



BLUEPRINT for Maryland's FUTURE

**More
Funding**

**More
Community
Schools**

**More Early
Childhood
Supports**

More Pre-K

**More
Educators**

HIGH POVERTY SCHOOLS

The Blueprint Addresses Long-Standing Equity Issues and Promises Equal Access for All Students

Since 2003, when Maryland's school funding formula was last updated through the Bridge to Excellence (Thornton) Act, there's been a 59% increase in students receiving free meals and a 40% increase in students receiving free or reduced-price meals (FARMS). More students are experiencing hunger, abuse, neglect, fear, inadequate healthcare, the effects of institutional racism, trauma, and many other adverse childhood experiences before they enter school.

As student poverty increased, the decades-old compensatory education component of the formula—which was designed to ensure equity for all students—just couldn't keep up. The old formula had become the 15th most regressive formula in the country resulting in the state spending 5% less on schools serving students in poverty.

The Blueprint creates additional funding through the compensatory education program with Concentration of Poverty (COP) Grants. Concentrated poverty exists where 30% or more of residents fall below the federal poverty threshold (currently \$24,200 for a family of four). COP grants currently fund schools with a concentration of poverty of 80% or greater; in doing so, the school is recognized as a community school. These COP grants, along with a continued commitment to compensatory funding, help to renew Maryland's commitment to equitable education and end the regressive nature of the old formula.

The Blueprint started to phase in community schools in FY 2020* (the 2019–2020 school year) for 219 schools identified with 80% or greater concentration of poverty. Seventy more became eligible for the 2021–2022 school year. More schools will be added, phased in by decreasing poverty levels, until FY 2027, when 557 are projected to become community schools.

Schools in high poverty communities need the across-the-board interventions the Blueprint provides. The expansion of community schools is just one vehicle for support. Expanded special education funding, new pre-k programs, ramped up staffing with more educators who look like their students, increased small group tutoring, and much more available career and technical education—all of these elements of the Blueprint point to lifting and supporting students experiencing poverty.

The new law provides the important transitional supplemental instruction (TSI) program for K–3 students who score a 1, 2, or 3 in English language arts or reading on the MCAP. TSI is one-to-one and small-group (not more than four students) tutoring with a certified teacher, a paraprofessional, or any other trained professional, or cross-age peer tutoring. It also includes screening, identifying, and addressing literacy deficits. This new support system will require a broad expansion of school staff, and also help the students most in danger of falling behind with intensive, targeted, and tailored support. TSI funding is in place until the end of school year 2027.

Learn more about the Blueprint for Maryland's Future at marylandeducators.org/Blueprint.



Blueprint for Maryland's Future: High Poverty Schools

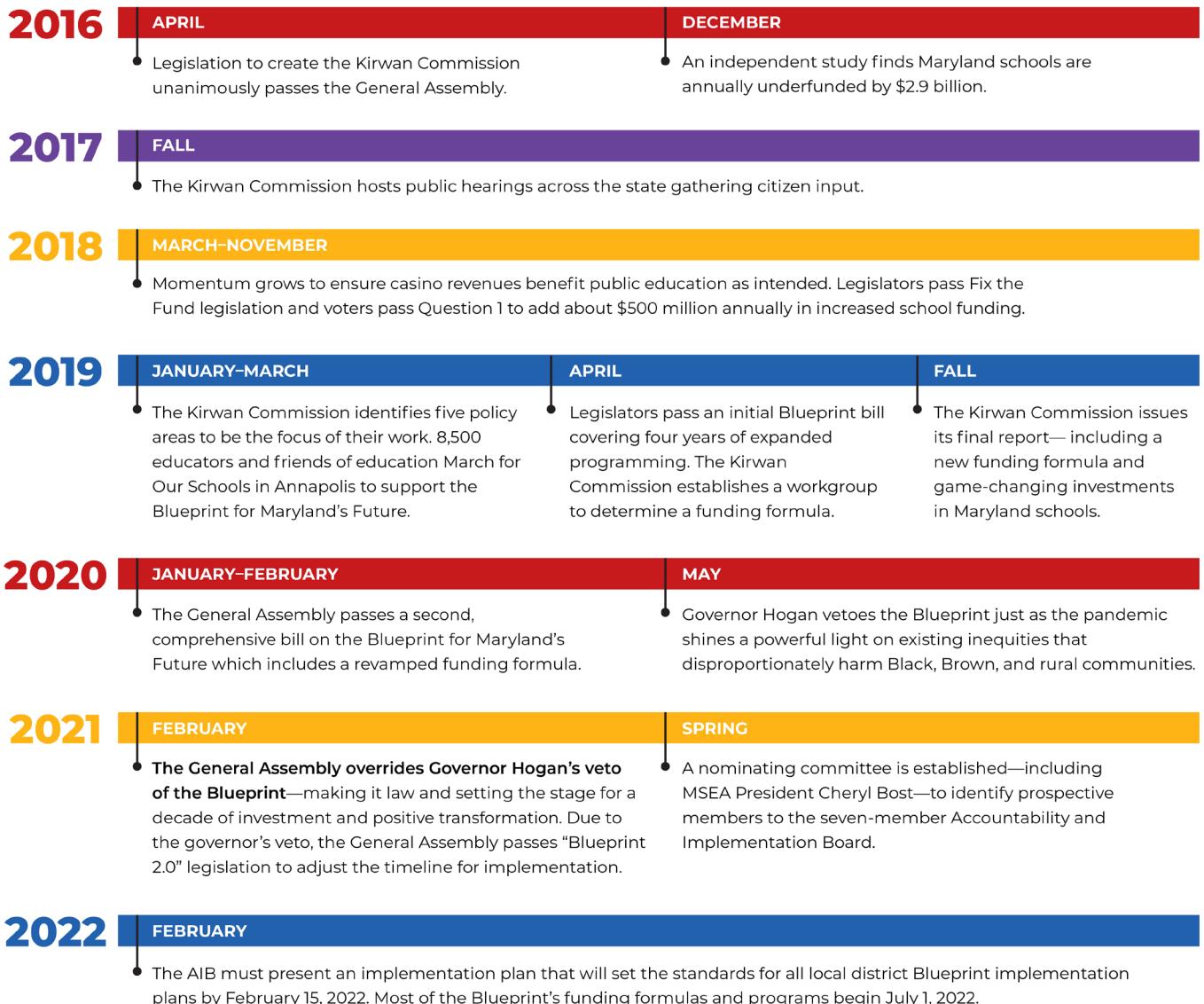
The Blueprint calls for and funds the hiring of high-quality and diverse pre-k–12 educators across the board, including more bilingual teachers, counselors, paraeducators, and support staff who can effectively support and assist English language learner students and their families. These educators can help bridge many of the gaps non-English speaking families face as they support their students.

The expansion of Judy Centers and Family Support Centers and pre-k directly serves high-poverty schools by adding more programs earlier for students and families. The pre-k program begins as voluntary and free to all three- and four-year-olds whose families are experiencing poverty, then soon enrolls more students on a sliding scale fee. In 10 years, it's estimated that 80% of eligible children will be enrolled in publicly funded pre-k. Both the Blueprint and the Built to Learn Act ramp up pre-k by expanding programs and constructing more pre-k classrooms.

To assure that state and local boards of education and special education departments are maximizing resources and funds and serving students as intended, the Blueprint includes a rigorous accountability structure through the Accountability and Implementation Board to ensure that all Blueprint funds are used as intended and not absorbed or redirected to central offices or MSDE.

**Maryland's fiscal year runs from July 1 through June 30 of the following year.*

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future: A Five-Year Fight for Equity and Opportunity



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