

# MARYLAND TRANSFORMS

A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR MARYLAND BY MARYLAND

JUNE 2023



MARYLAND STATE BOARD &  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION





MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

**Mohammed Choudhury**

State Superintendent of Schools  
Secretary-Treasurer, Maryland State Board of Education

**Sylvia A. Lawson, Ph.D.**

Deputy State Superintendent, Organizational Effectiveness

**Deann Collins, Ed.D.**

Deputy State Superintendent, Teaching and Learning

**Krishnanda Tallur**

Deputy State Superintendent, Operations

**Justin Dayhoff**

Assistant State Superintendent, Division of Financial  
Planning, Operations, and Strategy

**Wes Moore**

Governor

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# INTRODUCTION TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The Maryland State Board of Education and Maryland State Department of Education have developed a multiyear Strategic Plan composed of three phases leading up to June 2023. The Strategic Plan anchors the vision, mission, values, priorities, enablers, goals, and flagship programs, initiatives, and strategies to realize the Blueprint for Maryland's Future promise of an excellent and equitable education for every student. This guidebook articulates the elements of each of the following phases:

**PHASE 1:** The **vision** and **mission** for transforming public education in Maryland. The **values** that inform our everyday practices and relationships with our diverse communities and stakeholders. The **priorities** that must be achieved to ensure a successful educational experience for every Maryland student, from early childhood to college and career. The **enablers**, or structural conditions, regarding data-driven decision-making, resource allocation, human capital, and support systems that need to be in place for the priorities to be achieved.

**PHASE 2:** The **goals** that guide our direction in creating long-lasting, positive change in education. The **metrics**, or the data sources and data subsets, used to evaluate progress and establish baseline measures.

**PHASE 3:** The **programs, initiatives, and strategies** grounded in research and modeled around national best practices to create high-quality learning environments for students.

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We are committed to moving with urgency to actualize the bold, transformative change our students deserve.

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## LETTER FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT & STATE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Marylanders:

The Maryland State Board of Education and Maryland State Department of Education are dedicated to raising the quality of education for every student in Maryland. In order to ensure student success at scale, we must address the present and persistent historical challenges across our state's educational system.

Educational experiences in Maryland before the COVID-19 pandemic did not prepare all students for postsecondary success nor did they meet our workforce needs. In 2019, 57% of Maryland's 10th grade students and 59% of 3rd grade students were not proficient in English language arts. These challenges also held true in math where 73% of students were not proficient in Algebra I. Furthermore, 75% of Black/African American boys were not proficient in math in 3rd grade, and 76% of students eligible for Free and Reduced Price Meals were not proficient in English language arts in 3rd grade.

The pandemic has only exacerbated our challenges. As we continue to work to overcome these deficits, a return to normal is not good enough. We must tackle the opportunity and achievement gaps that have persisted in our state. This will ensure that all students, from advanced learners to those who are struggling and have been historically underserved, receive the necessary support in order to reach their full potential.

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future was passed by the Maryland General Assembly in 2021 to transform public education in the state into a world-class education system. The legislation presents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to fulfill the promise of an excellent and equitable education for all children in Maryland.

We are committed to moving with urgency to actualize the bold, transformative change our students deserve. To accomplish this, the Maryland State Board of Education and Maryland State Department of Education have developed a multiyear Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan aligns our vision, mission, values, priorities, enablers, goals, and flagship programs, initiatives, and strategies to the Blueprint's promise of an excellent and equitable education for every student. The Strategic Plan anchors the Blueprint legislation into the organizational fabric of our everyday work and embodies the aspirations that the people of Maryland have for our students.

Through our engagement efforts, we know that more than 86% of stakeholders believe the quality of public schools is "extremely important" for Maryland's success as a state. We worked collaboratively and transparently with educators, families, local education agencies, boards of education, institutions of higher education, the Accountability and Implementation Board, employers, and stakeholders across our state to collect feedback and ensure we heard from as many people as possible while seeking out and prioritizing new and underrepresented voices.

The elements outlined in this plan are an investment in our students' future. It is a testament to our collective belief in the power of education to transform lives and uplift communities. We value the input and support of all stakeholders who have contributed to this process. Your engagement and collaboration have been instrumental in shaping our Strategic Plan and ensuring that it reflects the diverse needs and aspirations of our state. As we continue to implement the Blueprint and execute our Strategic Plan, we will remain open to feedback and continuously seek opportunities for improvement.

We cannot do this alone. Together, we will create classrooms that instill a love for learning, foster critical thinking, and nurture the unique talents of each student. We look forward to your continued support as we seize this opportunity to transform public education so that all Maryland students are ready to be successful in college, career, and life.

**CLARENCE C. CRAWFORD**  
President, Maryland State Board of Education

**MOHAMMED CHOUDHURY**  
State Superintendent of Schools



# ABOUT THE MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION & DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The Maryland State Board of Education, established in 1864, consists of 13 regular members, and one student member, all appointed by the Governor. Regular members serve staggered four-year terms and the student member serves a one-year term.

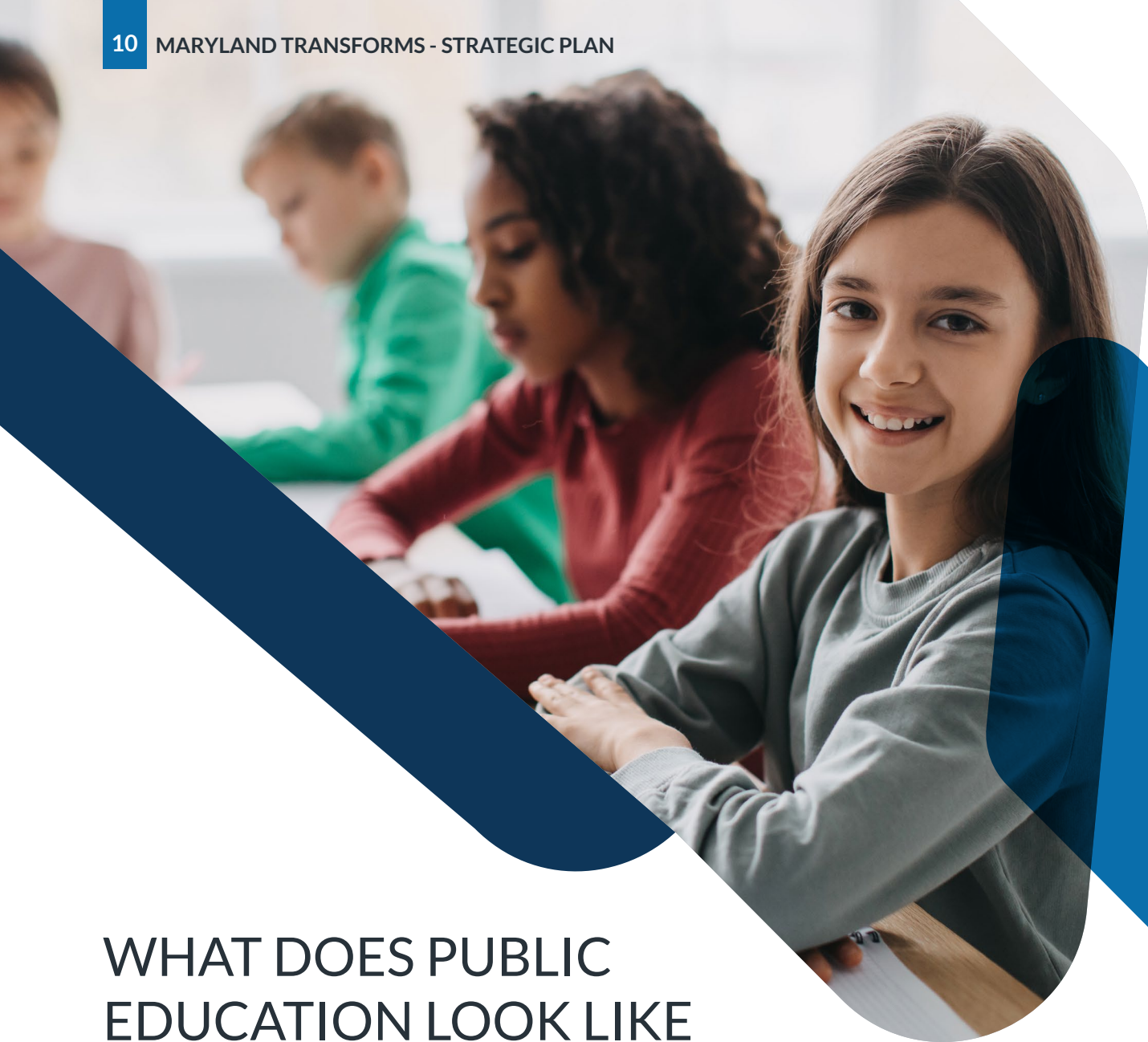
The State Board sets the educational policy and standards for Pre-K through high school and vocational rehabilitation services, passes regulations that have the force of law, and is empowered to interpret the true meaning and intent of the law. The State Board also reviews and approves three annual budgets (the Maryland State Department of Education headquarters budget, the State Aid to local education budget, and State-Aided Institutions budget) before they are passed on to the Governor's office for approval or revision and then to the General Assembly for final action.

The State Board also appoints the State Superintendent of Schools, who leads Maryland's education system and serves a four-year term. The State Superintendent is responsible for the administration of the Maryland State Department of Education and carries out the educational policies of the State Board. The State Superintendent is the Chief Executive and also serves as Secretary and Treasurer of the State Board.

The Maryland State Board of Education and Maryland State Department of Education work collaboratively to ensure the promise of an excellent and equitable education for all students.







## WHAT DOES PUBLIC EDUCATION LOOK LIKE IN MARYLAND?

Maryland has over 1,400 public schools in 24 local education agencies serving all of the state's 23 counties plus Baltimore City. Over the last 10 years enrollment has increased by 3 percent. Enrollment decreased slightly during the COVID-19 pandemic but has since rebounded. In school year 2022-23, over 889,900 students enrolled in Maryland public schools from Pre-K to high school.



**1,421**  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS



**24**  
LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES

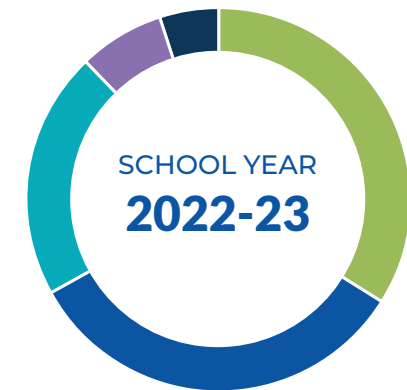


**889,971**  
STUDENTS ENROLLED

## DIVERSITY MATTERS HERE

With a student population that consists of 33% White students, 33% Black/African American students, 22% Hispanic/Latino students, and 7% Asian students, Maryland's student population is becoming increasingly diverse. The Hispanic/Latino student population grew significantly from 2017 to 2023.

