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R00A03

Funding for Educational Organizations

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Maryland State Department of Education

Response to the Analyst's Review and Recommendations

Senate Education, Business, and Administration Subcommittee –  
February 21, 2014

House Education and Economic Development Subcommittee –  
March 3, 2014



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State Superintendent of Schools

The analysis provides a comprehensive overview of the goals and activities of the Funding for Educational Organizations budget. As noted in the analysis, this budget provides grants to organizations with unique operations through four budgetary programs:

- **The Maryland School for the Blind**, assisted by a formula grant provided by the State, operates as a statewide resource center, providing outreach, school and residential services for students to reach their fullest potential by preparing them to be successful, independent and well-rounded contributing members of their communities.
- **Blind Industries and Services of Maryland** (BISM) is dedicated to positively changing attitudes regarding blindness and low vision through innovative programs and services to individuals who are blind or have low vision. BISM assists transitioning youth and adults to achieve self-sufficiency, personal growth, and independence.

BISM provides a comprehensive nine month rehabilitation program for individuals over age 18 who are legally blind. The program involves Orientation and Mobility training, computer skills training, Braille, Career Exploration, and independent living training. To enhance the training, BISM provides a residential component that affords the individual an opportunity to live independently but yet also provides the necessary supports needed during their training program. The program is available to Maryland residents at no cost.

- **State-Aided Educational Institutions (SAI)** – The 40 non-profit organizations participating in the SAI program provide unique experiential educational opportunities that cannot be replicated in the classroom. The majority of programs target Title I schools. Criteria for institutional eligibility include educational impact, budget request, number of students and teachers projected to be served, and safety factors. Each institution must prove 501(c)(3) nonprofit status, must provide for an annual independent audit, and must provide direct services to Maryland school groups. Additionally, the institution must generate more than half of its operating budget from sources other than State grants. For every State dollar invested in the institutions' education programs, they are able to leverage between \$3 and \$22 in additional support for their educational programming.
- **Nonpublic Textbook Program** – The purpose of the program is to provide funding for the purchase of textbooks, computer hardware and computer software for loan to students in eligible nonpublic schools. For schools where at least 20 percent of the students are eligible for the free and reduced price meals program, the distribution is \$90 per student. For the remaining eligible schools, the available funding is allocated on a per student basis, not to exceed \$60.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Concur with Governor's allowance.**  
**MSDE concurs.**