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**BLUEPRINT FOR MARYLAND'S FUTURE
ACCOUNTABILITY AND IMPLEMENTATION BOARD**

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February 16, 2022

The Honorable Larry J. Hogan, Governor of Maryland
The Honorable Bill Ferguson, President of the Senate
The Honorable Adrienne A. Jones, Speaker of the House of Delegates

Dear Governor, Mr. President, and Madame Speaker:

I am writing on behalf of the Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB) to provide an update on the start-up activities of the AIB and propose a new timeline for development and submission of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future implementation plans.

As you know, the AIB members were not officially appointed until November 2021 instead of the anticipated date of July 1. Since then, the board has held 9 meetings to orient ourselves to our charge to oversee the faithful implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future law and to establish both the board and a new agency. One of the first orders of business was to begin recruitment for an Executive Director. The board was pleased to announce the selection of Rachel Hise as the first executive director in late January 2022. She began work full time for the AIB on February 7, 2022, as the singular staff. Four additional permanent positions will be available when the State budget is enacted in April and 10 more positions in July 2022.

The AIB currently has approximately \$1.35 million in its budget for fiscal 2022 in accordance with the supplementary appropriations provided by Chapter 356 of 2021 enacted by the General Assembly. That funding is sufficient to support the AIB's start-up operations for now. Building a new agency from the ground up has its own challenges and takes time. The AIB anticipates receiving most, if not all, of its full \$4.8 million fiscal 2022 budget authorization by June 30, 2022, which is the end of the fiscal year. However, based on the flow of fantasy sports and sports betting revenues, the bulk of that funding will be received near the end of the fiscal year. The AIB will not be able to encumber it all and potentially a significant portion will revert at the end of the fiscal year. There are also several other Blueprint programs that receive supplementary appropriations in Chapter 356 that will be in a similar situation; further, a number of those programs do not have an appropriation in the fiscal 2023 budget, including Expert Review Teams and the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Committee. The Board respectfully requests that the AIB and other Blueprint programs receiving fiscal 2022 supplementary appropriations be permitted to carryover any remaining funds at the end of fiscal 2022 into the fiscal 2023 budget.

In addition, the Board urges full funding for all of the Blueprint formulas and programs in fiscal 2023. We were particularly concerned to learn that the new Education Effort Adjustment program is not funded in the budget. While we understand that the question of whether the funds are mandated for fiscal 2023 has been referred to the Office of the Attorney General for advice to resolve this question, it seems clear to us that the legislative intent was that the new formula be

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funded in fiscal 2023 to alleviate the fiscal impact of the new Blueprint local funding requirement on several of the State’s least wealthy jurisdictions in the first year. We urge the Governor and General Assembly to provide for full funding of the Education Effort Adjustment.

At its first meeting on November 15, 2021, the AIB reviewed several upcoming statutory deadlines (and one past deadline – the first annual report of the AIB was due November 1, 2021, before the AIB had been fully constituted). The most immediate deadlines relate to the development of the Blueprint Comprehensive Implementation Plan by the AIB, which is intended to provide guidance and benchmarks for achieving the outcomes that the Blueprint intends over the 12-year implementation period to all of the entities charged with implementing the Blueprint. That Comprehensive Plan was to be adopted by the AIB on February 15, 2022, approximately 7 1/2 months after the anticipated establishment of the AIB in July 2021. Clearly that deadline was not feasible for the AIB to meet given the delay in its establishment. Under the law, individual Blueprint implementation plans are required to be submitted to the AIB by June 15, 2022, which is also not feasible. Prior to that, on April 1, 2022, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) must submit to the AIB the criteria it is proposing to use to evaluate whether local school system plans will be recommended to the AIB for approval.

Due to the unanticipated delays in the AIB’s establishment, the AIB is proposing a new timeline for Blueprint implementation plans. This timeline is based on the statutory timeframes but provides an opportunity for public comment on a draft plan before the AIB adopts the final plan in December. Entities required to submit plans, including local education agencies (LEAs), MSDE, the CTE Committee, and higher education institutions, would have more than 5 months to complete their plans after the AIB draft plan is released. The AIB would then review Blueprint implementation plans in the spring/early summer of 2023, so that the plans could be implemented beginning in the 2023-2024 school year.

Current and Proposed Timeline for Blueprint Implementation Plans

Task	Current Date	Proposed Date
AIB adopts Comprehensive Implementation Plan	2/15/22	10/1/22 Draft 12/1/22 Final
MSDE submits LEA criteria to AIB	4/1/22	9/1/22
Entities submit Blueprint Implementation Plans	6/15/22	3/15/23

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We believe this new timeline provides sufficient time for the AIB to develop a meaningful Comprehensive Plan to guide implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future for the next decade, while balancing the need to move forward with faithful implementation of the Blueprint and accountability for meeting the intended outcomes for the children of Maryland. Indeed, LEAs have been implementing pieces of the Blueprint for several years as the State provided start-up funding for a number of Blueprint initiatives. The AIB intends to identify key milestones for implementation of the Blueprint in the 2022-2023 school year to guide LEAs, MSDE, and other entities over the next year while the Blueprint plans are under development.

We respectfully request that the Governor and General Assembly provide a response to this proposal before the end of the legislative session. LEAs and other entities are anxious for certainty about when they must submit their Blueprint implementation plans. The Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM) and Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) have indicated that they are pleased with the new proposed timeline. The timeline is also in alignment with MSDE's proposal for LEA implementation plans. There may be other statutory dates that need to be revised as a result of the new timeline. That will be part of the AIB's Comprehensive Plan development process. The AIB intends to formally propose any additional adjustments to statutory dates and timelines in the AIB's November 2022 annual report.

Finally, the AIB held a very constructive first meeting with members of the State Board of Education and the State Superintendent of Schools earlier this week. On behalf of the AIB, we pledge to work collaboratively with all of the entities charged with implementing the Blueprint. We have a once in a generation opportunity to transform Maryland's public schools into a world-class system that enables every student to be successful and well-prepared for college and career. While we may disagree at times about how to best accomplish that goal, there is no doubt that we are all dedicated to the ultimate goal of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

Sincerely,



Isiah Leggett
Chair

IL/RHH

cc: Members, Accountability and Implementation Board
Senator Paul Pinsky
Senator Guy Guzzone
Delegate Maggie McIntosh
Delegate Vanessa Atterbeary