In addition to the growing diversity in race/ethnicity, recent enrollment trends show an increase in the percentage of students who are Economically Disadvantaged and living in concentrated poverty. Maryland's student population also includes 12% of students who are multilingual learners and 12% of Students with Disabilities.



**White** 33%  
**Black** 33%  
**Hispanic** 22%  
**Asian** 7%  
**Two or more races** 5%

**128,107**  
FULL TIME EMPLOYEES

**62,593**  
Teachers

**3,581**  
Principals and Assistant Principals

**3,978**  
Librarians and Guidance Counselors

**14,144**  
Education Support Professionals





# THE BLUEPRINT FOR MARYLAND'S FUTURE

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future was passed by the Maryland General Assembly in 2021 to transform public education in the state into a world-class education system. The legislation presents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to fulfill the promise of an excellent and equitable education for all children in Maryland, especially those who have been historically underserved. The Maryland State Board of Education and Maryland State Department of Education are collaborating with local education agencies and boards, institutions of higher education, the Accountability and Implementation Board, employers, and stakeholders across the state to plan and implement the initiatives in each of the Blueprint's five pillars.

With sweeping policy changes designed to accelerate student achievement, and an unprecedented investment of state and local resources, the Blueprint creates the conditions for truly reimagining the education experience from early childhood to postsecondary success. To accomplish this, the Maryland State Board and Department of Education have developed a multiyear Strategic Plan released in three phases.

The complete Strategic Plan, released in June 2023, anchors the vision, mission, values, priorities, enablers, goals, metrics, and flagship programs, initiatives, and strategies to the Blueprint's promise of an excellent and equitable education for every student.



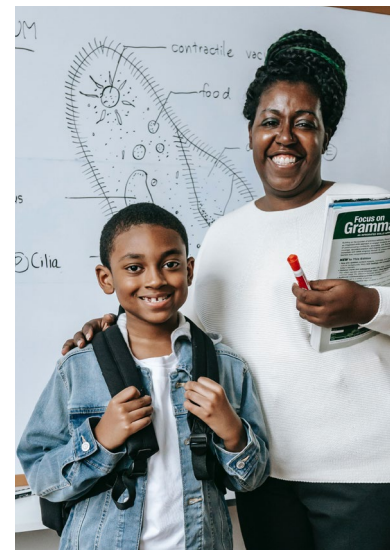
## 5 BLUEPRINT PILLARS

The Blueprint encompasses five pillars, each including key initiatives aimed at transforming the quality of education in Maryland, and narrowing and closing opportunity and achievement gaps.



### EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

- Support more families to access no cost, high-quality Pre-K
- Scale the impact of Patty & Judy Centers
- Expand family options through public/private Pre-K partnerships



### HIGH-QUALITY & DIVERSE TEACHERS & LEADERS

- Increasing starting salary to minimum \$60,000
- New career ladder and incentives for National Board Certified Teachers up to \$17,000
- Raising expectations for teacher preparation and induction



### COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS

- New college and career readiness standard by 10th grade
- Aligned curriculum resources and assessments
- College and career readiness and support pathways
- Expanded career and technical education system



### MORE RESOURCES FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

- Community Schools and School-based Health Centers expansion
- Concentration of Poverty grants
- Targeted supports for historically underserved students



### GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY

- Expert Review Teams
- Accountability and Implementation Board
- Local education agency Implementation Plans
- Maryland State Department of Education monitoring and technical assistance





NOVEMBER 2021

INITIAL ENGAGEMENT & DATA GATHERING



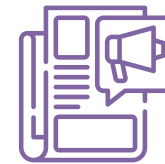
PHASE 01



PHASE 02



PHASE 03



JULY 2023 & BEYOND

IMPLEMENTATION & CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT



ONGOING COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT



BLUEPRINT IMPLEMENTATION

# STRATEGIC PLAN TIMELINE OF PHASES

The Maryland State Board of Education and Maryland State Department of Education developed and released the Strategic Plan in three phases that spanned from October 2022 to June 2023.

1

OCTOBER 2022

Initial Release  
Mission, Vision,  
Values, Priorities  
and Enablers

2

FEBRUARY 2023

Refine Phase 1  
Release Goals  
and Metrics

3

JUNE 2023

Finalize Phase 1 & 2  
Release Targets\*  
Identify Flagship  
Programs, Initiatives,  
and Strategies

## PHASE 1

Extending from November 2021 to October 2022, this phase focused on gaining initial input from a wide range of stakeholders representing the diversity of the state. Through multiple methods, from a statewide survey to roundtables and listening sessions, to the State Superintendent shadowing students in schools throughout the state, we learned what mattered most to our communities to transform public education in Maryland. The feedback we received helped shape the Strategic Plan's foundational elements, specifically the vision, mission, values, priorities, and enablers.

## PHASE 2

Between October 2022 and February 2023, the Maryland State Board and Department of Education continued to engage with our communities to refine the Phase 1 elements of the Strategic Plan, and develop the goals and metrics linked to each of the priorities and enablers. Engagement took the form of regional data walks with stakeholders, ongoing student shadows, and a new series of roundtables and community events. The goals and metrics released in this phase provided insight on our direction as we moved into Phase 3 of the strategic planning process.

## PHASE 3

Between February and June 2023, we engaged with stakeholders using previous methods and planning charettes to identify flagship programs, initiatives, and strategies, as well as set targets\* to achieve the goals developed in Phase 2. This work was informed by best-in-class research and involved in-depth conversations with education experts, practitioners, and decision makers from early childhood to K-12 education, as well as families and institutions of higher education. The complete Strategic Plan, released in June 2023, anchors the vision, mission, values, priorities, enablers, goals, metrics, targets\*, and the flagship programs, initiatives, and strategies to the Blueprint's promise of an excellent and equitable education for every child.

\*Final targets will be released by late Fall 2023 using the Spring 2023 Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program results









# ENGAGING WITH OUR STAKEHOLDERS

Maryland schools serve to prepare our future workforce and future community leaders, and it was critical that we heard from as many people as possible throughout the process. This work is the basis for creating transformational change in Maryland's education system. The guiding objective was to build processes and create space for stakeholder input as we worked to develop a Strategic Plan, while seeking out and prioritizing new and underrepresented voices. The Strategic Plan guides the Maryland State Board and Department of Education's organizational direction as we continue to implement the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

-  **SURVEYS**
-  **ROUNDTABLES**
-  **LISTENING SESSIONS**
-  **COMMUNITY EVENTS & CONVERSATIONS**
-  **REGIONAL DATA WALKS**
-  **CHARETTES**



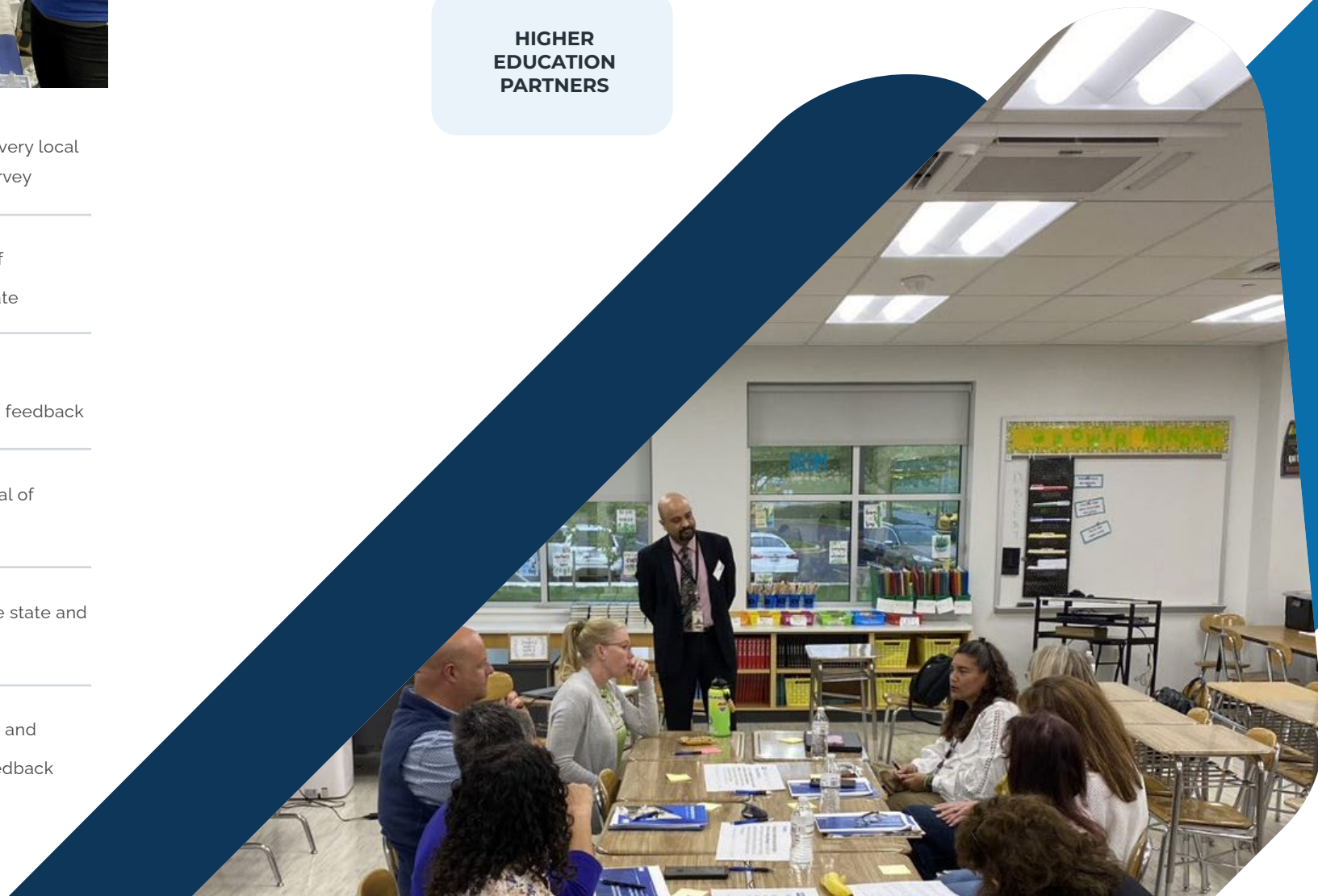
-  **29,200+** respondents from every local education agency completed the survey
-  **30** roundtables held and a total of **440+** participants across the state
-  **26** listening sessions attended  
**1,640+** participants submitted feedback
-  **133** community events and a total of **8,700+** connections made
-  **6** data walks in 5 regions across the state and **405+** participants attended
-  **5** strategic planning charettes held and **120+** participants submitted feedback

 **MORE THAN 40,550 CONNECTIONS**

**24 LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES ENGAGED**

# STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

The primary aim of engagement for the strategic planning process was to gain input from a wide range of stakeholders that represented the diversity of the state. Stakeholders included groups such as: students, families, educators and school/district staff, community organizations, advocates and experts, business community, and higher education partners. More than **40,550 connections** were made through virtual and in-person touchpoints.





