However, the amount of immediate change in staffing that is required of the policy timeline has overwhelmed our members and confused the message on the intent of Blueprint. Moreover, our members have swung on an emotional pendulum of experiencing so much success last year in implementing the career ladder and achieving the required minimum educator salary to being confronted with dramatic shifts in staffing, reduction of certain positions that support classroom teachers, limitations of student course offerings, and unprecedented class sizes at many schools. We are at risk of losing momentum for broader Blueprint buy-in from our members given the aggressive timeline for change in the AIB's policy.

We believe that the situation in CCPS may be unique in the State. Largely, it can be traced to a decade of reduced funding just prior to Blueprint in which CCPS eliminated over 300 positions. Those positions, which no longer exist in CCPS's central office, appear to be positions that other LEAs are able to re-deploy as part of fiscal compliance resource allocation to lessen the impact at the classroom level. In CCPS, we do not have those resources or that option. Moreover, in that same decade of cuts, our members went seven years without a step increment or cost-of-living adjustment. We now face a scenario where the Blueprint brought a dramatic improvement in salary structure and opportunities through the career ladder, only to confront immediate large-scale transfers, workload changes, and the possibility of a reduction-in-force.

We believe CCPS has been working earnestly to implement Blueprint. The work of Blueprint has aligned our organizations with school system leadership in ways never before realized. One reflection is their inclusion of us on the fiscal compliance workgroup from its inception. Another is our collaborative work on career ladder design and implementation. Those have become a model for Blueprint Pillar 2 at which other systems across Maryland now marvel. An additional aspect of the CCPS waiver request that interests us greatly is the work now underway with consultants from the AIB to maximize the process of resources allocation. We believe that may offer exciting possibilities to expand career ladder roles in some schools if the time is granted to complete the work. We are committed to pivoting and resuming our career ladder committee with CCPS and will be eager to intersect with the AIB consultants.

In summary, on behalf of the educators and administrator and supervisory personnel, we support the waiver submitted by the Superintendent of Schools and ask that the AIB grant the request. This decision from the AIB will refocus local efforts on Blueprint implementation in a more productive and effective manner. Please contact us if we may assist in any way.

Sincerely,

Celeste M. Jordan
President, CCEA

Erin Brillhart
President, APSASCCO



Report of the Superintendent's Blueprint Fiscal Compliance Workgroup

Updated February 12, 2025



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The Blueprint for Maryland's Future, among many policy decisions, reformed the State education funding formula to require local school systems to ensure that funding received in certain student program areas is expended at the school level within the program area through which the funding was received. Specific student-based Blueprint funding programs addressed by the workgroup include:

- Foundation program – The base per pupil funding amount in the law.
- Compensatory education – Per pupil funding for students who are identified as eligible for Free and Reduced Meals.
- Multilingual learners – Per pupil funding for students who are formally identified as needing services to develop English language proficiency.
- Special education – Per pupil funding for students identified for special needs services through an Individualized Education Program (IEP) process.

Through the funding formula, the Board of Education receives specific revenue through each program. There is an amount of required funding, based on the number of students in each program, at both State and County levels. These required funding amounts are referred to as shares. For each Blueprint program there is a required State share and local share, which together is the required combined share for the program.

The Blueprint then applies fiscal compliance in a manner that requires that the funding follow the students to the school level. For each program level, 100% of funding received must be spent on students in that program with at least 75% being spent at the school level where the students are located. Carroll County Public Schools (CCPS) is then accountable for compliance through monthly reporting to the State of expenditures by funding program at the school level.

Our FY25 estimates for compliance within Blueprint funding areas indicate compliance gaps in the following programs: Compensatory education - \$39 million and Multilingual learners - \$5 million. This means that, presently in CCPS, our resources are not distributed across schools in a manner that we can demonstrate compliance through expenditure reporting in these Blueprint program areas. Resources will need to be realigned across all schools to achieve compliance.

In special education, our FY25 estimate is that we are expending \$10 million more than the required combined share under Blueprint. However, the reality of special education law and needs is that more resources, not fewer, are required for our students. Therefore, we cannot legally reduce special education funding, nor would we. Thus, even though we are spending beyond the required share in special education, that creates a challenge overall in aligning all program funds that also must be considered as part of a compliance plan.

In May 2024, the Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB) and the Maryland State Board of Education (MSBE) enacted Joint Implementation Policy #2 – Blueprint for Maryland's Future (see Appendix A). This policy provides a three-year period, fiscal years (FY) 25-27, for local school systems to achieve fiscal compliance under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. Joint Implementation Policy #2 provides the following:

- a. "Fiscal Year 2025 (2024-2025 School Year): LEAs are expected to make a good faith effort to meet the requirement in the baseline year.
- b. Fiscal Year 2026 (2025-2026 School Year): Each LEA that is not in compliance with the requirement shall reduce by at least half the percentage of students within a district who attend a school that has not met the minimum school funding level (at least 75%/100% as



- applicable) of per pupil formula funding.
- c. Fiscal Year 2027 (2026-2027 School Year): Each LEA shall demonstrate that the minimum school funding level (at least 75%/100% as applicable) of per pupil formula funding is following all students to their school.”

Superintendent McCabe formed a Blueprint Fiscal Compliance Workgroup with the onset of fiscal year FY25 to develop comprehensive strategies for CCPS to meet fiscal compliance under the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future. Assistant Superintendents O’Neal and Shockney were directed to form a workgroup comprised of internal and external stakeholders best suited to analyze information and data and develop a system plan for compliance. Dr. McCabe also appointed external facilitators to guide the workgroup’s process.

The workgroup roster was comprised as follows:

External Co-Facilitators

Dr. Donald W. Harmon
Mr. Joseph P. Licata

Staff Leads

Dr. Frank Grossman, AIB Strategic Facilitator for CCPS
Ms. Angie McCauslin, CCPS Blueprint Coordinator
Mr. Jonathan D. O’Neal, Assistant Superintendent of Operations
Mr. Nicholas Shockney, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction

Superintendent’s Cabinet

Mr. Robert Burk, Chief Financial Officer
Mr. Gary Davis, Chief Information Officer
Mr. Ernesto Diaz, Director of Human Resources
Dr. Christy Farver, Director of Elementary Schools
Ms. Carey Gaddis, Communications Officer
Ms. Amy Gromada, Director of Middle Schools
Mr. Michael Hardesty, Director of Transportation
Mr. Eric King, Director of High Schools
Dr. Arlene Moore, Equity and Inclusion Officer
Mr. Curtis Pierce, Chief of School Security
Mr. Raymond Prokop, Director of Facilities Management
Mr. Karl Streaker, Director of Student Services
Mr. Steve Wernick, Director of Curriculum
Ms. Christine Wittle, Director of Special Education

