

Policy Area 5

Governance and Accountability

Policy Area:

A structure will be put in place to oversee this new system, monitor its implementation, and hold government agencies at all levels accountable for implementation of the Commission's recommendations.

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Element Detail 5a

Element: Independent oversight body to coordinate, monitor, and evaluate implementation of the Commission’s recommendations via a strategic plan, with the body ceasing to function at the end of the implementation period.

Design Assumptions:

1. The oversight body must have the authority to require other State agencies and local school systems to respond to its requests for information, changes to policies or implementation plans, and recommendations to withhold funding. The membership of the oversight body will include experts in education policy, both internationally and within the U.S., as well as representatives of Maryland stakeholders;
2. The Chairman of the oversight body will have the authority needed to organize the work of the body as he or she sees fit and the oversight body will have an executive director and a staff;
3. The oversight body will:
 - a) In consultation with the agencies charged with implementing the requirements in the enabling legislation, develop a detailed master schedule and strategic plan for implementation;
 - b) Monitor implementation of the strategic plan against the master schedule, coordinate between agencies, and work with the respective agencies to resolve implementation issues as they arise;
 - c) Contract, as necessary, with independent experts to gather and analyze data that reflects how the strategic plan is being implemented and its effects on student performance over time as measured by a wide range of appropriate variables; assist those contracted experts in securing the necessary data from Maryland State agencies;
 - d) Report progress annually to the Governor, legislature, and the public; describe implementation problems as they arise, and make recommendations as to changes in legislation, including in appropriations and accountability, that might be needed to increase the probability that the strategic plan will meet the objectives of the enabling legislation on schedule ;
 - e) Develop plans or review and approve plans and related instruments submitted by the key agencies responsible for implementing the strategic plan, as follows:
 1. The criteria to be used to determine the release of a portion of

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- State funding that is conditioned on the approval of plans for the use of those funds that is consistent with the Commission’s recommendation and the process to be used to determine whether those criteria have been met, including for the release of those funds in subsequent years based on implementation performance;
2. Plans to expand pre-K for low-income 3-year olds and all 4-year olds and to monitor the school readiness of students entering kindergarten;
 3. Plans to expand the network of Judy Centers and Family Resource Centers to serve families with children age 0-5 in high poverty communities;
 4. Criteria that must be met by collaboratives of districts and teacher preparation programs seeking to strengthen teacher preparation and induction as recommended by the Commission;
 5. Criteria to be used to approve applications from districts for matching funds to implement their career ladder systems;
 6. State plan for the use of inspection teams charged with supporting struggling schools, including the data and criteria to be used to determine which schools will be inspected, the inspection schedule, the scope of the inspection, the criteria for selecting inspectors and the powers and responsibilities of the inspectors;
 7. State plan to ensure all students reaching the Career and College Readiness (CCR) standard have access to post-CCR programs that prepare them for admission to selective colleges or for technical credentials leading to good jobs; and/or to complete college credits while in high school;
 8. State plan to review CCR standard against international benchmark periodically (starting in year 5) to ensure Maryland students are competitive with their peers in top-performing countries;
 9. State plan for creation of a CTE Steering Committee to strengthen the State’s CTE system;
 10. State plan for training Maryland teachers, school leaders, and administrators on the Commission’s recommendations.
- f) The oversight body will coordinate the State’s participation in the OECD’s PISA.
4. The oversight body will contract for an evaluation of the implementation of the Commission’s recommendations at the mid-

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point and end of the implementation period, including the use of additional funding to meet the goals, progress toward the goals and whether the goals have been achieved, and any recommendations to alter the goals or strategies to reach the goals.

5. The body will sunset at the end of the implementation period i.e., 10 years.

Implementation Considerations:

1. The structure of the oversight body within State government and the role and authority of the oversight body relative to existing State agencies, such as the State Board of Education, and local school boards
2. The approximate size of the oversight body and staff will be needed in order to determine the administrative budget
3. Consider altering an existing entity, such as the Education Development Collaborative that was recently appointed (but has not budget or staff)
4. The Commission must determine throughout its final report what entity or entities are intended to implement a recommendation when referred to as “the State”

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Element Detail 5b

Element: Formula funding to be designed so that some meaningful portion of the funding will be subject to the approval of specific plans to implement the recommendations and subject to demonstrated progress toward greater student success

Design Assumptions:

1. Some portion of formula funding will require districts to submit plans for implementing the recommendations of the Commission to the oversight body, with benchmarks set for measuring implementation;
2. Districts will be required to submit progress reports as a requirement of continued funding;
3. The oversight body has the authority to withhold – or to *recommend to the State Board/Superintendent* withholding – increases in funding to districts that are not making adequate progress towards implementation;
4. A process must be put in place to provide early warning and support to districts if they are at risk of not making adequate progress toward meeting goals
5. The majority of funding conditioned for specific purposes must follow students to the school level

Implementation Considerations:

1. Additional increments in funding will also depend on a determination that the approved plans are in fact being implemented, beyond mere compliance with statutory requirements, with this function to be among those assigned to the independent oversight body described above.

Element Detail 5c

Element:

Create inspection teams to visit struggling schools and pair high performing school leaders with struggling ones to provide support and mentorship, and a complementary system designed to provide the State with a profile for every school.

Design Assumptions:

1. MSDE should create the inspection teams, but the teams should issue annual reports to the independent oversight body overseeing the Commission's recommendations
2. The inspection teams will consist of highly experienced former and current superintendents, principals and teachers;
3. There will be a schedule for visits that will ensure that every school is visited once every five years; schools identified as struggling will be visited annually;
4. Schools will be identified as struggling if they fall below key benchmarks on a State profiling system focused on student performance, developed by MSDE and approved by the oversight body;
5. After being flagged as struggling by the inspection team, a school will have a comprehensive review by highly experienced teachers and leaders, who will then work with the school to develop an improvement plan;
6. The struggling school will be offered a partnership with a high performing school with a similar demographic profile whose leaders and staff will act as partners and coaches to the struggling school for a period of three years to help that school improve.

Implementation Considerations:

1. Partnerships will last 3 years, after which the struggling school will be reviewed again by the inspection team.
2. High performing schools that partner with struggling schools will receive additional staffing in the form of: an additional vice principal to manage the school on days when the principal is consulting with the partner school; additional teachers so that permanent teachers have the time to mentor their colleagues at the partner school.
3. What will the oversight body's role be in the State's ESSA plan for school accountability?