# A LOOK AT OUR MISSION, VISION & VALUES



## OUR MISSION

We will ensure a rigorous and world-class educational experience for every Maryland student, in every neighborhood, that prepares each to be college and career ready, through:

- strategic direction and leadership;
- policy making and resource allocation; and
- engagement and advocacy.



## OUR VISION

We will be a system of world-class schools where students acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for success in college, career, and life.



## OUR VALUES

**Accountability:** We will take responsibility for our commitments, and maintain open, transparent, and responsive communication on academic, operational, and financial policies and outcomes.

**Engagement:** We will partner and engage with diverse stakeholders and decision makers in the design, implementation, and evaluation of our policies, programs, and actions.

**Equity:** We will do whatever it takes to eliminate barriers to success and provide the necessary resources and supports to ensure that every Maryland student achieves at the highest level.

**Excellence:** We will ensure a rigorous and engaging educational environment for all students defined by high expectations, research-based instructional practices, and highly effective, culturally responsive educators.

**Transformation:** We will pursue best-in-class outcomes through bold, impactful actions to ensure that every student has the tools, resources, supports, and opportunities they need to thrive.





# OVERVIEW OF PRIORITIES & ENABLERS

The Strategic Plan priorities encapsulate the comprehensive stakeholder feedback received through multiple methods during each phase. Organized into a coherent sequence, the priorities trace the full journey and key milestones that a Maryland student needs to achieve from early childhood through graduation to become successful in college, career, and life. The priorities and enablers introduced in this section provide the framework for the development of measurable goals and specific strategies to transform education in Maryland into a world-class system. With discreet, evidence-based markers, the priorities map out what a successful educational progression looks like for a Maryland student. The enablers detail the necessary structural conditions that need to be met for every student in the state to support them in successfully reaching their full potential.



## PRIORITIES

### READY FOR KINDERGARTEN

All Maryland students are prepared socially, emotionally, and academically for success in kindergarten.

### READY TO READ

All Maryland students are proficient in reading by the end of third grade, and those who are not have the necessary supports to become proficient.

### READY FOR HIGH SCHOOL

All Maryland students enter high school on track to meet the college and career readiness standard by the end of 10th grade, and are engaged socially, emotionally, and academically to succeed in progressively challenging and advanced level coursework aligned to college and career pathways.

### READY FOR COLLEGE & CAREER

All Maryland students graduate from high school college and career ready, and with an individualized plan to succeed in college, career, and life.

## ENABLERS

1

Maryland is supporting our schools, local education agencies, families, and decision makers by producing relevant and timely data and reporting, and enabling educators to make the best use of their resources through high-quality professional learning to meet the needs of our students and accelerate student achievement.

2

Maryland's classrooms challenge, support, and inspire students. Therefore, our schools will be equipped with high-quality curricula, lessons, assessments, and systems for intervention and acceleration.

3

Maryland is elevating the stature of the teaching profession by:

- intentionally working to attract, recruit, and retain a highly qualified and diverse workforce;
- setting rigorous standards for educator preparation programs and induction; and
- implementing a career ladder system focused on development and growth opportunities for all educators.

4

Maryland is ensuring student success by:

- supporting our students' social-emotional learning, health and wellness, and safety;
- enhancing school culture and climate;
- scaling high-quality wraparound supports and partnerships; and
- strengthening family and community engagement.





## OVERVIEW OF GOALS & METRICS

Specific and measurable goals are necessary to accomplish the long-lasting positive change our students deserve. Over the years, students across the state have suffered from a loss of learning only to be worsened by the pandemic. As we continue to rebuild, the goals and metrics will help us keep a pulse on our progress and inform the flagship programs, strategies, and initiatives to be implemented. The Strategic Plan goals outlined in this section were established to define and monitor the success of each priority and enabler. The metrics, or the data source and data subsets, create a narrow lens used to evaluate the trajectory of each goal and establish baseline measures and targets\*.

### GOALS & METRICS FOR LOW PERFORMING SCHOOLS

Decrease in the percentage of schools that are re-identified as low performing schools three (3) school years after initial identification.

Of a cohort of low-performing schools, increase in average performance level in MCAP ELA and math, and decrease in chronic absenteeism rates.

### GOALS & METRICS FOR A COHORT OF STUDENTS

Following a cohort of students from grade 3 to 8, increase in average performance level in ELA and math on MCAP. To follow the same students over time, the outcome will be recalculated for prior years as students in the cohort move out of the state.

When looking at the data, we will disaggregate by: student groups, race/ethnicity, gender, economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities, multilingual learners, schools, and local education agencies.

\*Final targets will be released by late Fall 2023 using the Spring 2023 Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program results

## GOALS & METRICS BY PRIORITY & ENABLER

### P1

Increase in percentage of kindergarten students scoring at the Demonstrating Readiness level on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA).

### P2

Increase in percentage of grade 3 students scoring at or above Proficient on the Grade 3 English Language Arts (ELA) assessment.

### P3

Decrease in percentage of grade 8 students that met one or more of the following ABC indicators:

Attendance: student was chronically absent in grade 6, 7, or 8

Behavior: student received one or more out-of-school suspensions in grades 6-8

Courses: student failed one or more ELA or math courses in grades 6-8

### P4

Increase in percentage of high school graduates who met the state College and Career Readiness (CCR) standard and completed a CCR pathway.

### E1

Relevant data reports and high-quality resources that are made available to families, educators, and stakeholders to meet the needs of students.

### E2

Increase in percentage of schools visited by Expert Review Teams that are rated as "Accomplishing with Continuous Improvement" in the "Curriculum and Instruction" and the "Integrated Multi-Tiered System of Supports" indicators.

### E3

Increase in percentage of new teachers of color as measured by the Fall Staff Collection report; increase in percentage of teachers retained over a 3-year period; and increase in percentage of teachers eligible for the Teacher Leadership Track of the career ladder.

### E4

Increase in percentage of schools perceived as having a favorable learning environment\* and decrease in suspension rate.

\*Specific survey topics will be selected when a third year of survey data is available in late 2023



# OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMS, INITIATIVES, AND STRATEGIES

The flagship programs, initiatives, and strategies are designed to drive transformative change in classrooms and create high-quality learning environments for all students. Grounded in research and modeled around national best practices, these strategies form the backbone of our commitment of delivering an excellent and equitable education to every student at every age level to ensure that all students in Maryland receive the education they deserve.



## PRIORITY 1: READY FOR KINDERGARTEN

- Provide increased access to early childhood programs through a Mixed-Delivery System comprised of private and public providers and ensure affordability by subsidizing the cost for families.
- Expand early learning hubs, such as Judy and Patty Centers, that utilize a Two-Generation Approach to ensure families are supported in the development of their children ages 0-5.
- Develop Early Learning Standards that implement age-appropriate learning practices and materials, and foster high-quality learning environments for children's social, emotional, and academic growth.
- Utilize Maryland's Comprehensive Early Childhood Assessment System to monitor readiness and measure the quality of early learning programs to ensure culturally responsive, academically and developmentally appropriate materials and resources are provided to support and empower educators to be successful.



## PRIORITY 2: READY TO READ

- Training and coaching on evidence-based and highly effective reading pedagogy provided to all Pre-K through 3rd grade teachers, including special education teachers, principals, and other relevant staff aligned to the Science of Reading.
- Ensure the adoption of High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) that are content-rich and culturally responsive, as well as assessment tools aligned to the Science of Reading.
- Create and implement systems for progress monitoring\* to ensure all students are reading by the end of third grade and have the appropriate supports if still struggling with reading beyond third grade.

*\*This includes the use of Universal Screeners as required by Maryland's Ready to Read Act*



## PRIORITY 3: READY FOR HIGH SCHOOL

With an Early Warning System (EWS), the state will provide tools for local education agencies to identify students who are at risk of not being college and career ready to get back on track. By utilizing indicators such as attendance, behavior, and course grades, educators do not have to wait for students to fail to know they are at-risk.

- Provide teachers and staff access to an integrated data system that updates regularly with students' indicators across academics, behavior, attendance, and social-emotional learning.
- Create a multi-tiered response system focused on addressing the needs of all students, a group of students, and individual student interventions.
- Monitor and modify interventions that are not working, and scale those which are successful.

In addition to EWS, implementing the following best practices will leverage the developmental opportunities of early adolescence in the middle grades:

- Adopt flexible scheduling strategies such as block and flex scheduling to support the academic and developmental needs of students and include common planning time for teachers to plan instruction collaboratively.
- Ensure that classroom organization and staffing patterns support the needs of students through interdisciplinary teaching, or team teaching, to improve the academic and social-emotional outcomes for middle school students.
- Provide access to enrichment and elective courses to support student engagement, and schedule advisory periods to support student connectedness.



## PRIORITY 4: READY FOR COLLEGE & CAREER

- Set a new evidence-based College and Career Readiness (CCR) standard that moves beyond standardized tests, and ensure equitable access to post-CCR pathways.
- Ensure the adoption of High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) across every school, including the necessary training required for successful implementation.
- Adopt an Early Warning System (EWS) tied to high-quality and timely interventions, including strengthening the implementation of Maryland's 9th Grade On-Track measure across local education agencies.
- Build and sustain an infrastructure for High-Quality, School Day Tutoring across Maryland, including the use of flexible scheduling strategies such as block and flex scheduling to support the academic and developmental needs of students.





### ENABLER 1: HIGH-QUALITY DATA REPORTING & RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS

- Provide ongoing professional learning series focused on evidence-based pedagogy and ensuring meaningful use of assessments and other data to drive effective instructional practices (e.g., Learning Labs, Lesson Studies).
- Evolve Maryland's school Accountability System to align with Blueprint outcomes and prioritize student growth as a primary indicator of school quality and enhance reporting features.
- Enhance and scale tools that enable effective local education agencies' operations and teaching and learning practices at both the district and school level (e.g., School Accountability Projection Tools).
- Develop a new Statewide Finance and Data System to accurately measure and enforce accountability, collect and report new data, and advance public transparency and understanding of how State Aid calculations work.