System Staff

Mr. Jeff Alisauckas, Supervisor for Professional Learning
Ms. Christine Bechtel, Supervisor of Secondary Special Education
Ms. Brenda Bowers, Communications Coordinator
Mr. Bill Caine, Facilities Planner
Mr. Bill Eckles, Supervisor of Career and Technical Education
Ms. Beth Fagan, Special Education Coordinator of Early Intervention
Ms. Kim Mahle, Supervisor of Human Resources
Ms. Pam Mesta, Supervisor of ESOL



Ms. Pam Meyers, Supervisor of Early Childhood and Family Education
Ms. Shannon Mobley, Principal of Century High School
Ms. Jenn Seashole, Supervisor of Information Technology
Mr. Drew Sexton, Supervisor of Budget
Mr. Keith Shorter, Supervisor of Transportation

Carroll County Government Staff

Ms. Deb Effingham, Deputy County Administrator
Ms. Roberta Windham, County Administrator
Mr. Ted Zaleski, Director of Management and Budget

Employee Bargaining Groups

Mr. Dan Bessick, MSEA/APSASCCO UniServ Director
Mr. Erin Brillhart, Principal of Sykesville Middle School/APSASCCO President
Mr. Nathan Curtis, MSEA/CCEA UniServ Director
Ms. Celeste Jordan, CCEA President
Ms. Kelley McDonough, West Middle School Career Coach/CCEA Executive Board
Mr. Martin Tierney, Principal of Runnymede Elementary School/APSASCCO Vice President

In addition, various State officials received open invitations to attend any sessions of the workgroup. We thank Dr. Joshua Michael, President of the Maryland State Board of Education, and Ms. Rachel Amstutz, AIB Director of Policy, for attending and observing workgroup sessions.

Dr. McCabe charged the workgroup with a timeline to develop a final report to align with the FY26 operating budget process. The workgroup met and determined a purpose statement to fulfill the Superintendent's charge:

The CCPS Blueprint Fiscal Compliance Workgroup will develop a comprehensive plan for compliance by FY27 by:

- *Understanding the requirements;*
- *Considering the impact on all students;*
- *Developing innovative strategies and solutions;*
- *Identifying and addressing all contingencies; and*
- *Clearly communicating the plan to all stakeholders.*

This report meets the charge and timeline from the Superintendent. It is organized into four main sections: Maximizing Expenditure Reporting by Blueprint Programs, Realigning Resources Among Schools, Implementation Strategies, and System Communication Plan.



One component of fiscal compliance under the Blueprint is to ensure that all appropriate expenditures are being properly reported by Blueprint program. In FY25, we are examining all expenditures through the workgroup process to determine any qualifying expenditures which are presently reported centrally but qualify to be reported at the school level by Blueprint programs.

These reporting changes will occur by FY26 as part of our progression to full compliance. In essence, through the workgroup we are re-examining all system expenditures and linking them to appropriate program categories in the Blueprint for Maryland's Future – Fiscal Reporting Guidelines. From there, we will adjust expenditures to the appropriate program(s) in FY26.

One example of a large expenditure already identified thus far is in the area of multilingual learners (ML). Our data indicates that we have approximately \$1 million in expenditures reported centrally. The conversion to report those expenditures to the school and ML program level in FY26 should bring CCPS closer to compliance with AIB/MSBE Joint Policy #2.

Another area where we need to address reporting compliance is in the area of special education. We estimate that we are expending approximately \$10 million more on special education services than required in the combined shares of the Blueprint formula. This represents significant challenges because, not only does it reflect a gap between Blueprint theory and our reality, it stresses our flexibility to comply in other Blueprint programs. We will need to exercise the Blueprint provision allowing for charging compensatory education funding to cover the additional expenditures in special education. The most significant process toward full fiscal compliance by Blueprint program involves realigning resources across the system and all schools. As the vast majority of our operating budget is tied to staff, this means rebasing staffing across schools. Looking forward to school administration in the future under Blueprint compliance, it will be important that school staffing costs be managed so that the school does not exceed funding levels within any one program.



Program Funding at the School Level

In order to support schools in this management of staying within program funding levels, CCPS has determined that we will ensure that 80% of funding in each program will be budgeted at the school level. However, we will reserve a 5% variance to protect a school from having staffing costs that exceed the funding amount of a program. In essence, 80% of funding by program will go to the school level while 75% may be charged to staffing. The remaining 5% variance will be dedicated to other supports for the students in the school.

New Classroom Teacher Staffing Standard

The workgroup developed a new baseline for staffing to be implemented in FY26 and FY27 to achieve system fiscal compliance. We captured the current staffing allocations across CCPS and used those data in our workgroup to develop a new standard based upon ranges of compensatory education student enrollment. The standard, in some way, will be applied beginning in FY26 to phase CCPS into fiscal compliance by Blueprint program.

The chart below represents the new classroom teacher staffing allocation standard to be implemented in our schools beginning in FY26.

	Base School Standard			Tier 1 Standard			Tier 2 Standard			Tier 3 Standard			Tier 4 Standard		
	Comp Ed Range			Comp Ed Range			Comp Ed Range			Comp Ed Range			Comp Ed Range		
	Low %	High %	Ratio	Low %	High %	Ratio	Low %	High %	Ratio	Low %	High %	Ratio	Low %	High %	Ratio
Elementary	0%	5%	28.0	6%	19%	25.0	20%	23%	22.0	24%	36%	18.0	37%	100%	16.0
Middle	0%	5%	29.0	6%	18%	26.0	19%	27%	23.0	28%	32%	19.0	33%	100%	17.0
High	0%	5%	30.0	6%	19%	27.0	20%	24%	25.0	25%	31%	20.0	32%	100%	18.0

This classroom teacher staffing allocation standard applies only to classroom teacher staffing. This includes homeroom teachers, academic subject teachers, and related arts teachers, such as art, music, health, FACS, technology education, and physical education. It does not include other teacher or educator positions such as special educators, media specialists, counselors, speech language pathologists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, mental health therapists, career coaches, specialists, etc.

The Blueprint staffing standard chart divides schools at all three levels – elementary, middle, and high schools – into staffing allocation groups based upon percentage ranges of compensatory education enrollment at each school. Depending upon which group a school is in, a specific classroom student: teacher ratio is then applied to the school.

