


TO: Members of the State Board of Education

FROM: Carey M. Wright, Ed.D., State Superintendent of Schools 

DATE: August 27, 2024

SUBJECT: 2025 State Board of Education Legislative Platform

Purpose

The purpose of this item is to request that the State Board adopt the 2025 State Board Legislative Platform.

Executive Summary

Consistent with its statutory role embedded within §2–205(k)(2) of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, the legislative platform is an opportunity for the State Board to advise on legislative matters pertaining to education policy. Last year, the State Board adopted a platform for the first time. This drafted platform included a series of legislative principles and policy statements that outlined the State Board's approach to taking positions on proposed legislation during the General Assembly's legislative session.

In the 2025 Legislative Platform draft, the State Board will seek to maintain its focus on providing students with the skills, resources, and opportunities necessary to reach their full promise and potential, while striving to eliminate opportunity and achievement gaps for children from all backgrounds. There are eight (8) legislative principles that will guide the State Board and the State Superintendent as legislative matters emerge during the legislative session. They include: **Increase Academic Achievement, Bolster Investments in Public Education, Affirm a Politically Independent State Education Governance Structure, Build Capacity at MSDE, Reduce Creation of New Unfunded Legislative Mandates, Resist Curricular Mandates, Lead with an Equity Focus, Prioritize Fiscal Accountability.**

Action

The request from the State Board and MSDE legislative subgroup is that the State Board adopt the 2025 State Board Legislative Platform.

State Board of Education

2025 State Board Legislative Platform

August 27, 2024

Presented By | Zach Hands, Executive Director, State Board of Education
Alex Reese, Chief of Staff, Maryland State Department of Education



Background and Context

- Last year, the State Board of Education adopted a legislative platform to meet its role in the law to advise the Governor and the General Assembly on legislative matters pertaining to education policy.
- This included a series of legislative principles and policy statements that outlined the State Board's approach to taking positions on proposed legislation during the General Assembly's legislative session.
- The platform served as a strong basis for the State Superintendent and the State Board to work collaboratively and successfully as advocates and leaders in the legislative process.

2025 Legislative Platform

- A legislative subgroup consisting of MSDE and State Board staff, the State Superintendent, and a few members of the State Board have met consistently during the interim period of the legislative session to begin building the platform for the year.
- MSDE will come back to the State Board later this year with recommendations on departmental legislation, which could include any of the recommendations from the Assessment and Accountability Task Force.
- The platform is drafted to serve as the basis for the State Board and the State Superintendent to advocate for various pieces of legislation during the legislative session and to build formal positions (support, oppose, support with amendments).

Legislative Principles

- **Boost Academic Achievement.** The State Board advocates for transformational policies that accelerate student achievement and drive outcomes for all students through evidence- and research-based strategies.
- **Bolster Investments in Public Education.** The State Board supports continued investments into public education and will work with the Governor and the General Assembly to realize the vision of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.
- **Preserve a Politically Independent State Education Governance Structure.** The State Board believes deeply in a strong, politically independent structure for state education governance that is accessible, efficient, transparent, and accountable to students and families in Maryland.
- **Build the Workforce at MSDE.** The State Board strongly supports enhancements of the workforce at MSDE to build the capacity and expertise necessary to deliver results.

Legislative Principles

- **Reduce Creation of New Unfunded Legislative Mandates.** The State Board opposes unfunded legislative mandates for the State Board, MSDE, and local school systems, and supports streamlining areas of statute with outdated mandates and reporting requirements.
- **Resist Curricular Mandates.** The State Board opposes curricular mandates from the General Assembly. We support maintaining the longstanding process for developing and establishing standards and frameworks entrusted to the State Board and MSDE for curriculum development by local school systems.
- **Equity-Focused Leadership.** The State Board calls special attention to the urgent need for equity and driving the Blueprint's focus on closing entrenched opportunity and achievement gaps, so that all students — including but not limited to students with disabilities, multilingual learners, and students from historically underserved communities — can reach their full potential.
- **Prioritize Fiscal Accountability.** The State Board advocates for fiscal accountability and prudence, especially during difficult budgetary times. The State Board prioritizes support for legislation that minimizes fiscal impact on the State budget and results in the strategic reallocation of funding from existing Blueprint or other existing educational appropriations.

Questions?



**MARYLAND STATE
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**Maryland State Board of Education
2025 Legislative Platform**

DRAFT

Executive Summary

The Maryland State Board of Education (State Board) and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) are engaged in the continued transformation of Maryland's public school system and leading the implementation of strategic initiatives, including the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, to improve outcomes for all students.

