

## Working Group 4 More Resources for At-risk Students

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### Policy Area:

System that Ensures At-risk Students are Successful ~~that-by~~ supporting these students and their families as soon as they arrive at school with both academic supports and extensive case management ~~to-that~~ address their social, physical, mental, and family needs -to enable their success at school.

Maryland currently provides additional funding for students who are at-risk of school failure based on specific demographic and learning characteristics. These include students with disabilities, students from families living in poverty, and students who are learning English. From its study of other highly successful nations and Massachusetts, the Commission determined that it will recommend continuation of the current funding structure that provides additional funding based on weights for each of these groups. In addition, its study identified the need to recommend a new funding weight, one that would provide resources for wrap-around supports for schools with high proportions of students living in poverty. The Commission also recognized the need to recommend funding for intensive instructional support to students who are falling behind academically. This latter amount will not be a permanent funding stream, and will end when reforms related to curriculum and teaching are implemented, thus reducing the need for large-scale instructional remediation.

These there are five groups of students included under the umbrella category of "at-risk." These are:

- Individual/Family Poverty
- Special Education
- School-level/Concentrated Poverty
- English language learners
- Academic Failure (transitional).
- Students of Color

The Commission (based on the recommendation of APA) adopted a funding weight for students individual / family poverty. Thus, the charge of Workgroup 4 was to provide the design assumptions and implementation considerations that were needed to develop cost estimates of services and programs for the remaining four groups.

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**Commented [JS1]:** we urge you and the members of Workgroup 4 to take into account the recommendations of numerous organizations and experts that the Workgroup and Commission directly and substantively address the needs of African-American, Hispanic, Latino, and Native American students. We understand that current research shows that the strongest contributor to the academic outcomes for these students is poverty and acknowledge that the additional resources for poor children will be helpful. However, we also know that race plays a very significant role that is distinct from that of poverty. Indeed, some of the schools and LEA's with large disparities are not schools with concentrated poverty. Further, the relative strength of poverty as compared to race differs by outcome. For some outcomes it may act as a contributing factor, for others such as suspensions and arrests, race has a more primary role. In short, racial bias - current and past - systematically and substantially disadvantages Maryland's children of color in schooling and in virtually every aspect of their lives. Given the importance of eliminating racial disparities, the failure to address racial/ethnic disparities in the recommendations for "at-risk" students is inexplicable and an egregious omission. Although race-based funding policies have been judged as unconstitutional, the same is not true for funding for programs and interventions that address large disparities in the performance of subgroups identified by the state in their ESSA implementation plans. Indeed, ESSA's Targeted Supports and Interventions provisions require LEAs to intervene when identified subgroups in schools underperform relative in statewide comparisons.

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#### Element Detail 4a:

- Add a **concentrated poverty weight** to the funding formula to support intensive services for students and their families to enable them to succeed in school, that are coordinated and able to meet the additional needs of students in schools located in distressed communities.
- Add a fixed, categorical funding amounts for each schools with concentrated poverty to be used to establish or enhance community schools ~~to provide wrap-around services and~~ establish or enhance school provide health and behavioral health services.

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#### **Design Assumptions:**

1. ~~Maryland provides substantial funding for at-risk students through its foundation and compensatory education funding formula. M-which many schools utilize these funds to provide wrap-around services to students in need of additional supports. However, top performing systems around the world fund such supports at higher levels, thereby provide additional funds to provide allowing for a greater more comprehensive degree of additional services services for those students that who are at have the highest risk of not succeeding in school. In addition, recent research, including an analysis provided to the Commission by the Maryland Longitudinal Data Center shows that both individual and school level poverty place children at risk of not succeeding in school.~~
2. ~~To ameliorate the consequences of school level poverty, Additional- additional funding will be provided to funding for schools with high concentrations of poor students ~~ed poverty will allow Maryland to provide funds to schools with high levels of poverty to enhance or establish programs and services to support the needs of students in those schools.~~ This funding stream would be comprised of a fixed, ~~categorical~~ amount and a per-pupil amount.~~
3. The Concentrated Poverty. This additional funding would be available to every school in which at least X% of students qualify for free and reduced price meals. ~~But each~~ Each qualifying school ~~would have to~~ will have to submit an implementation plan based on an assessment of need to be awarded this funding. The per-pupil funding would be based on the total enrollment of the school. It, in combination with the compensatory education funding, would be used to support the additional programs and services identified in a school's needs assessment. These would include, but would not be limited to:
  - a) additional extended learning time including before and after school;
  - b) safe transportation to school;
  - c) vision and dental screening;
  - d) additional social workers;
  - e) physical and behavioral health and wellness including providing food for in-school and out-of-school time and linkages to community providers;
  - f) family and community engagement and supports including informing

parents of academic course offerings, opportunities for children and social services;

g) implementation of youth voice and youth engagement strategies including but not limited to restorative practices, mentoring, student debate and student government

h) linkages to Judy Centers and other early education programs that feed into the school;

i) student enrichment experiences;

j) improving student attendance; and

k) improving the learning environment at the school

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~~A fixed amount would be provided for each school in which at least X% of students are eligible for free or reduced price meals. This fixed~~ portion of this funding would be used to hire a community schools coordinator and a health services practitioner.