Initial classroom teacher ratios are established to bring schools into compliance in Blueprint program areas, notably compensatory education and multilingual learners (ML). The classroom teacher staffing allocation standard groups schools into tiers based on the school’s percentage of compensatory education students as below. The compensatory education ranges are slightly different at each level to adjust for the number of schools and the distribution of compensatory education students at each level.

- Base school standard – The baseline for a school that had almost no compensatory education students enrolled.
- Tier 1 – Schools at each level which have a smaller percentage of compensatory education students.
- Tier 2 – Schools at each level which have a slightly higher percentage of compensatory education students.
- Tier 3 - Schools at each level which have a more significant percentage of compensatory education students.
- Tier 4 - Schools at each level with a high percentage of compensatory education students.



Appendix B of this report illustrates the current FY25 classroom teacher budgeted positions and ratios for each school, each school's compensatory education percentage, and the tier into which the school will be placed in the new classroom teacher staffing standard. Appendix B may be referenced for comparative purposes and to gauge the level of change required to implement Blueprint fiscal compliance.

Fiscal Compliance Objectives

These initial ratios are intended to shift resources across schools to help achieve the following Blueprint compliance objectives:

1. Realign system staffing resources to achieve compliance with compensatory education funding (\$39 million);
2. Free up staffing resources to achieve compliance with ML funding (\$5 million); and
3. Free up staffing resources to establish the variance described above (\$13 million).

Obviously, these compliance gap figures will result in significant changes in staffing across our schools, both in terms of changes from school to school and within a school by program area. The classroom staffing allocation standard described above only addresses classroom teaching positions, but not all school-based staffing or other positions in the system. In order to achieve full fiscal compliance through the above three objectives, the new classroom teacher staffing allocation standard, by itself, will not free up sufficient staffing resources.

Beyond the application of the new standard, key system leaders will need to examine all staffing and make further systemic staffing decisions. Additional details of how the new staffing standard will be applied and how other staffing decisions may be made will follow in the next section of this report, Implementation Strategies.



Developing comprehensive strategies and action steps to effectively implement systemic decisions is as important as the decisions themselves. Achieving Blueprint fiscal compliance will bring tremendous change to CCPS, particularly in terms of how our schools operate. The workgroup was careful to devote equal effort to consider the implications of each decision, as it did to the decision itself. Careful consideration was given to determining the impact on students. While we must comply with Blueprint, we also want to do so in a manner that best supports our students' learning and achievement. This work included re-examining prior system decisions on resource allocation as well as considering new opportunities as we move through fiscal compliance.

The following section outlines our implementation strategies or action steps:

Maximizing Expenditure Reporting by Program

During FY25, budget staff are analyzing all expenditures and mapping them to the Blueprint for Maryland's Future – Fiscal Reporting Guidelines, as described in that section of this report. The analysis will be concluded by end of January 2025. The results of the analysis will then potentially adjust the Blueprint program areas fiscal compliance gaps. These adjustments will be incorporated into other strategies in this plan, such as the application of the new classroom teacher staffing standard and other systemic staffing decisions.

Application of the Classroom Teacher Staffing Standard

Initial ratios are included in this report for planning purposes. The school directors will apply these initial ratios at each level and develop a virtual staffing allocation for every school based on the standard by mid-January 2025.

Budget staff will analyze the virtual staffing allocations to estimate if the ratios as applied appear sufficient to achieve the compliance objectives. Adjustments will then be made as needed and this process will be iterative until a final classroom teacher staffing standard is reached. This process will conclude by end of January 2025.

Once the final classroom teacher staffing standard is established, the final standard will be applied to each school to develop a final staffing allocation. Based on this final staffing allocation, a theoretical class size analysis will be completed for each school. This process will conclude by the end of the first week of February 2025.

To comply with the fiscal compliance phase-in requirement of Joint Implementation Policy #2 – Blueprint for Maryland's Future, CCPS will separate the schools by elementary and secondary levels. In each of the two years of the phase-in period, CCPS will achieve 100% compliance at each level in succession.

For FY26, CCPS will begin by achieving compliance with all secondary schools. Given the volume of change involved in this process, other potential Blueprint-related implementation plans in secondary schools will be paused until at least FY27 to allow schools and communities to adjust.

For instance, concurrent with our fiscal compliance workgroup, we also have three school scheduling committees meeting to determine the most efficient school schedule models at each level (elementary, middle, and high) to meet Blueprint requirements, including program funding and teacher time requirements under the career ladder. These committees will issue their reports and recommendations in February 2025. While recommendations of the middle and high school committees will be available for vetting, no action will be taken on recommendations at these levels until at least FY27.

Final fiscal compliance will be achieved in FY27 when all CCPS elementary schools will be brought into compliance. As with secondary schools the prior year, other potential Blueprint-related implementation plans will be paused in FY27 to allow schools and communities to adjust.



Other Systemic Staffing Decisions

As noted in the Realigning Resources Across Schools section of the report, application of the classroom teacher staffing standard alone will not be sufficient to achieve all three fiscal compliance objectives. Additional staffing changes will be required beyond classroom teachers. The scope of other changes to systemic, non-classroom teacher staffing required will be dictated by the combined processes above associated with maximizing expenditure reporting and applying the classroom teacher staffing standard. When those analyses are completed and adjusted program area compliance gaps are refined, the level of additional staffing decisions required will be clearer.

Those analyses should be completed by the first week of February 2025. System leaders will be prepared to announce other staffing changes by mid-February 2025.

School Funding Variance in Program Areas

As indicated previously, CCPS will reserve a 5% variance in Blueprint program areas to protect schools from having staffing costs that exceed the funding amount of a program. In the foundation program, CCPS has an established history of providing a per pupil allocation to the school level. This will continue through compliance and will be the variance in the foundation program.

CCPS will also reserve a 5% variance in school-level funding in the compensatory education and ML programs. These program variances will be implemented as schools are phased into compliance with secondary schools in FY26 and elementary schools in FY27.

Building upon the work of the fiscal compliance workgroup, system leaders will develop a menu of non-staffing strategies to support student learning and achievement from which schools can select options annually. As noted above, the approach of the workgroup was that, rather than complying for the sake of compliance, we will do so in a manner that best supports our students' learning and achievement. To this end the workgroup invested tremendous effort to re-examining existing instructional practices for efficacy and considering novel instructional approaches.

System leaders will draw from this work and provide schools with an array of strategies to which the school may apply its program variances. These will be provided to schools in advance of the year in which the school is brought into fiscal compliance. Secondary schools will be provided with strategies by the end of school year 2024-25. Elementary schools will be provided with strategies by the end of school year 2025-26.