### ENABLER 3: ELEVATING THE TEACHING PROFESSION

- Strengthen regulations to increase the rigor of educator preparation programs.
- Support Grow Your Own staff programs to expand teacher and school leader pipelines, increase diversity to better align with student demographics, and address educator shortages.
- Develop guidelines for comprehensive educator Induction Programs for new teachers and school leaders to provide quality mentoring and support to ease the transition into the classroom.
- Implement teacher and school leader Career Ladders that expand opportunities for growth and collaboration, as well as increase compensation to attract and retain a high-quality and diverse educator workforce and to incentivize educators to work in low-performing schools.



### ENABLER 2: HIGH-QUALITY CURRICULA & SYSTEMS FOR INTERVENTION & ACCELERATION

- Ensure the adoption of High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) that are content-rich and culturally responsive, as well as assessment tools aligned to the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards.
- Establish and adopt a statewide Early Warning System (EWS) across the prekindergarten through 12th grade spectrum to identify students who are at risk of:
  - Not being ready for kindergarten
  - Not being ready to read by the end of third grade
  - Not being proficient in math by the end of fifth grade
  - Not being ready for high school (e.g. attendance, behavior, and course grades in middle school)
  - Not being on track to graduate from high school in four years
  - Not being college and career ready by the end of tenth grade



### ENABLER 4: SUPPORTING STUDENT SUCCESS SOCIALLY & EMOTIONALLY

- Expand community schools and provide professional learning for community school coordinators and staff rooted in the Collective Impact framework to provide effective wraparound services that meet the needs of students and the community.
- Enhance Tier 1 school-based mental health promotion services and supports to foster positive, social-emotional and behavioral skills for all students. Tier 1 activities are implemented school-wide, at the grade level, and/or at the classroom level, and services are delivered by both school- and community-based professionals working within schools (e.g., school-wide mental health literacy; school climate improvement efforts; restorative practices; classroom-based social emotional learning for students).
- Scale the Maryland School Mental Health Response Program and strategic partnerships to support local education agencies in addressing student and family mental health needs by enriching the work of site-based student support services personnel through enhanced training and consultancies on mental health promotion and services (e.g., risk assessment; crisis stabilization; safe and supportive schools; linkages and triage; brief interventions).
- Utilize results from the Maryland School Survey to spotlight connections between student and educator perceptions of their schools and school achievement and other outcomes, while driving school level practices for improvement of student outcomes.



# DEEP DIVE INTO THE PRIORITY

## READY FOR KINDERGARTEN

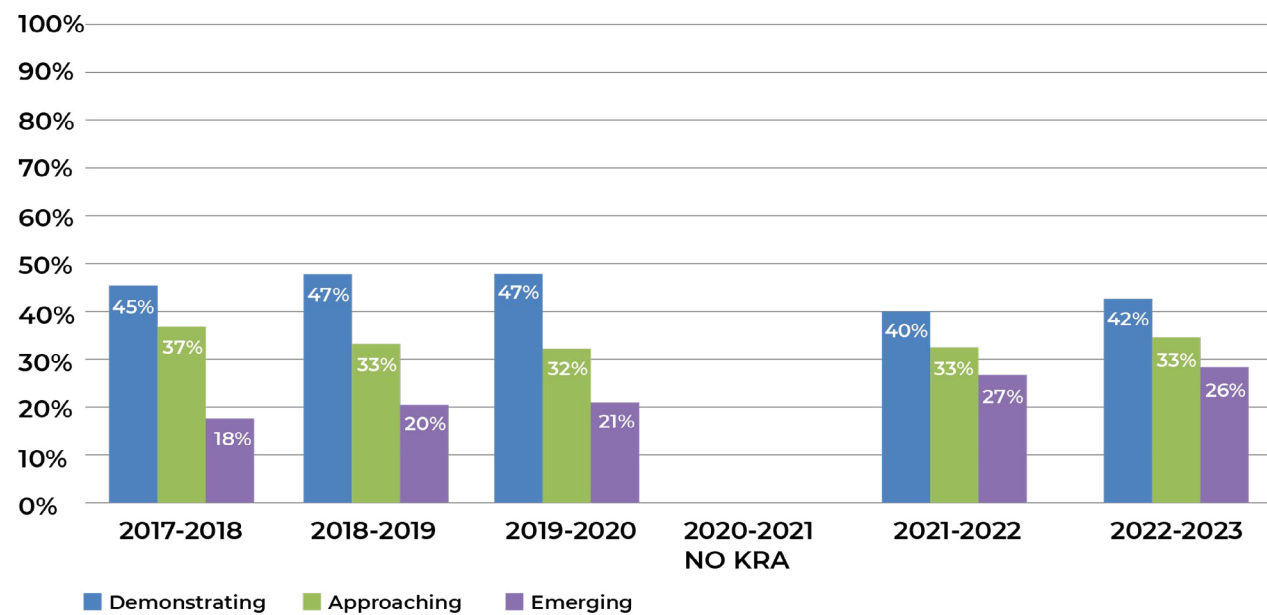


Children's brains develop at an extraordinary rate during the first few years of their lives. Over eighty-percent of brain development occurs in the first five years of life, and what children experience in these early years shapes their brains. There is mounting evidence on the significant income gap in children's social and academic skills at kindergarten entry, along with research showing that children's skills at the beginning of kindergarten strongly predict their achievement throughout their schooling.

Recognizing that the early years are the most critical period for brain development and set the foundation for lifelong learning and achievement, the Blueprint for Maryland's Future emphasizes equitable early education opportunities that prepare all children for school and success through a mixed-delivery system comprised of public/private Pre-K partnerships that will expand family options.

Readiness is not only a matter of a child's level of social and academic preparedness. Maryland teachers and schools must be ready to meet children's needs at any level. Providing all Maryland children opportunities to develop social and cognitive skills in high-quality educational settings before kindergarten is critically important and makes a difference in academic success.

### MARYLAND STATEWIDE KINDERGARTEN READINESS OVER TIME



While kindergarten readiness declined in Maryland from Fall of 2019 to Fall of 2022, there are signs of recovery. **Percentage of students demonstrating (the highest level of preparedness) has increased** in Fall of 2023 and percentage of students emerging (the lowest level of preparedness) has declined compared to the prior year's administration.



### PRIORITY

All Maryland students are prepared socially, emotionally, and academically for success in kindergarten.



### GOALS & METRICS

Increase in percentage of kindergarten students scoring at the Demonstrating Readiness level on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA).



### SNAPSHOT OF ENGAGEMENT

#### WHEN SURVEYED

Nearly 1/3 of respondents chose social, emotional, and mental health supports as their top priority.

#### DURING ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

Participants advocated for greater investment in teacher training at the early childhood level as well as focusing on retaining quality teachers.

#### IN THE LISTENING SESSIONS

Participants welcomed the resources made available by the Blueprint for broadening the availability and expanding access to Pre-K and early childhood programs.

### Did you know that children that attend Pre-K earn higher incomes as adults?

A strong start to early childhood is more critical than ever. Children that attend Pre-K learn to socialize with their peers, manage their emotions, and get the foundational academic skills to boost their lifetime learning potential. Studies show that kids who attend Pre-K are:

3.5X MORE LIKELY TO BE READY FOR KINDERGARTEN

MORE LIKELY TO SUCCEED IN SCHOOL

MORE LIKELY TO GO TO COLLEGE

LESS LIKELY TO DROP OUT

LESS LIKELY TO BECOME A TEEN PARENT

LESS LIKELY TO BE ARRESTED FOR A VIOLENT CRIME





## PROGRAMS, INITIATIVES, AND STRATEGIES



### PRIORITY 1: READY FOR KINDERGARTEN

- Provide increased access to early childhood programs through a Mixed-Delivery System comprised of private and public providers and ensure affordability by subsidizing the cost for families.
- Expand early learning hubs, such as Judy and Patty Centers, that utilize a Two-Generation Approach to ensure families are supported in the development of their children ages 0-5.
- Develop Early Learning Standards that implement age-appropriate learning practices and materials, and foster high-quality learning environments for children's social, emotional, and academic growth.
- Utilize Maryland's Comprehensive Early Childhood Assessment System to monitor readiness and measure the quality of early learning programs to ensure culturally responsive, academically and developmentally appropriate materials and resources are provided to support and empower educators to be successful.



### MIXED-DELIVERY SYSTEM

A Mixed-Delivery System is a model that co-delivers high-quality Pre-K in both private provider-and school-based settings through partnerships with child care centers, family child care providers, Head Start, faith-based providers, private schools, public charter schools, and college/university early learning centers.



### PRE-K ACCESSIBILITY & AFFORDABILITY

Under the Blueprint, income eligibility for prekindergarten enrollment is based on a system of tiers ranging from no cost, subsidized, to full cost Pre-K. The Maryland State Department of Education is implementing a sliding scale to offset the cost for families depending on their income. Maryland has also increased the income limits as well as the value of scholarships in the Child Care Scholarship Program to allow more families to qualify.



### TWO-GENERATION APPROACH & EXPANSION OF EARLY LEARNING HUBS

Judy Centers and Patty Centers are comprehensive hubs that leverage a Two-Generation Approach where families of children ages 0-5 can participate in learning experiences and receive support. The Blueprint expands Judy Centers to include nine new additional Centers each year over the next five fiscal years, and then doubles the expansion, as well as expands Patty Centers to include three new additional Centers each year over the next five fiscal years.



### MARYLAND EXCELS

Maryland EXCELS is the state's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) for child care and early education programs that meet nationally recognized quality standards. The system rates the quality of child care and early education programs on a scale of 1 to 5 based on: staffing and professional development, accreditation and program improvement, developmentally appropriate practice, compliance with licensing regulations, and administrative practices.



### EARLY LEARNING STANDARDS

Early Learning Standards describe the skills, concepts, and behaviors that young children in a high-quality learning and care environment typically learn before their fourth birthday. The standards promote the design and implementation of developmentally appropriate environments and learning experiences to support all children's development across different domains.



### EARLY CHILDHOOD ASSESSMENTS

Ready for Kindergarten (R4K) is Maryland's Comprehensive Early Childhood Assessment System. R4K has two components: the Early Learning Assessment (ELA) and the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA). The ELA is a formative assessment that measures the learning progress of children 36-72 months. The KRA measures the knowledge, skills, and behaviors that children should be able to demonstrate at the start of kindergarten.