## Implementation Considerations:

1. Implementation plans should include, at a minimum but are not limited to:
  - a) The results of a ~~A community-based~~ needs assessment process that is conducted in partnership with a leading ~~community organization~~ local that has the capacity ~~building organization~~ to help the school identify student and family needs, available and needed resources, and develop an implementation strategies. The plan should ~~y for addressing the needs of the students and their families and building~~ build on and strengthen the ~~ing~~ community resources available in the community surrounding ~~near~~ the school;
  - b) Provision for ~~Ensuring that~~ an experienced and qualified community schools coordinator to be hired at a vice principal level ~~is hired~~;
  - c) ~~Inclusion of~~ Commitments from ~~community~~ partners who provide services in the school community in geographic proximity to the school who ~~to can~~ assist in meeting the identified needs ~~identified~~;
  - d) A plan to ~~Ensuring~~ that time is made available to train staff about ~~on~~ the additional available supports ~~offered, including why~~ identifying the need for the supports are needed and how to engage with the community school coordinator to access ~~in engaging with~~ these supports; and
  - e) ~~Development of~~ Strategies to maximize external non-State or local education funding.
2. Local school systems must demonstrate that funds ~~provided under the weight~~ are being provided to those schools in which the concentrated poverty threshold of X% is met ~~weight is applicable~~ and that they are being used for the purpose of implementing the needs assessment and implementation plans.
3. Local governments would be expected to demonstrate support through meaningful partnership and financial support that is supplemental to and does not supplant existing efforts.
4. Partner agencies, such as local management boards, should participate ~~at the~~ at the LEA and State level, as appropriate, to ~~and~~ provide the coordinating services and necessary funding ~~and support~~ to enable other local agencies to participate as partnering organizations.
5. Accountability ~~should focus on~~ indicators ~~should that~~ include the school quality accountability measures required by Maryland's ESSA plan, namely state ESSA school quality standards school climate and chronic absence. They should also attendance and also include, but ~~are~~ not be limited to: successful implementation of the plan, number of students served and not served, time to receive services, attendance, enrichment opportunities, reduction in disciplinary actions, student and principal satisfaction, and meaningful family involvement.
6. Once programs are established ~~Every year~~ districts will be required to ~~report~~ collect data on their program including progress on their chosen indicators and report the results in coordination with school level reports cards, published annually by the MSDE. MSDE should provide public reports of the school accountability

rubric including district, and school level data, grade level data and student sub-group data including students who are English Language Learners, students with disabilities, students who live in poverty and by race and ethnicity. The full commission should include this element in their discussions of accountability and governance, -including issues such as, whether and at what point should there be - ~~whether there should be~~ consequences and what those consequences should be if progress is not being for lack of progress, ~~made~~ how progress would be defined, and what consequences might be.

7. Schools with ~~a lower~~ poverty levels that do not meet the required threshold are encouraged to ~~could still~~ provide wrap-around services, organize a community school, and/or provide health and behavioral health services using their compensatory education funding.

### Outstanding Issues:

1. At what level of school concentration of poverty does the additional funding begin and at what level will it reach the full amount?
2. What proxy should be used for identifying FRPM students going forward?
3. To whom should the implementation plans be submitted? Are the plans subject to approval? Who approves the plans? What metrics would measure success?
4. Finalizing the concentration of poverty cost calculations requires that the -per- student base, the compensatory education weight, and the proxy for identifying FRPM student also be finalized.
5. What ~~are~~ the phase-in priorities? Should the schools with the greatest concentration of poverty be given priority?

**Element Detail 4b (referred to full commission):** Train school staff in all schools to recognize mental health issues as well as other issues related to trauma and coordinate access to needed mental health and other services for students, as part of effort to increase school safety (see SB 1265 – signed into law as Chapter 30)

**Element Detail 4c:** Revise funding formula weight for **special education students**.

### Design Assumptions:

1. State and federal law require school systems to identify, locate, and evaluate all students who have or are suspected of having disabilities and in need of special education and related services.
2. To ensure students are not misidentified as being disabled, the law defines a list of eligible disabilities and students must meet one of those criteria.
3. The timeline for identifying, locating, and evaluating students for special education and related services is established in State and federal law and regulation. Parental consent is required for students to be evaluated. An Individualized Education Plan (IEP) must be developed within 30 days of the date a student is identified as a student with a disability.
4. HB1415 was enacted in the 2018 session and it required MSDE, in consultation with DBM and DLS, to contract for an independent study to evaluate funding methodologies used nationally and internationally and make recommendations regarding the appropriate level of funding for special education students in Maryland.
5. Differentiated weights are preferred in principle, but APA proposed a blended weight. It is anticipated that the special education study required by HB 1415 will propose differentiated weights. In the meantime, the Commission will propose a single placeholder weight.