The State Board embraces the urgency to capitalize on historic investments in public education, make swift improvements in literacy and math proficiency, and rebuild our accountability system to more accurately capture the progress and needs of our students and school systems.

Fundamentally, the State Board strongly believes the political independence of the State Board and MSDE, which arose as a result of the 1916 Flexner Report, is a strategic advantage to the public education system in Maryland. The Flexner Report, chartered as a review of public schools in Maryland, concluded over a century ago that this independence was critical to the success of children in the State to keep education "as far removed from political influences as possible". The General Assembly adopted the report's recommendation and the system remains in place to this day as a result of generations of Maryland civic leaders protecting this core tenet of our education system.

This fundamental independence serves as the basis for the State Board's role in the legislative process. The State Board's legislative platform is a critical opportunity, consistent with its statutory role embedded within §2-205(k)(2) of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, to advise the Governor and General Assembly on legislative matters pertaining to education policy.

We continue to maintain a laser-like focus on improving outcomes for all students by building coalitions with key stakeholders and bringing transparency and accountability to the forefront of our work. To achieve this, the Board commits to continued partnership and collaboration with other public agencies to advance positions intended to effectuate change through the legislative process. Working with our partners in the General Assembly, we will advocate for legislation that advances equity, ensures student success at scale, and supports the development of a highly-qualified and diverse workforce of educators and school leaders.

We will operate during this legislative session on a series of key principles with a focus on the more than 1,400 schools in Maryland serving as the primary units of change.

Investing in Education and Improving Outcomes

The State Board maintains its focus on providing students with the skills, resources, and opportunities necessary to reach their full promise and potential, while striving to eliminate opportunity and achievement gaps for children from all backgrounds. Delivering on this mission will involve informed, collaborative decision-making to ensure that robust supports span the education spectrum, beginning with early childhood education, bolstering the core work of schools, and advancing through college and career readiness, driven by a commitment to outcomes for students and families.

The investment into public schools through the Blueprint for Maryland's Future is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to improve the lives of Marylanders. To deliver on the promises of this historic legislation, the State Board will advocate during the legislative session for strategic action that honors the intent of the law while remaining responsive to the needs and realities of Maryland's ever-evolving education landscape.

Legislative Principles

Increase Academic Achievement

1. The State Board advocates for transformational policies that accelerate student achievement and drive outcomes for all students through evidence- and research-based strategies.

Bolster Investments in Public Education

2. The State Board supports continued investments into public education and will work with the Governor and the General Assembly to realize the vision of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future to improve student learning outcomes. We commit to ensuring investments in public education are spent responsibly and strategically while improving student achievement.

Affirm a Politically Independent State Education Governance Structure

3. The State Board believes deeply in the strong, politically independent structure of state education governance that has existed for more than a century with the State Board providing general control and supervision over public schools in Maryland. Through this structure, the State Board holds that we and all local education agencies in the state must be accessible, efficient, transparent, and accountable to students and families in Maryland.

Build Capacity at MSDE

4. The State Board strongly supports enhancements to the workforce at MSDE to build the capacity and expertise necessary to ensure appropriate implementation support and accountability that yields results for education reforms, and supports the critical work of local school systems and individual schools

Reduce Creation of New Unfunded Legislative Mandates

5. The State Board opposes unfunded legislative mandates for the State Board, MSDE, and local school systems, and supports streamlining areas of statute with outdated mandates and reporting requirements.

Resist Curricular Mandates

6. The State Board opposes curricular mandates from the General Assembly. We support maintaining the longstanding process for developing and establishing standards and frameworks entrusted to the State Board and MSDE for curriculum development by local school systems.

Lead with an Equity Focus

7. The State Board calls special attention to the urgent need for equity and driving the Blueprint's focus on closing entrenched opportunity and achievement gaps, so that all students – including but not limited to students with disabilities, multilingual learners, and students from historically underserved communities – can reach their full potential.

Prioritize Fiscal Accountability

8. The State Board advocates for fiscal accountability and prudence, especially during difficult budgetary times. The State Board prioritizes support for legislation that minimizes fiscal impact on the State budget and results in the strategic reallocation of funding from existing Blueprint or other existing educational appropriations.

For additional information on legislative matters pertaining to the State Board and MSDE, please reach out to the following staff members:

Zach Hands, Executive Director, State Board of Education
zachary.hands1@maryland.gov
Phone: 443-915-6094

Dr. Akilah Alleyne, Executive Director, Office of Government Affairs
akilah.alleyne@maryland.gov
Phone: 443-462-1211