### COMPONENTS OF HIGH-QUALITY EARLY LEARNING<sup>1</sup>

#### Professional and stable teacher workforce

Compensation and preparation that reflects the expertise and importance of the early learning workforce

#### Effective leadership

Leaders support with lesson planning and curriculum, behavior management, and professional development

#### Age-appropriate curriculum

Research-based curriculum that is developmentally, culturally, and linguistically relevant for all children

#### Comprehensive family engagement activities

Family engagement strategies that encourage families to participate in their child's learning

#### Multilevel, continuous quality improvement system

Programs must constantly monitor, reflect, and revise policies and practices to maintain quality

#### Sustainable and sufficient set of funding mechanisms

Programs need to be able to access funding that supports the actual cost of operation

### LEARNING THROUGH PLAY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Children naturally learn through play by engaging in and making sense of their world. The best preschool programs take a "playful learning" approach, teaching early academic and social-emotional skills together through play and exploration. Studies have long found positive physical, social, emotional, and cognitive effects of play.

### EVIDENCE-BASED PEDAGOGY: SCIENCE OF READING

Research from the fields of education, cognitive psychology, developmental psychology, and neuroscience explains how individuals learn how to read and best practices for reading instruction. The foundation of literacy begins at a young age. Early childhood instruction of phonological awareness and vocabulary can prevent many reading difficulties in children.

<sup>1</sup>Workman, S., & Ullrich, R. (2017). *Quality 101: Identifying the Core Components of a High-Quality Early Childhood Program.*



# DEEP DIVE INTO THE PRIORITY

## READY TO READ



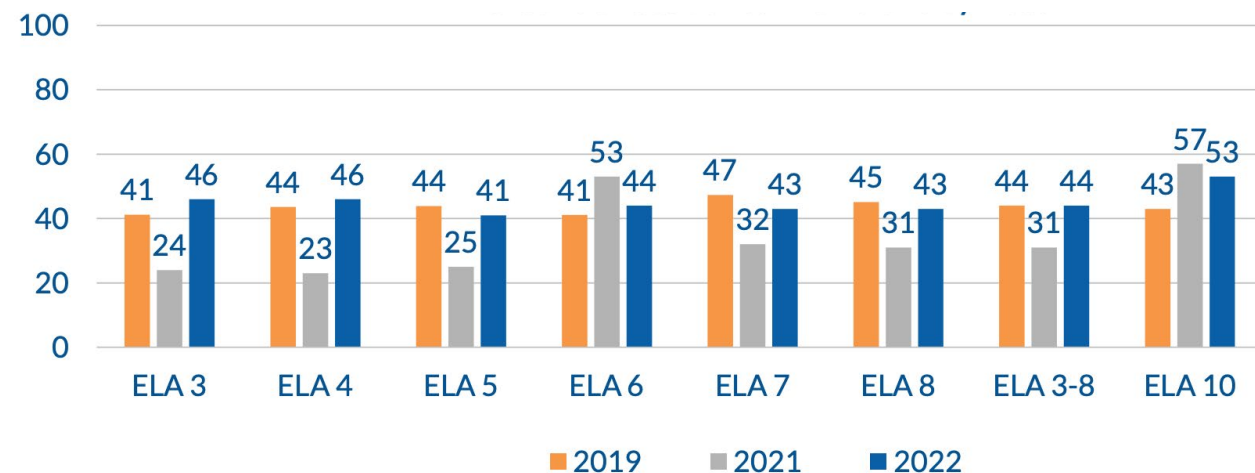
Research shows that the development and mastery of early literacy skills are a strong predictor of later school reading and math achievement. It is crucial that all Maryland students are able to successfully transition from learning to read to reading to learn. Reading proficiently becomes increasingly important after third grade, and students that are behind are at higher risk of not finishing high school ready for college and career.

Thousands of Maryland children reach fourth grade without learning to read proficiently. The shortfall is especially pronounced among low-income children. Failure to read proficiently is linked to higher rates of school dropout, which limits individual earning potential as well as Maryland's competitiveness and productivity. Reading proficiently by the end third grade is a crucial marker for every Maryland child's educational development.

Fortunately, much is already known about the science of how children learn to read and how to teach and develop reading skills. The problem is that policies are too fragmented, practices too segmented by children's age and grade, and key preparation and intervention programs too limited to realize positive results at scale.

### ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS ASSESSMENT TREND 2019-2022

#### PERCENT OF STUDENTS PROFICIENT BY TEST



Maryland **students have returned to pre-pandemic performance** with the percent of students proficient from SY 2021-2022 similar to, or better than, the performance from SY 2018-2019 across nearly all tests.

Note: SY 2020-2021 assessments were shortened assessments taken in Early Fall of 2021



### PRIORITY

All Maryland students are proficient in reading by the end of third grade, and those who are not have the necessary supports to become proficient.



### GOALS & METRICS

Increase in percentage of grade 3 students scoring at or above Proficient on the Grade 3 English Language Arts (ELA) assessment.



### SNAPSHOT OF ENGAGEMENT

**49%**  
SELECTED READING & WRITING IN THE EARLY GRADES AS THEIR TOP PRIORITY

When polled, 49% of survey respondents selected Reading & Writing in the Early Grades as their top priority.

This priority remains at the top of the list when comparing results by stakeholder group and by region. That is also the case when we break down the results by race/ethnicity.

*"If all U.S. adults were able to move up (literacy proficiency levels), it would generate an additional \$2.2 trillion in annual income for the country, equal to 10% of the gross domestic product."*<sup>2</sup>

According to the U.S. Department of Education, 54% of U.S. adults 16 to 74 years old - about 130 million people - lack proficiency in literacy, reading below the equivalent of a sixth-grade level. This is an alarming number for several reasons, and its implications are enormous because research has shown that literacy is correlated with several important outcomes:

- PERSONAL INCOME
- EMPLOYMENT LEVELS
- HEALTH
- ECONOMIC GROWTH

<sup>2</sup>Rothwell, J. (2020, September). Assessing the Economic Gains of Eradicating Illiteracy Nationally and Regionally in the United States.





## PROGRAMS, INITIATIVES, AND STRATEGIES



### PRIORITY 2: READY TO READ

Training and coaching on evidence-based and highly-effective reading pedagogy provided to all Pre-K through 3rd grade teachers, including special education teachers, principals, and other relevant staff aligned to the Science of Reading.

Ensure the adoption of High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) that are content-rich and culturally responsive, as well as assessment tools aligned to the Science of Reading.

Create and implement systems for progress monitoring<sup>3</sup> to ensure all students are reading by the end of third grade and have the appropriate supports if still struggling with reading beyond third grade.

*\*This includes the use of Universal Screeners as required by Maryland's Ready to Read Act*



#### TRAINING & COACHING FOR TEACHERS, PRINCIPALS, AND OTHER STAFF

Comprehensive professional development equips educators with the knowledge and skills necessary to implement evidence-based practices. Coaching provides ongoing support, allowing educators to refine their instructional techniques and receive personalized feedback. By providing training and coaching aligned with the Science of Reading, schools foster a culture of continuous improvement and equip teachers with the tools they need to deliver effective reading instruction to every student.



#### HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS & ASSESSMENT TOOLS

The use of high-quality, culturally responsive instructional materials in conjunction with the Science of Reading is paramount in promoting effective literacy instruction. These materials not only align with evidence-based practices, but also provide students with engaging, rich content that is relevant to their cultural backgrounds and experiences. By incorporating diverse texts and perspectives, these materials foster inclusivity and create meaningful connections for students. Additionally, assessments aligned with these practices allow educators to gather data on students' progress and tailor instruction accordingly.



### EVIDENCE-BASED PEDAGOGY: SCIENCE OF READING<sup>3</sup>

The foundation of literacy begins at a young age. Early childhood instruction of phonological awareness and vocabulary can prevent many reading difficulties in children.

The Science of Reading is a field of research that examines how individuals acquire and develop reading skills and comprehension. It draws upon a wide range of scientific disciplines, including cognitive psychology, linguistics, neuroscience, and education, to understand the underlying processes involved in reading.

It provides valuable insights into effective reading instruction and highlights the importance of specific instructional components. It emphasizes the need for explicit and systematic instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, fluency, and comprehension strategies. These components are considered foundational to building strong reading skills and are essential for students to become proficient readers.

Evidence-based instructional practices derived from the Science of Reading include explicit phonics instruction, structured literacy approaches, direct instruction of vocabulary and comprehension strategies, and providing ample opportunities for reading practice. These practices are supported by rigorous research studies that have demonstrated their effectiveness in improving reading outcomes for students of all backgrounds and abilities.

Recent advances in technology and a greater understanding of neurobiology have allowed researchers and practitioners who work with typical and struggling readers to understand how reading develops in the brain and the skills that contribute to proficient reading. By grounding reading instruction in the Science of Reading, educators can make informed decisions about instructional methods and materials that are most likely to support students' reading development and help them become proficient readers.

#### FIVE KEY ELEMENTS OF SCIENTIFIC READING INSTRUCTION



##### PHONEMIC AWARENESS

The ability to identify and work with the individual sounds in speech



##### PHONICS

The relationships between the letters of written language and the sounds of spoken language



##### FLUENCY

The ability to read with speed, accuracy, and proper expression



##### VOCABULARY

The ability to recognize and understand all the words when reading



##### COMPREHENSION

The understanding and interpretation of what is read

<sup>3</sup>National Reading Panel. (2000, April). *Teaching Children to Read: An Evidence-Based Assessment of the Scientific Research Literature on Reading and Its Implications for Reading Instruction*.



# DEEP DIVE INTO THE PRIORITY

## READY FOR HIGH SCHOOL



Scientists have long known that the human brain develops more rapidly in the first five years of life. But recent advances in brain imaging have revealed that a second spurt occurs in early adolescence, a phase generally defined as spanning ages 11 to 14. A growing body of research indicates that the middle grades are the "make it or break it" years when many students begin to disengage from school, increasing the likelihood of dropping out of high school.

A Maryland student's learning experiences in the middle grades is a selection of classes they go through in a day. If they experience inconsistent expectations across those classes, they and the school will struggle to achieve high outcomes.

A strong research base for effective instructional practices in the middle grades does exist. Providing research-based instruction that enhances learning in the middle grades is critical for Maryland students' success in high school and beyond.



### PRIORITY

All Maryland students enter high school on track to meet the college and career readiness standard by the end of 10th grade, and are engaged socially, emotionally, and academically to succeed in progressively challenging and advanced level coursework aligned to college and career pathways.



### GOALS & METRICS

Decrease in percentage of grade 8 students that met one or more of the following ABC indicators:

- Attendance: student was chronically absent in grade 6, 7, or 8
- Behavior: student received one or more out-of-school suspensions in grades 6-8
- Courses: student failed one or more ELA or math courses in grades 6-8



### SNAPSHOT OF ENGAGEMENT

#### WHEN SURVEYED

When looking at the overall results, nearly a third of survey respondents selected Supports for Social, Emotional, and Mental Health as a priority.