6. To provide special education resources, local school systems spend more than the current funding formula provides.
7. Total State and local expenditures on special education equaled \$1.567 billion in fiscal 2015. Of this, the State provided \$272 million, or 17.3% of the total. Thus, ~~the~~ local funding accounted for the remaining \$1.296 billion.
8. A weight of 2.18 is recommended as the “stop-gap” weight until the completion of the special education study required by HB1415 and until any recommendations of the study are implemented in law. This weight is calculated based on the fiscal 2015 foundation per pupil base of \$6,860. For context, the weight in current law is 0.74. The weight will be recalculated once the Commission determines a new foundation base such that an equivalent amount of State funds are generated as the weight of 2.18 would generate.
9. The result of this stop-gap weight is that State funding, in fiscal 2015 dollars, increases by 195% from \$272 million to \$800 million. This increases the State proportion of expenditures from 17% to 51%.

**Implementation Considerations:**

~~1.~~ Because a special education study required by HB 1415 is due by December 2019, the new weight may be revised again in response to the study recommendations. It is anticipated that the placeholder weight recommended by the Commission may be in place for up to 3 years while the completed study is being reviewed and incorporated into State law.

1. Although ~~LEAs~~ school districts will have discretion in repurposing approximately \$529 million in local funds, they are encouraged to reinvest a portion back into special education ~~as appropriate~~ to provide a robust level of services to meet the needs of the special education students.

**Table 1  
Fiscal 2015 Special Education Expenditures**

<u>Adjusted Total Expenditures*</u>	<u>Fall 2014 Enrollment</u>	<u>Per Pupil Expenditures</u>	<u>Equivalent Weight**</u>
\$1,567,335,305	104,618	\$14,982	2.18

\* Fiscal 2015 Selected Financial Data, excluding federal funds, infants and toddlers, and nonpublic placements. Includes fixed charges.

\*\* Weight assumes current law per pupil base of \$6,860 in fiscal 2015 (weight of 0.74). Assuming the APA recommended base of \$10,880, the equivalent weight is 1.38.

**Commented [JS2]: Safeguard the Future Adoption of Higher and Tiered Funding for Special Education Students**

We understand the Commission’s desire to use a temporary funding weight for special education, so as to allow the on-going work of the Special Education Committee to be completed. However, given the abysmal outcomes for special education students, and the rare opportunity that you have, we do not believe that the Workgroup or Commission should abdicate its responsibility for recommending the additional, graduated funding that special education students will need to be successful. We urge the Workgroup to recommend additional increases in the weight after three years, should the work of the Special Education Committee be delayed or its recommendations not adopted.

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**Table 2  
Fiscal 2015 Special Education State Aid**

	<u>State Aid</u>	<u>% of Adjusted Total Expenditures</u>
Actual	\$271,702,887	17.3%
Using 2.18 Weight	800,442,277	51.1%
Difference	\$528,739,390	33.7%
% Difference	194.6%	

**Element Detail 4d:** Revise funding formula weight for **English Learner (EL)** students.

**Design Assumptions:**

1. The Commission’s preliminary report recommends increasing support for at-risk students, including special education, low-income, and EL
2. Because most of EL students also qualify for compensatory education funding, the compensatory education weight will provide for academic and social/emotional supports. Therefore, the EL weight as recommended by APA is only reflective of resources needed to specifically support language acquisition.
- ~~2.3.~~ Schools with high concentrations of EL students qualify for concentrated poverty status, even if their Free and Reduced Price Meal (FRPM) rates (or their proxies) are too low.
- ~~3.4.~~ In addition to ~~what the weight~~ APA recommended, the EL weight should be increased to provide a family liaison. The services that a family liaison would provide or coordinate could include: translation services for communication between school personnel and parents through a bilingual liaison, cultural competency training for school personnel, other family support and family engagement services, and referrals to outside resources that a school may not be able to directly provide. A school can determine what services would best meet the needs of their students.
- ~~4.5.~~ EL teachers must have specialized training, proficiency in the other language(s), and cultural competency.

**Implementation Considerations:**

1. ~~1-~~The workgroup is concerned that changes at the federal level ~~-relating-~~ to the immigration status of documented and undocumented students will result in an undercounting of students for compensatory education purposes. It may be necessary to adjust the EL weight to ensure that students who would otherwise qualify for compensatory education would receive the resources they need to be successful.

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[Resources to Address Racial and Ethnic Disparities](#)



1. LEAs must regularly and, publicly release data that disaggregates student outcomes by both poverty and race for every Maryland school, so that the separate impact of race and ethnicity are clear.

2. Similar to the funding mechanism for schools with large numbers of EL students that do not meet the concentrated poverty threshold, schools with large racial disparities, regardless of concentrated poverty status, are eligible for,
- a. resources to undertake a needs assessment to determine the extent of and steps to eliminate racial and ethnic disparities, and
  - b. funds to support intensive training and interventions for all adults in these schools,
  - c. funds to support the implementation of alternatives to suspensions, expulsions, citations, and arrests, including, but not limited to, programs such as restorative practices, SEL curricula and PBIS.

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