

Office of Strategic Initiatives

Katie Ridgway
Director
410-809-6327

Katie.Ridgway@hcps.org

BLUEPRINT
for our students' future 

Testimony to the Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB)

Public Hearing on Draft Comprehensive Implementation Plan

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCabLcTj1tk442pw6sfsulpa>

November 10, 2022

Good afternoon,

I am Katie Ridgway, Director of Strategic Initiatives for Harford County Public Schools, and I am proud to also serve as the Blueprint Coordinator. When I began this endeavor, I was struck by the dichotomy of my colleagues' tones when discussing Blueprint implementation. They were both excited about the opportunities and anxious about the details.

Overall, a theme emerged: everyone wants the same thing – to improve student outcomes and experiences. We all want to implement the Blueprint with a fidelity that actually impacts the lives of our students. I ask that members of the AIB, leaders at MSDE, advocacy groups, and Boards of Education remember in the coming months that, first and foremost, we all want to implement the Blueprint successfully and sustainably. We all want to improve the lives of our students.

With that, please consider the following as you work with us to enact change:



Early Childhood Education: Many districts are starting from zero with regard to private providers. In Harford County, we have no centers and only two family providers with six seats, so meeting a percentage of private seats is a monumental task. We want to focus on increasing the number of students attending pre-k, rather than a percentage of private vs public programs. I do appreciate that there is a waiver process in the implementation plan and template. We will also need to all work together to advocate for capital investment in our schools to add the necessary number of pre-k classrooms to truly reach our earliest learners.



High Quality and Diverse Teachers and Leaders: Please consider working with MSDE to have a default ladder for districts who cannot reach agreement with their teacher's union. Thank you for having a phased-in approach to the career ladder in our written plans. Moving forward, please keep negotiation timelines of the districts in mind when setting deadlines, definitions, and guidance for the career ladder. If any legislative changes are proposed, please consider incentivizing those with special education certification to work in special education classrooms.



Career and College Readiness: We want to increase student opportunity, not create barriers. High school students who have not met the CCR standard should always be able to enroll in post-CCR pathway courses, if those courses are determined beneficial to the student in their individualized support pathway plan. The language of task 3.3.2(a) indicates otherwise.



More Resources for students to be successful: HCPS is committed to community schools, but currently, there is no funding for small and medium counties to hire supervisory leadership for the community schools. Please consider funding mechanisms for districts to hire leadership in this area to effectively implement community schools. Funding for leadership support for Blueprint implementation is important in many other areas too, as the new initiatives require guidance for efficacy of the work.

Finally, it would help our local implementation planning, budget processes, and local funding request to have a breakdown of the foundation formula.

I appreciate your consideration and the monumental task ahead of this board and all of our local boards.

Thank you,

Katie Ridgway

Director of Strategic Initiatives

Harford County Public Schools Blueprint Coordinator



Email us at AskHCPS@hcps.org or give us a call at (410)809-6193.

Blueprint web information: <https://www.hcps.org/superintendent/blueprint.aspx>