#### DURING ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

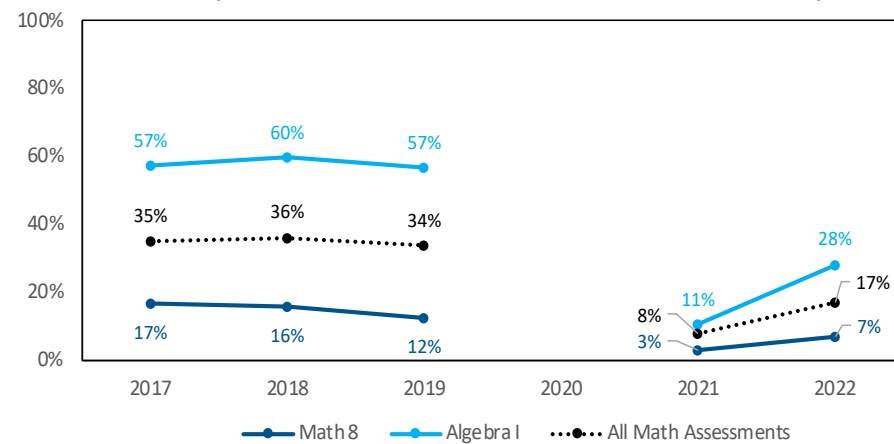
Students felt that exposure to a wide number of extracurriculars and "niche" classes in middle school would help them balance their interests.

#### IN THE LISTENING SESSIONS

The Blueprint strategies that generated most interest among participants were those related to College and Career Readiness, especially beginning in the earlier grades.

## STATEWIDE MATH PROFICIENCY: GRADE 8 STUDENTS

Maryland Statewide: Grade 8 Math Assessment Proficiency



MARYLAND STATEWIDE: ASSESSMENTS TAKEN IN GRADE 8			
YEAR	MATH 8	ALGEBRA I	ALL MATH ASSESSMENTS
2017	37,868	21,156	63,425
2018	37,471	22,364	64,264
2019	36,356	21,606	64,461
2021	31,127	15,676	52,909
2022	41,265	17,185	67,082

Note: Assessments for 2021 (SY 2020-2021) were shortened tests and were administered in Fall 2021. The category 'All Math Assessments' includes Math 8, Algebra I and II, and Geometry.

In Maryland grade 8 **students taking the grade 8 math test have been trending down over time.** Students taking a high school math test in middle school, although consistent before the pandemic, also declined in 2021. The state assessment was not administered in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

*"Because adolescents comprise nearly one-fourth of the entire U.S. population, the nation needs policies and practices that will better leverage these developmental opportunities to harness the promise of adolescence – rather than focusing myopically on containing its risks."*<sup>4</sup>

Sixth graders who failed math or English/reading, attended school less than 80% of the time, or received an unsatisfactory behavior grade in a core course had only a 10% to 20% chance of graduating on time. Less than 1 of every 4 students with at least one off-track indicator graduated within one extra year of on-time graduation.<sup>5</sup>

A FAILING GRADE IN MATHEMATICS OR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

AN ATTENDANCE RATE OF LESS THAN 80%

ONE UNSATISFACTORY BEHAVIOR MARK IN A CORE COURSE

<sup>4</sup>Backes, E. P., & Bonnie, R. J. (Eds.). (2019). *The Promise of Adolescence: Realizing Opportunity for All Youth*. National Academies Press (US).

<sup>5</sup>Balfanz, R. (June 2009). *Putting Middle Grades Students on the Graduation Path*. National Middle School Association.





## PROGRAMS, INITIATIVES, AND STRATEGIES



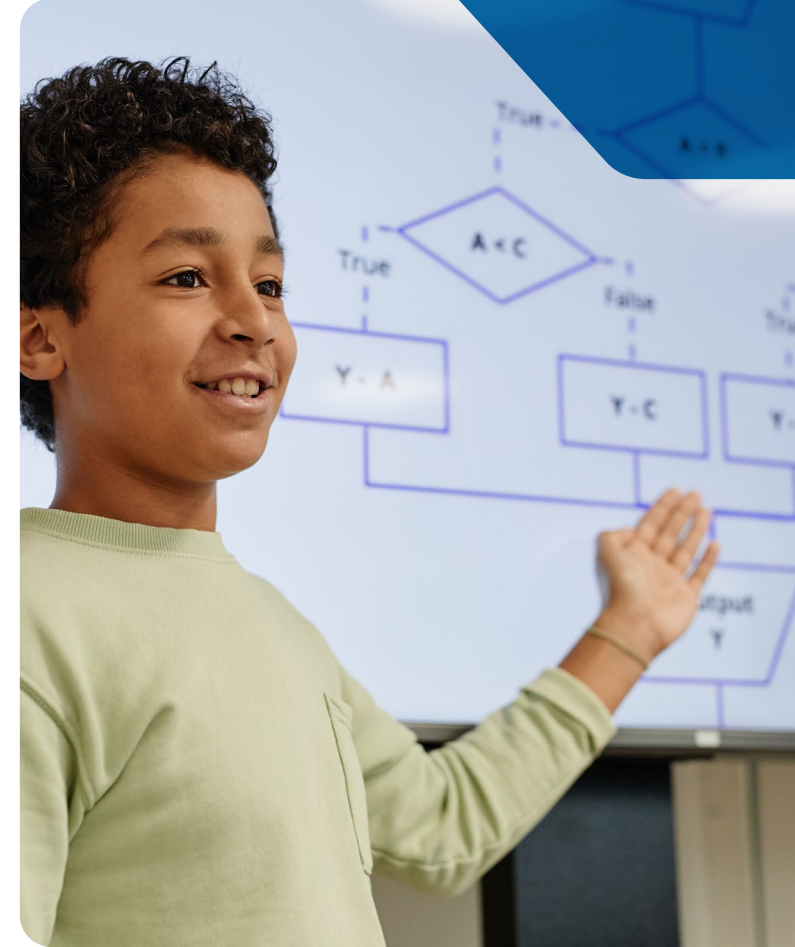
### PRIORITY 3: READY FOR HIGH SCHOOL

With an Early Warning System (EWS), the state will provide tools for local education agencies to identify students who are at risk of not being college and career ready to get back on track. By utilizing indicators such as attendance, behavior, and course grades, educators do not have to wait for students to fail to know they are at-risk.

- Provide teachers and staff access to an integrated data system that updates regularly with students' indicators across academics, behavior, attendance, and social-emotional learning.
- Create a multi-tiered response system focused on addressing the needs of all students, a group of students, and individual student interventions.
- Monitor and modify interventions that are not working, and scale those which are successful.

In addition to EWS, implementing the following best practices will leverage the developmental opportunities of early adolescence in the middle grades:

- Adopt flexible scheduling strategies such as block and flex scheduling to support the academic and developmental needs of students and include common planning time for teachers to plan instruction collaboratively.
- Ensure that classroom organization and staffing patterns support the needs of students through interdisciplinary teaching, or team teaching, to improve the academic and social-emotional outcomes for middle school students.
- Provide access to enrichment and elective courses to support student engagement, and schedule advisory periods to support student connectedness.



### EARLY WARNING INDICATORS & SYSTEMS<sup>6</sup>

Early Warning Systems (EWS) represent a collaborative approach among educators, administrators, parents, and communities by using data effectively to keep students on the pathway to graduation. EWS use indicators to identify students who may be at risk academically or socially and create response systems to ensure students receive timely and appropriate support by providing the right intervention for the right student at the right time.

The development of predictive early warning indicators has occurred rapidly over the past decade. In the early 2000s, researchers set out to identify the most highly predictive factors of dropping out.

They identified three key indicators (the ABCs) that were better predictors of student outcomes than demographics or test scores. By closely monitoring attendance patterns, behavior issues, and course performance, educators and administrators can proactively intervene and provide targeted support to students who may be struggling.

The best EWS are characterized by a combination of features, such as:

- rapid identification of students who are in trouble;
- rapid interventions that are targeted to students' immediate and longer-term need for support, redirection and greater success;
- the frequent monitoring of the success of interventions;
- a rapid modification of interventions that are not working;
- and shared learning from outcomes.

Early Warning Systems, when coupled with the ABCs framework, contribute to creating a supportive and responsive learning environment for middle school students.



#### FLEXIBLE SCHEDULING & STRATEGIC STAFFING

Flexible scheduling, such as block and flex scheduling, allows for more instructional time, enabling teachers to delve deeper into content and engage students. It provides opportunities for differentiated instruction, interventions, and enrichment activities specific to individual student needs. Incorporating common planning time and interdisciplinary teaching allows educators to share best practices, align instructional strategies, and develop cohesive curricula creating a supportive environment and strengthening the professional growth of teachers.



#### EXPANSION OF ENRICHMENT & ELECTIVE COURSES

Enrichment and elective courses offer students the opportunity to explore areas of interest and develop talents beyond the core curriculum. Engaging in such courses not only enhances student motivation and enthusiasm but also promotes creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. Additionally, scheduling advisory periods dedicated to student connectedness provides a supportive and nurturing environment essential for a student's social-emotional wellbeing.

#### THE ABC'S OF MIDDLE SCHOOL<sup>7</sup>

Research shows that students at risk of dropping out can be identified as early as sixth grade. In fact, sixth graders who display just one of the following off-track indicators have only a 10% - 20% chance of graduating on time.



#### ATTENDANCE

An attendance rate of less than 80%



#### BEHAVIOR

One or more out-of-school suspensions for behavior



#### COURSES

Failing grade in mathematics or English language arts course

<sup>6</sup>Balfanz, R., Bruce, M., Bridgeland, J. M., & Fox, J. H. (November 2011). *On Track for Success: The Use of Early Warning Indicator and Intervention Systems to Build a Grad Nation*. Civic Enterprises & Johns Hopkins University.

<sup>7</sup>Balfanz, R. (June 2009). *Putting Middle Grades Students on the Graduation Path*. National Middle School Association.

# DEEP DIVE INTO THE PRIORITY

## READY FOR COLLEGE & CAREER



The Blueprint for Maryland's Future has the central goal of ensuring that all Maryland students are college and career ready before graduation, thus signifying an ability to transition successfully to postsecondary coursework at a two- or four-year institution of higher education and/or to the workforce. Maryland is developing new college and career readiness standards, with the goal of having students assessed and meeting the standards by the end of 10th grade.