Labor-Management and Negotiations-Related Implications

The implications of fiscal compliance for labor relations are many. The amount of change in the assignment of staff and how differently schools will operate is significant. The aggressive timeline the Superintendent established for the workgroup not only recognized coordinating this report with the FY26 operating budget timeline but also with the need to allow sufficient time for labor-management discussions and potential collective bargaining to occur prior to implementation.

General communication strategies will be described in the following report section, System Communication Plan. However, relative to the impact on employees, there is a need for intensive collaboration between CCPS central staff and the impacted employee bargaining units. For this reason, representatives from the CCEA and APSASCO were included on the workgroup, as those units are most likely to see the greatest impact. The hope, by including them, was that association leadership would begin the labor-management process with a deeper understanding of the implications and a preparedness to move into discussions at the timing of the release of the report.

The master agreements contain negotiated processes for the assignment of employees. These include the



voluntary transfer process, involuntary transfer (surplus) process, and the reduction in force process. Generally, these processes include timelines for notification and selection.

Those negotiated processes are intended to govern normal staffing conditions in typical years. They do not necessarily anticipate a situation with the level of change involved with Blueprint fiscal compliance implementation.

CCPS central staff will be engaging employee bargaining unit leadership at the time the report is released to determine if there is a need or interest in negotiating any changes specific to implementation of this report. As more specific details emerge during implementation, that communication will continue so that adjustments may be considered as quickly as possible from a labor-management perspective.

Finally, there will be implications on the mutual work of the Blueprint career ladder committee between CCPS and CCEA and APSASCCO as implementation of this report unfolds. CCPS staff will continue to communicate and provide updates to CCEA and APSASCCO on implementation and how it may impact career ladder decisions.



It was important to the Superintendent and the workgroup that a comprehensive communication strategy be developed to guide the release and implementation of the report. Given the amount of system change required to achieve fiscal compliance and the wide-ranging implication of the implementation strategies, providing accurate and timely information to all stakeholders is essential. Additionally, transparent communication of the change process and implications of implementation are vital to setting and managing expectations during the implementation process.

The report will be presented publicly to the Board of Education at its January 8, 2025, business meeting. This will be the first opportunity for the Board to receive the information, discuss the concepts, and ask questions. At the same time, other stakeholders will be hearing the information for the first time as well and attempting to digest the complexities. Therefore, an established communication strategy will be shared as part of the report presentation, so stakeholders will be aware of opportunities for further information sessions.

The communication strategy includes the following elements:

Website as the Central Source of Information

A section will be created on the CCPS Blueprint website to house the report and all related information. Notice of the website section will be shared during the January 8, 2025 Board business meeting. It also will be disseminated via our CCPS communication system. The website will be used as a repository of documents related to Blueprint fiscal compliance and to share key dates that arise from this communication strategy. It will also include an evolving Frequently Asked Questions section and an email contact for stakeholders to submit comments and questions.

Public Board Meetings

Beginning with the January 8, 2025, business meeting, monthly Board meetings will include a report on progress toward implementation. In addition, joint meetings with the Board of Education, the Board of County Commissioners, and the Carroll Delegation will include information on the implementation of this plan. All of these meetings are televised and streamed for the public to consume live or on demand.

Employee Groups

The implications for labor management and negotiations are significant. Much of the system change required for fiscal compliance will involve staffing decisions. For these reasons, we invited the leadership of the two employee units most likely impacted to be part of the process from the beginning.

Moving forward with the implementation process, there will be multiple opportunities to engage employee groups and employees:

- Central staff will notify the leadership of employee bargaining groups of planned changes.
- When appropriate and invited, central staff will attend meetings of employee bargaining groups to provide details regarding the implementation process.
- As soon as implementation details are clarified, the Superintendent's designee will discuss potentially negotiable aspects with employee bargaining groups and develop a priority timeline to address issues.
- The Superintendent will disseminate messages to staff regarding implementation at critical points.
- The Superintendent will host one town hall meeting, specifically for employees, to provide a forum for employees to receive updates and interact with staff.
- Central staff will provide updates at regular principal meetings to share information and guide the work of implementation. School leaders will be provided pertinent discussion points to assist with messaging.

Other Key Stakeholders



Beyond employee groups, all key stakeholders have an interest in our implementation plans for Blueprint fiscal compliance. Accordingly, our communication strategy includes opportunities to engage other specific stakeholders.

Elected Officials

In addition to the public meetings referenced above, when the report is made public, copies will be provided to all Carroll County local and State elected officials for their review. Elected officials are able to contact us individually or collectively to have more detailed discussions or request information.

Students

Central staff will share and discuss the report and plan with leadership of the Carroll County Student Government Association (CCSGA). If CCSGA then would like staff to provide presentations at larger CCSGA meetings, we will be pleased to do so.

Parents and Other Community Members

The report will be presented to appropriate Board-appointed advisory councils, such as the Community Advisory Council and the Teacher Advisory Council at their scheduled meetings.

The Superintendent will hold two town hall meetings for all community members in the spring of 2025 to share the implementation plan details regarding specific strategies and implications. These town hall meetings will be announced in advance through the CCPS communications system and social media. The meetings also will be available for streaming.



The Superintendent’s Blueprint Fiscal Compliance Workgroup released its initial report on January 8, 2025, and presented the plan to the Board of Education. At that time, the initial plan was described as a framework to fiscal compliance, and it was noted that analysis would continue, strategies would be refined, and processes would be developed. As substantive updates are brought to the Board of Education and submitted for public information, this plan will be updated by incorporating addenda for those key updates. This addendum details the updates provided at the February 12, 2025, Board meeting.

Maximizing Expenditure Reporting by Program

Work has continued toward maximizing expenditure reporting. At the February 12, 2025, Board meeting, updated fiscal compliance gaps were provided based on projected expenditure reporting:

Compensatory education:

- Revised compliance gap of \$27 million, based on the following reductions to the original \$39 million gap:
 - \$10.3 million in special education charges above required Blueprint shares
 - \$1.6 million in identified qualifying expenditures

Multilingual education:

- Revised compliance gap of \$4 million, based on charging expenditures of existing central ML staff to the school level.

