

Career Ladder

Joint Implementation Policy #4
Blueprint for Maryland 's Future

May 2025



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Background

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future established a career ladder for educators to incentivize teachers to stay in the classroom and to provide professional learning opportunities for teachers and school leaders embedded in the regular working schedule to support time for teachers to collaborate with their colleagues, and participate in professional learning to identify students who are not progressing, design interventions to support those students, and work with students one-on-one and in small groups to provide interventions to lead to improved outcomes for students.

Local education agencies (LEAs) in agreement with local employee representatives were required to submit Levels 1 through 3 of their Career Ladder to the State Board of Education (SBOE) and the Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB) in 2024; all 24 career ladders have been approved by the AIB. LEAs and their teachers' union partners must submit Level 4 of the Teacher Leader Track (excluding Tier 3 - Professor Distinguished Teacher) by July 2025. A few LEAs included piloting Level 4 of the career ladder in their 2024 submission in order to identify what roles/responsibilities and scheduling works to support the Lead Teacher (Tier I) and Distinguished Lead Teacher (Tier II) positions. The statute requires Tier I teachers to teach 50% of their working time and 40% of time for Tier II positions, which includes collaborative time for all teachers.

The AIB and SBOE have deferred submission of Level 4 of the School Leader/Administrator Track and other required components of the career ladder pending further policy and guidance.

Discussion

Preliminary feedback from the Level 4 pilots conducted by LEAs during the 2024-2025 school year suggest that the teaching time expectations for Tier I and II positions in the law do not provide sufficient time for those teachers to perform their career ladder roles on a regular basis. The AIB and SBOE do not believe that asking LEAs and teachers to implement infeasible goals, particularly in light of the "pause" or "pacing" of collaborative time for all teachers, will lead to successful implementation of the career ladder.

This joint policy provides implementation guidance for local school districts and partners to pilot Level 4 teacher roles and responsibilities with a minimum teaching time of less than 50% during the 2025-2026 school year in order to provide additional data regarding the time needed for Level 4 teachers to successfully fulfill their career ladder duties while at the same time maintaining their connection to the classroom

by teaching at least one course/subject. The AIB and SBOE will use this information to inform possible recommendations for changes to the career ladder that may require legislation.

Policy Statements

The AIB and SBOE establish the following implementation direction to pilot Level 4 of the career ladder for teachers during the 2025-2026 school year to identify innovative and feasible models to meet the goals of the career ladder:

1. For the purpose of this policy, “teacher or co-teacher” means a teacher (including a multilingual learner or special education teacher) who delivers instruction and is responsible for a student’s or group of students’ academic progress in a Pre-K-12 public school setting.
2. Level 4 Lead and Distinguished Lead Teachers shall be a teacher or co-teacher for at least one course/subject for all marking periods, which means being the teacher or co-teacher of record for a course/subject. The maximum time that a Lead or Distinguished Lead Teacher may teach is 50% on average as specified in Md. Ann. Code, Ed § 6-1004.
3. Teachers who participate in Level 4 pilots are eligible to receive the salary increase in Md. Ann. Code, Ed § 6-1009 if they are a teacher or co-teacher for at least one course/subject for all marking periods and meet other career ladder requirements.
4. Lead and Distinguished Lead Teachers are not required to teach the same students, course, or subject throughout the school year.
5. The AIB and SBOE will review the results of Level 4 pilots during the 2025-2026 school year to inform any recommendations to modify the statutory requirements for teaching time on Level 4 of the Teacher Leader Track.

ADOPTED:

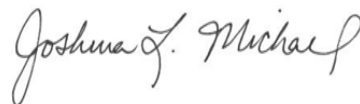


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May 29, 2025