Students meeting the college and career readiness standards will be prepared to succeed in multiple, rigorous college and career pathways at no cost to students. These pathways will enable students to develop in-depth knowledge of a subject area(s); earn post-secondary credits and/or in demand industry-recognized credentials; participate in registered apprenticeships that meet workforce needs and/or in rigorous college preparation programs.

All instruction and assessments in public schools will work toward this goal of preparing students to be ready for college and career. Each student in Maryland public schools, regardless of the student's race, ethnicity, gender, zip code, socioeconomic status, abilities, or language spoken at home, will be supported to meet the college and career readiness standards before graduation.

### THE BLUEPRINT'S APPRENTICESHIP AND INDUSTRY CREDENTIAL GOAL

(a)(1) On or before December 1, 2022, the Career and Technical Education Committee shall establish, for each school year between the 2023-2024 school year and the 2030-2031 school year, inclusive, statewide goals that reach **45% by the 2030-2031 school year, for the percentage of high school students who, prior to graduation, complete the high school level of a registered apprenticeship or an industry-recognized occupational credential.**

(2) To the extent practicable, the Career and Technical Education Committee shall ensure that the **largest number of students achieve the requirement of this subsection by completing a high school level of a registered apprenticeship program** approved by the Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning within the Maryland Department of Labor. (Education §21-204)

In 2021, Maryland had **57,423 graduates**. To meet the 45% goal, 25,840 of these graduates would have needed to complete an apprenticeship or industry credential. **In 2021, about 7% of graduates met these criteria.**



### PRIORITY

All Maryland students graduate from high school college and career ready, and with an individualized plan to succeed in college, career, and life.



### GOALS & METRICS

Increase in percentage of high school graduates who met the state College and Career Readiness (CCR) standard and completed a CCR pathway.



### SNAPSHOT OF ENGAGEMENT

#### WHEN SURVEYED

Teachers and business leaders selected Expanding CTE Programs among the top five most frequently selected priorities.

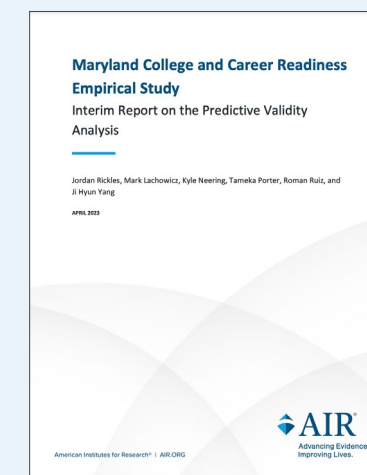
#### DURING ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

Participants advocated for greater investment in career counseling and for an expansion of college and career courses to better prepare all students for postsecondary success.

#### IN THE LISTENING SESSIONS

Participants envisioned a seamless transition for students from career exploration to preparation and training, and from credentialing to hiring and career success.

*Student achievement, graduation rate, and postsecondary enrollment data for Maryland students, especially for underserved student populations, signal the need to rethink how we prepare our students for college, career, and life.*



The Maryland State Department of Education's **College and Career Readiness Roadmap to Implementation** report tracks the preparation necessary for implementing Pillar 3: College and Career Readiness, which reimagines what students must know and be able to do by the end of the 10th grade and by the time they graduate high school.

The **Maryland College and Career Readiness Empirical Study: Interim Report on the Predictive Validity Analysis** examined how well high school measures of readiness at the end of a student's second year of high school (10th grade) predict postsecondary progress and explored alternative ways of meeting the readiness standard.





## PROGRAMS, INITIATIVES, AND STRATEGIES



### PRIORITY 4: READY FOR COLLEGE & CAREER

- Set a new evidence-based College and Career Readiness (CCR) standard that moves beyond standardized tests, and ensure equitable access to post-CCR pathways.
- Ensure the adoption of High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) across every school, including the necessary training required for successful implementation.
- Adopt an Early Warning System (EWS) tied to high-quality and timely interventions, including strengthening the implementation of Maryland's 9th Grade On-Track measure across local education agencies.
- Build and sustain an infrastructure for High-Quality, School Day Tutoring across Maryland, including the use of flexible scheduling strategies such as block and flex scheduling to support the academic and developmental needs of students.



#### POST-CCR PATHWAYS & CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Post-CCR pathways promote advanced learning opportunities and allow students to earn a credential in a field aligned to their interests. For students who have not met the CCR standard by 10th grade, CCR support pathways are available. Additionally, students can benefit from a CTE system that is aligned with current industry needs, as well as curriculum, standards, and assessments that are aligned towards the new CCR goal.



#### HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) are resources that provide a road map for teachers on how to plan, teach, and assess student learning while reflecting research on effective instruction. They are fully aligned to state standards for what students should know and be able to do at the end of each school year. HQIM also support all learners, and enable frequent progress monitoring through embedded and aligned assessments.



#### EARLY WARNING INDICATORS: 9TH GRADE ON-TRACK MEASURES

Research demonstrates that keeping 9th graders on-track to graduate is a high-leverage success strategy. Since 2018, the Maryland School Report Card includes a 9th Grade On-Track measure. On-Track is defined as earning 4 or more credits in math, English language arts, science, social studies, and world language. The Blueprint requires LEAs to strengthen the implementation of a 9th grade tracker system to measure each student's progress toward graduating on time.



#### HIGH-QUALITY, SCHOOL DAY TUTORING

Rigorous research provides strong evidence that High-Quality, School Day Tutoring can produce large learning gains for K-12 students, especially those who have fallen behind academically. This type of tutoring is provided at least three times per week by a trained tutor (teacher, college students, etc.) in a small group format of two to four students and is offered during the school day.



### INTERIM COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS STANDARD

Student achievement, graduation rate, and postsecondary enrollment data for Maryland students, especially for underserved student populations, signal the need to rethink how we prepare our students to succeed in and through college and in their careers. Currently, a student meets the interim College and Career Readiness (CCR) standard if they meet or exceed the standards in both English and math. Through our engagement, we identified guiding principles for the implementation of a new CCR system grounded in moving beyond using standardized test scores as the only measure of readiness, equitable access to post-CCR pathways, and pathways that enable students to explore elective enrichment and academic opportunities.

#### CCR RESEARCH STUDIES

MSDE commissioned two research studies to determine the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in an entry-level college course. Both studies explore alternative methods of demonstrating readiness, such as GPA and course completion.

##### Exploratory Study

MSDE partnered with the Maryland Assessment Research Center (MARC) at the University of Maryland to complete a short-term quantitative study to explore the relationship between high school state and national standardized tests, other potential predictors of success (such as course grades), and success in postsecondary coursework and/or workforce outcomes.

##### Long Term Study

MSDE has partnered with American Institutes for Research to perform a deep content analysis to determine the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in the first year at a community college or 4-year college or university in Maryland. The preliminary report findings support that adding an alternative way to meet the CCR standard with high school GPA increased the percentage of students who meet the CCR standard from 40% to 64% and improved accuracy

*As specified in the Blueprint, American Institutes for Research will submit their final research report to the Governor, the Maryland General Assembly, the Accountability & Implementation Board, and the Maryland State Board & Department of Education on or before September 1, 2023.*

### COLLEGE AND CAREER PATHWAYS

Students have access to all pathways at no cost to themselves or their families. Career counseling programs will aid students in choosing a post-CCR pathway. Local education agencies must support students through the successful completion of post-CCR pathways in addition to supporting them in achieving College and Career Readiness as outlined in their individualized CCR plans.

#### COLLEGE PREP PROGRAMS

- International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme
- Cambridge AICE Diploma Program
- A comparable program consisting of Advanced Placement courses specified by the College Board

#### EARLY COLLEGE AND DUAL ENROLLMENT PROGRAMS

- An associate degree
- At least 60 credits towards a bachelor's degree

#### CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE) PROGRAMS

- An industry-recognized occupational credential or postsecondary certificate
- A registered apprenticeship program
- A youth apprenticeship program



# DEEP DIVE INTO THE ENABLER

## HIGH-QUALITY DATA REPORTING & RESOURCES



### ENABLER 1: HIGH-QUALITY DATA REPORTING & RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS

- Provide ongoing professional learning series focused on evidence-based pedagogy and ensuring meaningful use of assessments and other data to drive effective instructional practices (e.g. Learning Labs, Lesson Studies, etc.).
- Evolve Maryland's school Accountability System to align with Blueprint outcomes and prioritize student growth as a primary indicator of school quality and enhance reporting features.
- Enhance and scale tools that enable effective local education agencies' operations and teaching and learning practices at both the district and school level (e.g. School Accountability Projection Tools).
- Develop a new Statewide Finance and Data System to accurately measure and enforce accountability, collect and report new data, and advance public transparency and understanding of how State Aid calculations work.



### ENABLER

Maryland is supporting our schools, local education agencies, families, and decision makers by producing relevant, timely, and high-quality data and reporting, and enabling educators to make the best use of their resources to meet the needs of our students and accelerate student achievement.



### GOALS & METRICS

Relevant data reports and high-quality tools that are made available to families, educators, and stakeholders to meet the needs of students.



### SNAPSHOT OF ENGAGEMENT

**DURING THE LEARNING LABS MORE THAN 78% OF ATTENDEES REPORTED BEING "HIGHLY SATISFIED" WITH THE EVENT**

On average, more than 78% of attendees reported being "highly satisfied" with the Early Literacy Learning Labs, while the remaining 22% reported being "satisfied" with the event. Overall, respondents found the event to be well-organized and informative, and they appreciated the intentional sequence of activities and selection of presenters. Participants found the opportunity to visit classrooms and observe instruction to be highly meaningful and beneficial.

### PROFESSIONAL LEARNING: LEARNING LABS

Learning labs provide an innovative approach for teachers and administrators to engage in collaborative learning and planning using Maryland schools and districts as labs. These labs offer a supportive environment where educators can experiment, reflect, and refine their instructional practices based on the specific needs and challenges of their schools.

This unique format provides educators with opportunities to learn from their peers as well as subject-matter experts while focusing on a specific topic anchored around essential and guiding questions—learning from real-world contexts and gaining valuable insights into effective strategies and solutions. The activities are structured to allow them to observe practices as they are applied, learn from host districts about the strategic decisions they have made, explore new ideas and learning, and put them into practice immediately.

The Maryland State Department of Education launched a series of Early Literacy Learning Labs in Calvert and Wicomico counties, as well as Baltimore City in the spring of 2023. This two-day, in-person professional learning opportunity was designed for district literacy teams to collaborate on the application and implementation of high-leverage strategies and best practices in early literacy.