Realigning Resources Among Schools

Following the release of the report, work continued to update underlying data in the report. Enrollment figures were updated from the official fall 2023 enrollment counts to the official fall 2024 enrollment numbers. Additionally, fiscal compliance data in Blueprint program areas was updated based on preliminary FY26 State aid calculations. After examining these updates, the new classroom teacher staffing allocation standard was slightly adjusted as below:

	Base School Standard			Tier 1 Standard			Tier 2 Standard			Tier 3 Standard			Tier 4 Standard		
	Comp Ed Range			Comp Ed Range			Comp Ed Range			Comp Ed Range			Comp Ed Range		
	Low %	High %	Ratio	Low %	High %	Ratio	Low %	High %	Ratio	Low %	High %	Ratio	Low %	High %	Ratio
Elementary	0%	5%	30.0	6%	19%	25.0	20%	23%	22.0	24%	36%	18.0	37%	100%	16.0
Middle	0%	5%	31.0	6%	18%	26.0	19%	27%	23.0	28%	32%	19.0	33%	100%	17.0
High	0%	5%	32.0	6%	19%	27.0	20%	24%	25.0	25%	31%	20.0	32%	100%	18.0

Impact of Implementing the Classroom Teacher Staffing Standard

In addition to arriving at an updated classroom teacher staffing standard, we have had time to analyze the implementation of the standard and arrive at some early projections on the impact to staffing FTE at each school, overall FTE reductions, and class size ranges.

The following tables were provided in the update to the Board of Education on February 12, 2025.



Schools by Tier Based on Fall 2024 Enrollments and Updated Classroom Teacher Staffing Standard

Elementary			Middle			High		
School	Comp Ed %	Tier	School	Comp Ed %	Tier	School	Comp Ed %	Tier
Carrolltowne	13%	1	Oklahoma Road	15%	1	Century	19%	1
Eldersburg	14%	1	Sykesville	18%	1	Liberty	14%	1
Freedom	12%	1	Mt. Airy	20%	2	South Carroll	20%	2
Linton Springs	15%	1	North Carroll	30%	3	Westminster	23%	2
Mechanicsville	14%	1	Shiloh	28%	3	Manchester Valley	27%	3
Mt. Airy	20%	2	East	38%	4	Francis Scott Key	37%	4
Piney Ridge	20%	2	Northwest	45%	4	Winters Mill	36%	4
Winfield	21%	2	West	33%	4			
Ebb Valley	27%	3						
Friendship Valley	30%	3						
Hampstead	26%	3						
Manchester	30%	3						
Parr's Ridge	24%	3						
Runnymede	33%	3						
Sandymount	26%	3						
Spring Garden	32%	3						
Cranberry Station	42%	4						
Elmer Wolfe	41%	4						
Robert Moton	58%	4						
Taneytown	59%	4						
Westminster	40%	4						
William Winchester	39%	4						

FTE Changes for Classroom Teachers by Level

Level	Students	Current FTE	Projected FTE	Change
Elementary	11,642	522.0	483.9	-38.1
Middle	5,903	313.6	294.4	-19.2
High	7,914	390.4	355.7	-34.7
	25,459	1,226	1,134	-92

FTE Changes by High School

School	Tier	Current FTE	Projected FTE	Change
Century	1	53.5	40.7	-12.8
Liberty	1	52.4	37.3	-15.1
South Carroll	2	49.0	37.3	-11.7
Westminster	2	72.0	59.0	-13.0
Manchester Valley	3	64.5	66.9	2.4
Francis Scott Key	4	46.0	50.3	4.3
Winters Mill	4	53.0	64.2	11.2
		390.4	355.7	-34.7



FTE Changes by Middle School

School	Tier	Current FTE	Projected FTE	Change
Oklahoma Road	1	41.0	29.2	-11.8
Sykesville	1	39.0	29.2	-9.8
Mt. Airy	2	39.0	32.8	-6.2
North Carroll	3	33.0	31.6	-1.4
Shiloh	3	33.0	33.1	0.1
East	4	44.5	47.1	2.6
Northwest	4	37.0	37.9	0.9
West	4	47.1	53.6	6.5
		313.6	294.4	-19.2

FTE Changes by Elementary School

School	Tier	Current FTE	Projected FTE	Change
Carrolltowne	1	25.8	18.4	-7.4
Eldersburg	1	21.0	14.8	-8.0
Freedom	1	27.0	19.7	-7.3
Linton Springs	1	32.0	23.2	-8.8
Mechanicsville	1	22.0	16.1	-6.9
Mt. Airy	2	17.0	15.6	-1.4
Piney Ridge	2	25.2	19.6	-5.6
Winfield	2	32.2	24.6	-7.6
Ebb Valley	3	25.0	24.4	-0.6
Friendship Valley	3	22.0	21.9	-0.1
Hampstead	3	18.0	16.2	-1.8
Manchester	3	29.0	29.4	0.4
Parr's Ridge	3	17.0	16.4	-0.6
Runnymede	3	27.0	26.0	-1.0
Sandymount	3	27.2	28.2	1.0
Spring Garden	3	20.0	18.3	-1.7
Cranberry Station	4	24.0	29.8	5.8
Elmer Wolfe	4	23.2	23.3	0.1
Robert Moton	4	18.2	19.3	1.1
Taneytown	4	20.0	21.8	1.8
Westminster	4	24.0	27.6	3.6
William Winchester	4	25.2	29.3	4.1
		522.0	483.9	-38.1



Average Class Sizes

Level	Students	Current Class Size Avg	Projected Class Size Avg	Change
Elementary	11,642	23.3	24.6	1.3
Middle	5,903	18.8	26.0	7.2
High	7,914	22.9	27.4	4.5

Average Class Sizes by Elementary Schools

School	Tier	Current Class Size Average	Projected Class Size Average	Change
Carrolltowne	1	25.0	31.4	6.4
Eldersburg	1	22.3	30.3	8.0
Freedom	1	24.0	31.4	7.4
Linton Springs	1	24.5	32.3	7.8
Mechanicsville	1	25.0	30.8	5.8
Mt. Airy	2	27.2	28.9	1.7
Piney Ridge	2	23.3	27.9	4.6
Winfield	2	23.5	28.1	4.6
Ebb Valley	3	22.8	22.8	NC
Friendship Valley	3	23.8	22.6	-1.2
Hampstead	3	22.1	23.4	1.3
Manchester	3	23.3	22.4	-0.9
Parr’s Ridge	3	23.2	23.2	NC
Runnymede	3	23.4	22.6	-0.8
Sandymount	3	23.8	22.1	-1.7
Spring Garden	3	22.1	23.3	1.2
Cranberry Station	4	24.9	19.1	-5.8
Elmer Wolfe	4	21.1	20.2	-0.9
Robert Moton	4	22.9	20.5	-2.4
Taneytown	4	22.6	19.5	-3.1
Westminster	4	23.6	19.4	-4.2
William Winchester	4	22.7	19.6	-3.1
		23.3	24.6	1.3