# DEEP DIVE INTO THE ENABLER

## HIGH-QUALITY CURRICULA & SYSTEMS



### ENABLER 2: HIGH-QUALITY CURRICULA & SYSTEMS FOR INTERVENTION & ACCELERATION

- Ensure the adoption of High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) that are content-rich and culturally responsive, as well as assessment tools aligned to the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards.
- Establish and adopt a statewide Early Warning System (EWS) across the prekindergarten through 12th grade spectrum to identify students who are at risk of:
  - Not being ready for kindergarten
  - Not being ready to read by the end of third grade
  - Not being proficient in math by the end of fifth grade
  - Not being ready for high school (e.g., attendance, behavior, and course grades in middle school)
  - Not being on track to graduate from high school in four years
  - Not being college and career ready by the end of tenth grade



### ENABLER

Maryland's classrooms challenge, support, and inspire students. Therefore, our schools will be equipped with high-quality curricula, lessons, assessments, and systems for intervention and acceleration.



### GOALS & METRICS

Increase in percentage of schools visited by Expert Review Teams that are rated as "Accomplishing with Continuous Improvement" in the "Curriculum and Instruction" and the "Integrated Multi-Tiered System of Supports" indicators.



### SNAPSHOT OF ENGAGEMENT

#### DURING ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

In-depth dialogues fostered by roundtables highlighted meaningful nuances in the views and aspirations of Marylanders across our state. Black/African American respondents emphasized resources such as access to advanced coursework and pathways, and high-quality teachers for underserved communities in their most frequently cited priorities.

<sup>8</sup>Doan, S., Kaufman, J. H., Woo, A., Tuma, A. P., Diliberti, M. K., & Lee, S. (2021). *How States Are Creating Conditions for Use of High-Quality Instructional Materials in K-12 Classrooms*. Rand Corporation.



### HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS (HQIM)<sup>8</sup>

High-Quality Instructional Materials play a crucial role in supporting effective teaching and improving student outcomes. These materials, which are aligned with standards and research-based practices, provide educators with the necessary resources to deliver rigorous and engaging instruction. Many states across the nation have recognized the significance of these materials and are taking steps to facilitate their adoption by developing policies and initiatives that support the selection, adoption, and effective implementation of these materials.

For example, providing educators with information about the quality of instructional materials to guide decision-making at the district and school levels, as well as incentivizing the adoption of high-quality materials by linking funding sources, such as grants and emergency relief funds, to the selection of these materials.

Additionally, it is critical to provide professional development opportunities aligned with these materials to ensure that teachers receive the necessary training and support to effectively integrate them into their instruction. By creating these conditions, states aim to enhance teacher buy-in and usage of HQIM, ultimately improving student achievement and educational outcomes.



# DEEP DIVE INTO THE ENABLER

## ELEVATING THE TEACHING PROFESSION



### ENABLER 3: ELEVATING THE TEACHING PROFESSION

- Strengthen regulations to increase the rigor of educator preparation programs.
- Support Grow Your Own staff programs to expand teacher and school leader pipelines, increase diversity to better align with student demographics, and address educator shortages.
- Develop guidelines for comprehensive educator Induction Programs for new teachers and school leaders to provide quality mentoring and support to ease the transition into the classroom.
- Implement teacher and school leader Career Ladders that expand opportunities for growth and collaboration, as well as increase compensation to attract and retain a high-quality and diverse educator workforce and to incentivize educators to work in low-performing schools.



### ENABLER

Maryland is elevating the stature of the teaching profession by: intentionally working to attract, recruit, and retain a highly qualified and diverse workforce; setting rigorous standards for educator preparation programs and induction; and implementing a career ladder system focused on development and growth opportunities for all educators.



### GOALS & METRICS

Increase in percentage of new teachers of color as measured by the Fall Staff Collection report; increase in percentage of teachers retained over a 3-year period; and increase in percentage of teachers eligible for the Teacher Leadership Track of the career ladder.



### SNAPSHOT OF ENGAGEMENT

#### DURING THE EDUCATOR DIVERSITY & EARLY CAREER & RISING EDUCATORS ROUNDTABLES

Teachers of color cited their own early experiences with lack of representation as having a profound impact on their decision to become a teacher and stay in the profession. Another major obstacle for increasing the number of teachers of color, according to participants, was the steep cost of becoming a teacher, suggesting the need for financial assistance in the form of tuition reimbursement, paid internships, and/or stipends for student teachers.

### GROW YOUR OWN (GYO) STAFF: EXPANDING THE TEACHER & SCHOOL LEADER PIPELINE

Educator attrition and shortages signal the need to rethink how we recruit, attract, prepare, and retain a high-quality and diverse workforce. The Maryland State Department of Education aims to elevate the stature of the teaching profession through support for Grow Your Own staff programs.

Grow Your Own programs are strategies and partnerships between educator preparation programs, school district, and community organizations that recruit and prepare local community members to enter the teaching profession and lead in their communities. They are designed to expand teacher and school leader pipelines, address shortages, and increase diversity to better align with student demographics.

In 2022, MSDE awarded \$47,486,941 in Maryland Leads grants to 23 local education agencies to implement GYO programs. In Frederick County, there are efforts to grow certified behavior analysts, special education teachers, as well as the implementation of an administrator residency program to grow new school leaders. Similarly, Montgomery County offered tuition assistance for current high school seniors and paraeducators to pursue a teaching degree at Bowie State University or Montgomery College and provided deliberate and structured mentorship opportunities for students interested in teaching careers to diversify hires and make teaching staff more representative of the district.



# DEEP DIVE INTO THE ENABLER

## SUPPORTING STUDENTS SOCIALLY & EMOTIONALLY



### ENABLER 4: SUPPORTING STUDENT SUCCESS SOCIALLY & EMOTIONALLY

Expand community schools and provide professional learning for community school coordinators and staff rooted in a Collective Impact framework to provide effective wraparound services that meet the needs of students and the community.

Enhance Tier 1 school-based mental health promotion services and supports to foster positive, social-emotional and behavioral skills for all students. Tier 1 activities are implemented school-wide, at the grade level, and/or at the classroom level, and services are delivered by both school- and community-based professionals working within schools (e.g., school-wide mental health literacy; school climate improvement efforts; restorative practices; classroom-based social emotional learning for students).

Scale the Maryland School Mental Health Response Program and strategic partnerships to support local education agencies in addressing student and family mental health needs by enriching the work of site-based student support services personnel through enhanced training and consultancies on mental health promotion and services (e.g., risk assessment; crisis stabilization; safe and supportive schools; linkages and triage; brief interventions).

Utilize results from the Maryland School Survey to spotlight connections between student and educator perceptions of their schools and school achievement and other outcomes, while driving school level practices for improvement of student outcomes.



### ENABLER

Maryland is ensuring student success by: supporting our students' social-emotional learning, health and wellness, and safety; enhancing school culture and climate; scaling high-quality wraparound supports and partnerships; and strengthening family and community engagement.



### GOALS & METRICS

Increase in percentage of schools perceived as having a favorable learning environment\* and decrease in suspension rate.

*\*Specific survey topics will be selected when a third year of survey data is available in late 2023*



### SNAPSHOT OF ENGAGEMENT

**ROUNDTABLE PARTICIPANTS MENTIONED THE IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC ON THEIR CHILDREN'S ABILITY TO LEARN, THEIR EMOTIONAL WELLBEING, AND THEIR SENSE OF CONNECTION**

Participants reflected on how the pandemic had laid bare long-standing unmet needs and profound deficits in services for students and their families, from food insecurity to uneven access to reliable internet to a chronic shortage of mental health services. The pandemic heightened these needs and created more urgency for finding solutions. Participants called for greater availability of counselors in school buildings and for better education for both parents/guardians and students regarding mental health and emotional wellbeing.

### COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Community schools promote positive, equitable outcomes by providing students and families with the physical and mental health, academic, and extracurricular supports needed to thrive. Community schools serve as hubs that bring families, communities, and partners together to remove barriers to learning by using an asset-based approach aimed to strengthen connections to generate improved student outcomes.

This evidence-based strategy focuses on four pillars: integrated student supports, expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities, family and community engagement, and collaborative leadership and practices.<sup>9</sup>

Under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, any school that receives Concentration of Poverty Grants must implement the community school model. Concentration of Poverty Grants provide schools with startup funding and permanent per-pupil dollars to launch and sustain community schools. The grants are formula-based and awarded to schools on an annual basis. As of fiscal year 2023, there are 358 community schools receiving Concentration of Poverty Grants.

<sup>9</sup>Maier, A., Daniel, J., Oakes, J., & Lam, L. (2017). *Community Schools as an Effective School Improvement Strategy: A Review of the Evidence*. Learning Policy Institute and the National Education Policy Center.



# WHAT IS COMING NEXT



**JULY 2023 & BEYOND**

## Implementation & Continuous Improvement

The implementation process of the Strategic Plan transforms the elements outlined in the plan into actionable steps. Effective implementation requires clear communication, strong leadership, and continued engagement of stakeholders. Regular monitoring and evaluation of progress are crucial to identify any gaps or challenges in the implementation process. The continuous improvement process ensures that the plan remains relevant and effective over time. Through a cycle of implementation, evaluation, and improvement, we can ensure that the Strategic Plan remains dynamic, responsive, and aligned with evolving needs.

NOVEMBER 2021

INITIAL ENGAGEMENT & DATA GATHERING



OCTOBER 2022

Initial Release  
Mission, Vision, Values,  
Priorities, and Enablers

PHASE  
**01**



PHASE  
**02**

FEBRUARY 2023

Refine Phase 1  
Release Success Metrics and Goals



JUNE 2023

Finalize Phase 1 & 2  
Release Targets\*  
Identify Flagship Programs,  
Initiatives, and Strategies

PHASE  
**03**



JULY 2023 & BEYOND

IMPLEMENTATION & CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT



● ONGOING COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT  
- - - BLUEPRINT IMPLEMENTATION

\*Final targets will be released by late Fall 2023 using the Spring 2023 Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program results



## THANK YOU FOR TRANSFORMING MARYLAND WITH US

We extend our sincere gratitude for taking the time to read about the Maryland State Board and Department of Education's multiyear Strategic Plan. This plan serves as the foundation for transforming public education in Maryland and ensuring an excellent and equitable learning experience for every student. From articulating the vision, mission, values, and priorities in Phase 1 to establishing goals and metrics for progress evaluation in Phase 2, and finally implementing research-based programs, initiatives, and strategies in Phase 3, this guidebook encapsulates the essence of our commitment to creating high-quality learning environments. We appreciate your engagement and support as we work towards achieving the Blueprint for Maryland's Future promise. Together, we will transform Maryland into a world-class education system.



# CONTACT US

410-767-0100



[www.marylandpublicschools.org](http://www.marylandpublicschools.org)



200 West Baltimore Street,  
Baltimore, MD 21201-2595