Average Class Sizes by Middle Schools

School	Tier	Current Class Size Average	Projected Class Size Average	Change
Oklahoma Road	1	20.4	34.7	14.3
Sykesville	1	17.9	34.6	16.7
Mt. Airy	2	20.0	30.4	10.4
North Carroll	3	19.0	26.1	7.1
Shiloh	3	19.1	23.8	4.7
East	4	17.9	17.3	-0.4
Northwest	4	17.7	17.7	NC
West	4	19.6	23.7	4.1
		18.8	26.0	7.2

Average Class Sizes by High Schools

School	Tier	Current Class Size Average	Projected Class Size Average	Change
Century	1	21.8	30.9	9.1
Liberty	1	23.0	35.5	12.5
South Carroll	2	23.2	31.4	8.2
Westminster	2	22.6	29.9	7.3
Manchester Valley	3	24.3	22.7	-1.6
Francis Scott Key	4	20.8	21.2	0.4
Winters Mill	4	24.7	20.1	-4.6
		22.9	27.4	4.5



Class Size Ranges by Level and Tier

Level	Tier	School Count	Projected Low	Projected High	Projected Average
Elementary	1	5	20.7	44.0	31.2
	2	3	20.3	35.7	28.3
	3	8	15.2	35.5	22.8
	4	6	14.3	26.0	19.7
Middle	1	2	33.0	39.7	34.7
	2	1	29.4	31.6	30.4
	3	2	21.2	27.5	25.0
	4	3	21.8	27.4	19.6
High	1	2	27.4	42.0	33.2
	2	2	30.8	38.9	30.7
	3	1	22.3	24.0	22.7
	4	2	19.3	21.5	20.7

Class Size Ranges by Elementary School

School	Tier	Projected Low	Projected High	Projected Average
Carrolltowne	1	25.0	39.3	31.4
Eldersburg	1	20.7	44.0	30.3
Freedom	1	24.0	39.3	31.4
Linton Springs	1	24.5	36.7	32.3
Mechanicsville	1	25.0	42.0	30.8
Mt. Airy	2	26.7	32.2	28.9
Piney Ridge	2	20.3	35.7	27.9
Winfield	2	26.5	29.3	28.1
Ebb Valley	3	20.5	25.0	22.8
Friendship Valley	3	18.5	28.7	22.6
Hampstead	3	20.0	35.5	23.4
Manchester	3	18.2	29.5	22.4
Parr's Ridge	3	20.5	25.8	23.2
Runnymede	3	15.2	29.8	22.6
Sandymount	3	17.2	27.0	22.1
Spring Garden	3	19.0	28.3	23.3
Cranberry Station	4	14.3	25.3	19.1
Elmer Wolfe	4	17.5	23.0	20.2
Robert Moton	4	16.7	26.0	20.5
Taneytown	4	15.8	23.0	19.5
Westminster	4	15.0	22.3	19.6
William Winchester	4	15.8	22.3	19.6



Class Size Ranges by Middle School

School	Tier	Projected Low	Projected High	Projected Average
Oklahoma Road	1	33.6	39.7	34.7
Sykesville	1	33.0	39.5	34.6
Mt. Airy	2	29.4	31.6	30.4
North Carroll	3	26.0	26.3	26.1
Shiloh	3	21.2	27.5	23.8
East	4	21.8	27.3	17.3
Northwest	4	21.8	27.4	17.7
West	4	23.0	24.3	23.7

Class Size Ranges by High School

School	Tier	Projected Low	Projected High	Projected Average
Century	1	27.4	36.7	30.9
Liberty	1	31.7	42.0	35.5
South Carroll	2	31.1	38.9	31.4
Westminster	2	30.8	30.8	29.9
Manchester Valley	3	22.3	24.0	22.7
Francis Scott Key	4	21.5	21.5	21.2
Winters Mill	4	19.3	21.4	20.1

Additional Position Changes Required for Fiscal Compliance

Despite the significant staffing changes and reductions associated with implementing the classroom teacher staffing standard, those changes are not sufficient to achieve the three major compliance objectives:

1. Reallocate existing expenditures to fund \$27m in required compensatory education student services
2. Reduce existing expenditures to fund \$4m in the required Multilingual learner (ML) student services
3. Reduce \$13m in existing expenditures to establish a 5% variance for schools in compensatory education and ML program areas

Beyond the staffing changes through the classroom teacher staffing standard, there are changes to over 100 FTE at the central and school levels. These changes include positions eliminated, positions reduced, and positions repurposed as detailed on the following charts:



Central Office and Administrative Positions

Action	Position	Implementation
Eliminate	Mentor Teacher-School Counseling (1)	2025-2026
Eliminate	Special Education Instructional Consultant-Inclusion (2)	2025-2026
Eliminate	Coordinator-Instructional Technology (1)	2025-2026
Eliminate	Teacher-Instructional Technology (2)	2025-2026
Eliminate	Coordinator-Career & Technical Education (1)	2025-2026
Re-Purpose	Coordinator-Secondary ELA (1)	2025-2026
Re-Purpose	Coordinator-Secondary Mathematics (1)	2025-2026
Re-Purpose	Coordinator-Secondary Science (1)	2025-2026
Re-Purpose	Coordinator-Secondary Social Studies (1)	2025-2026
Re-Purpose	Coordinator-STEM (1)	2025-2026
Reduce	Athletic Director (7)	2025-2026
Eliminate	Elementary Assistant Principal (1)	2026-2027

Secondary School Positions

Action	Position	Implementation
Eliminate	Middle School Reading Specialist (4)	2025-2026
Eliminate	Middle School Math Resource Teacher (4)	2025-2026
Eliminate	Middle & High School Media Specialist (14)	2025-2026
Eliminate	Academic Facilitator (7)	2025-2026

Elementary School Positions

Action	Position	Implementation
Eliminate	Elementary School Reading Specialist (11)	2026-2027
Eliminate	Elementary School Math Resource Teacher (11)	2026-2027
Eliminate	Primary Interventionist (7)	2026-2027
Eliminate	Media Clerks (22)	2026-2027



Maryland State Board of Education and the Accountability and Implementation Board Joint Implementation Policy #2 – Blueprint for Maryland’s Future Minimum School Funding Requirement

Background

When the Maryland General Assembly created the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future (Blueprint), it recognized the importance of ensuring per pupil funding reaches the students it is intended to help and, as a result, require minimum school funding levels to ensure allocated funds follow children to their school programs. In Md. Code Ann., Ed. §5-234, the Blueprint law establishes minimum school funding at 75% of the per pupil amount applicable to the foundation program and seven targeted funding programs, as well as 100% of the concentration of poverty per pupil grant and 100% of per pupil funding for private providers participating in the full-day prekindergarten program.

Local education agencies (LEAs) must report to the Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB) and Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) beginning on or before July 1, 2024, and each July 1 thereafter, on the LEA’s compliance with minimum school funding requirements at the school system and individual school level. The new Blueprint Financial Reporting System, which was required by §5-234(c) to be developed by MSDE in consultation with AIB, is designed to collect LEA and school-level budget and spending information by Blueprint funding formula monthly beginning in fiscal year 2025 (July 1, 2024). LEAs will upload data each month by the 15th of the following month. (It is currently in beta testing in fiscal year 2024; all LEAs have had access to the system since April 2024.) The first full year of LEA data will be available by October 15, 2025, after the closeout of fiscal year 2025.

Pursuant to Ed. §5-405(c), Blueprint funds are automatically withheld by law until the AIB determines that a local school system or public school has met adequate implementation and performance standards. From fiscal year 2023 through 2025, the AIB is authorized to release funds after a local school system or public school has developed an initial implementation plan and has received approval for its initial implementation plan and for any subsequent modification (§5-405(c)). Beginning in fiscal year 2026, the AIB is authorized to release or withhold funds based on whether a local school system or public school has made sufficient progress on an implementation plan or taken appropriate steps to improve student performance.



Discussion

As with the implementation of other Blueprint programs and requirements, the first year of data is baseline data. LEAs are expected to make a good faith effort to meet the minimum school funding requirement. The 2024 LEA Blueprint Implementation Plans submitted by May 1, 2024, include a multi-year plan for how each LEA will meet the minimum school funding requirement.

Minimum school funding is an integral part of making progress on implementation plans, improving student performance, and achieving the Blueprint outcomes. Thus, beginning in fiscal year 2026, the AIB will be authorized to evaluate LEA and school-level compliance with the minimum school funding requirements and make Blueprint funding determinations based on the level of compliance.

While the mechanism for equitable funding is to ensure at least the minimum funding at each school, the intent of the law is to ensure each student's school is appropriately resourced. Therefore, key performance measures will focus on the proportion of students who attend schools funded at the minimum school funding level.

Ed. §5-406(f) requires the AIB to adopt an appeals process for LEAs to request a waiver from minimum school funding requirements based on certain enrollment shifts and other criteria. The AIB will develop an appeals process, which will include an opportunity for public review and comment before the appeals process is adopted.

Finally, while the Blueprint calls for a minimum school funding level of 75% or 100% of funds from the per pupil formulas, this is the *minimum* expectation for *each* school, not an average across schools. The 75% minimum allows for school variation on costs, particularly those related to school personnel; however, the intent is not to require that 25% of funds are spent centrally.

Policy Statements

1. To provide further detail on the expectations for minimum school funding requirement compliance, the AIB and State Board of Education jointly resolve that LEAs are urged to meet the minimum school funding requirement for all students in all schools as soon as practicable and must meet the requirement *no later than* the 2026-2027 school year.
2. Adherence to the minimum school funding requirement will be measured by the percentage of students within an LEA who attend a school that has met the required minimum school funding levels in accordance with Ed. §5-234. The percentages of



schools within a district in compliance with the required minimum school funding levels will also be monitored and reported.

3. Each LEA will submit baseline data for each LEA in aggregate and each school in the LEA by Blueprint funding formula required to comply with Ed. § 5-234. LEAs should make a good faith effort to meet the minimum school funding requirement in the 2024-25 school year. The following timeline is available for LEAs that do not meet the requirement in the 2024-2025 school year:
 - a. Fiscal Year 2025 (2024-2025 School Year): LEAs are expected to make a good faith effort to meet the requirement in the baseline year.
 - b. Fiscal Year 2026 (2025-2026 School Year): Each LEA that is not in compliance with the requirement shall reduce by at least half the percentage of students within a district who attend a school that has not met the minimum school funding level (at least 75%/100% as applicable) of per pupil formula funding.
 - c. Fiscal Year 2027 (2026-2027 School Year): Each LEA shall demonstrate that the minimum school funding level (at least 75%/100% as applicable) of per pupil formula funding is following all students to their school.
4. The AIB and MSDE will use data collected from the LEAs in the Blueprint Financial Reporting System to evaluate compliance with the requirement. The monthly data reporting will satisfy the reporting requirement to MSDE and the AIB that begins July 1, 2024, with data from each month required to be uploaded by the 15th of the following month.

Adopted this 16th day of May 2024

Isiah Leggett, Chair
Accountability and Implementation Board

Adopted this 21st day of May 2024

Clarence C. Crawford, President
State Board of Education



Current School Budgeted Classroom Teacher FTE, Student-Teacher Ratio, Comp Ed %, and Tier Placement

School	FTE	Current Ratio	Comp Ed %	Tier
Carrolltowne Elementary	31.2	19.0	12%	1
Cranberry Station Elementary	29.4	19.8	41%	4
Ebb Valley Elementary	30.4	18.1	26%	3
Eldersburg Elementary	25.6	18.0	18%	1
Elmer A. Wolfe Elementary	28.4	16.4	42%	4
Freedom District Elementary	32.6	19.7	11%	1
Friendship Valley Elementary	27.2	17.6	29%	3
Hampstead Elementary	22.2	17.8	25%	3
Linton Springs Elementary	39.0	18.6	13%	1
Manchester Elementary	35.2	18.3	26%	3
Mechanicsville Elementary	26.8	17.9	16%	1
Mount Airy Elementary	21.4	21.4	20%	2
Parr's Ridge Elementary	21.2	19.4	23%	2
Piney Ridge Elementary	30.4	18.5	20%	2
Robert Moton Elementary	22.6	17.0	57%	4
Runnymede Elementary	33.0	17.3	35%	3
Sandymount Elementary	32.8	17.1	25%	3
Spring Garden Elementary	24.4	17.9	33%	3
Taneytown Elementary	24.6	18.5	63%	4
Westminster Elementary	29.6	18.1	39%	4
William Winchester Elementary	30.8	19.0	36%	3
Winfield Elementary	39.0	17.2	20%	2
Mount Airy Middle	38.0	19.8	19%	2
North Carroll Middle	32.0	18.8	27%	2
Northwest Middle	36.0	17.9	47%	4
Oklahoma Road Middle	40.0	19.0	14%	1
Shiloh Middle	32.0	19.7	27%	2
Sykesville Middle	38.0	19.9	16%	1
Westminster East Middle	43.5	18.4	38%	4
Westminster West Middle	46.1	19.8	31%	3
Century High	52.5	20.6	17%	1
Francis Scott Key High	45.0	20.7	41%	4
Liberty High	51.4	19.5	14%	1
Manchester Valley High	63.7	21.5	26%	3
South Carroll High	48.0	19.5	20%	2
Westminster High	70.0	21.1	24%	2
Winters Mill High	51.3	22.2	35%	4

**Board of County
Commissioners**

Kenneth A. Kiler, President
Joseph A. Vigliotti, Vice President
Thomas S. Gordon III
Michael R. Guerin
Edward C. Rothstein



Carroll County Government

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MD Relay 711/800-735-2258

March 31, 2025

Dear Mr. Leggett:

The Carroll County Board of Commissioners (Board), fully support the waiver request submitted by Superintendent McCabe from the timeline prescribed in Joint Implementation Policy #2 of the Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB) and the Maryland State Board of Education. The Board believes Carroll County Public Schools (CCPS) faces a unique situation, relative to other surrounding school systems, as they begin implementing school-level changes to meet Blueprint fiscal compliance. This situation is a by-product of the decade preceding the pandemic and Blueprint.

From FY09 to FY19, CCPS experienced a steady enrollment decline. Under the State aid formula, that enrollment decline resulted in a direct loss in State education aid of more than \$16 million. At the height of the Great Recession, the Board worked to fund CCPS, but it was not possible to overcome losses in State aid and meet CCPS's inflationary increases and need for improvements. As a result, the school system made significant cuts to programs and positions, including three school closures. Those decisions and reductions now limit Superintendent McCabe's ability to reallocate resources without making significant changes to school staffing, student course offerings, and class size changes.

In recent years, the Board has continued to fund CCPS well above maintenance-of-effort and, under Blueprint, even more above the combined local shares. According to Department of Legislative Services data, our local funding equates to 10th in the State on a per pupil basis, which is consistent with our relative wealth ranking under the State aid formula. For the past four fiscal years, we have maintained a funding level for CCPS on average over maintenance-of-effort by more than \$10 million annually. During last year's budget process, the Commissioners committed an additional \$6 million to CCPS so that they could achieve the required career ladder and the minimum \$60,000 teacher salary. In the current operating budget discussion for FY26, the Board continues to work with CCPS for adequate funding and to address the reduction to Foundation aid contained in the State budget.

The Carroll County Board of Commissioners will continue to support Superintendent McCabe and the Board of Education as the school system proceeds with Blueprint implementation and ask that you honor the waiver request for the reasons stated in their application. It is necessary for our school communities to work through this process successfully.

Thank you for your consideration. Please reach out if the Board may support the waiver request in additional ways.

Sincerely,

THE BOARD OF CARROLL COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Kenneth A. Kiler
President

Joseph A. Vigliotti
Vice President

Thomas S. Gordon III

Michael R. Guerin

Edward C. Rothstein (COL, Ret.)



THE MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 31, 2025

Mr. Isiah Leggett
Chair, Accountability & Implementation Board

Dear Chairperson Leggett,

On behalf of the Carroll County Delegation, we are writing to offer our endorsement of the waiver request submitted by Superintendent McCabe from the timeline prescribed in Joint Implementation Policy #2 of the Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB) and the Maryland State Board of Education. Superintendent McCabe has long taken a lead in framing the scope of change to our schools that will be required to meet Blueprint fiscal compliance. She has tried to prepare our communities for over a year. Once you adopted Joint Implementation Policy #2, Dr. McCabe formed a county-wide committee to review CCPS data, examine best practices, and develop a comprehensive plan for compliance. That committee included school system staff, local union leaders, and County government staff involved in the annual budget process. Superintendent McCabe also was very transparent in inviting key State leaders to attend sessions and be familiar with the work.

Once these efforts moved from report and discussion to action steps, the reality of the level of change caused our communities to react. All major stakeholder groups, including parents, employees, and students, have expressed concern with the amount of change the school system must undertake on the timeline in your policy. That community outcry reached our ears in Annapolis during this session. Working on this issue became a main focus of our efforts. We have crossed political lines to explain the unique situation in Carroll County Public Schools (CCPS) to legislative leaders. We have also engaged collaboratively with MSEA leadership to develop understanding and seek solutions. Finally, we continue to work with Superintendent McCabe, the Board of Education, and the Carroll County Commissioners to understand everyone's role in this process and to seek the best possible outcome for our students and communities.

We are proud of our local school system and the work accomplished every day on behalf of students by system leadership, educators. We believe that that CCPS is one of the most efficient school systems in the State and our sustained student performance speaks for itself. It does not mean that the school system is without its challenges or need for improvement. One challenge is that Blueprint implementation for CCPS follows a decade of declining student enrollment and requisite reductions in State education aid totaling over \$16 million. This reality caused the Board of Education to reduce over 370 positions which are no longer available to help alleviate the reallocation of resources to support Blueprint. While our County Commissioners have worked to

offset that loss in State aid, CCPS was never able to restore any of those eliminated resources which challenge their compliance efforts more than in other metropolitan area systems.

Locally, our Board of Education has been implementing Blueprint with fidelity. We have had success with CCR pathways, including career and technology expansion and dual enrollment, collaboration with the local workforce development board, pre-K expansion, and career ladder implementation and teacher salary enhancements. The latter was accomplished only through additional funding from the County Commissioners. The school system does not sidestep what is required of it, even if the choices are challenging. They will work to align resources as required by Blueprint. However, it is reasonable to seek additional time under Joint Implementation Policy #2. We are aware that CCPS is working with resource allocation consultants from AIB and are interested in seeing how those recommendations may inform future implementation. More importantly, we are concerned with the prescribed timeline for fiscal compliance, given the significant change required at the school level, will cause our communities to turn irrevocably against Blueprint in whole.

For the Carroll County Delegation, we support the waiver submitted by the Superintendent of Schools and ask that the AIB grant the request. Please feel free to contact us if we may support the request in any way.

Sincerely,



Senator Justin Ready



Senator Christopher R. West



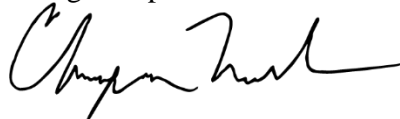
Delegate Christopher Eric Bouchat



Delegate April R. Rose



Delegate Joshua J. Stonko



Delegate Chris Tomlinson