Accountability & Implementation Board
BLUEPRINT FOR MARYLAND'S FUTURE

2023 Garrett County Public Schools Blueprint Implementation Plan Recommendation for Approval

Local Education Agency	Garrett County Public Schools
Date of Approval	

The Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB) staff has completed its review of Garrett County Public Schools's Initial Blueprint Implementation Plan, including all revisions made in response to requests by the AIB and Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). AIB staff recommend that the plan's approval is ***conditioned*** upon Garrett County submitting a revised Career Counseling Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that meets all requirements. **With the Board's approval of the plan and satisfaction of the condition, FY 2024 Blueprint funds automatically withheld pending AIB approval of the LEA's plan will be authorized for release by MSDE in accordance with the Blueprint law**.

Review Process

Each local education agency (LEA) was required to submit its Initial Blueprint Implementation Plan to the AIB and MSDE concurrently on March 15, 2023. Immediately following their submission, AIB staff reviewed them to determine if they met the minimum requirements established in the AIB's Initial Blueprint Comprehensive Plan, including responding to all questions in the template and staying within the 98 page maximum length (excluding the template). In April 2023, the AIB determined that all LEA plans met the minimum requirements and, in accordance with statute, FY 2023 Blueprint funds were authorized for release by MSDE.

MSDE and AIB staff then conducted separate evaluations of each of the 24 LEA plans to determine if they met the Criteria for Success. For AIB's review, AIB staff and consultants, as well as Career and Technical Education (CTE) Committee staff, served as reviewers of both LEA implementation plans and Career Counseling MOUs. Each reviewer was assigned to read pillar-specific sections of individual LEA plans and some reviewers read and evaluated entire implementation plans. Ultimately, every section of each LEA plan was evaluated by two different reviewers for AIB who consolidated their feedback to inform their final decision of whether each criterion in the Criteria for Success was met.

MSDE's review process is described in the memo hyperlinked below. MSDE provided up to two rounds of feedback with requests for revisions to LEAs before sending their recommended plans for approval in two groups to the AIB between May 16 and June 6, 2023. AIB staff reviewed the LEA revised plans and, if applicable, identified additional responses requiring revisions based on one or more of the following criteria:

- The response did not adequately or entirely address the associated criterion in the Criteria for Success;

- The response did not adequately or entirely address a requirement for implementation identified in the Initial Blueprint Comprehensive Implementation Plan; or
- The response did not adequately or entirely address a statutory requirement.

AIB staff requested revised responses from LEAs as applicable over two rounds of feedback provided between May 25 and June 20, 2023. AIB staff provided additional technical assistance including numerous office hour sessions to assist LEAs with their revisions. Each revised LEA response was re-evaluated against the appropriate criterion to determine if the revisions met the requirements. Once all revised responses were reviewed and determined to meet the requirements, the LEA's revised plan was ready to be recommended to the Board for approval.

In addition, AIB staff/ consultants and CTE Committee staff reviewed the Career Counseling MOUs that LEAs, local workforce development boards, and community colleges submitted with each LEA plan and subsequent versions. The review criteria included meeting the requirements in the Blueprint law and the guidance provided by AIB and MSDE. Staff provided feedback to each county and requested revisions to the MOUs as applicable on June 5, with rolling deadlines in June and July for submitting and re-submitting revised MOUs until they meet the requirements. AIB staff recommend that the plan's approval is ***conditioned*** upon Garrett County submitting a revised Career Counseling Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that meets all requirements. **With the Board's approval of the plan and satisfaction of the condition, FY 2024 Blueprint funds automatically withheld pending AIB approval of the LEA's plan will be authorized for release by MSDE in accordance with the Blueprint law**.

Plan Materials

Garrett County's plan submitted to the Board for approval includes the materials listed below:

- 2023 Blueprint Implementation Plan—the original plan submitted by the LEA in March 2023, including a draft Career Counseling MOU if available.
- AIB Feedback—the request(s) for revisions from AIB staff sent to the LEA and the LEA's revised response(s) based on this feedback.
- MSDE Memo and Feedback (round one and round two)—the request(s) for revision from MSDE staff sent to the LEA and the LEA's revised response(s) based on this feedback. (NOTE: Some LEAs received two rounds of feedback. In this case, the feedback round is noted in the document's title.)
- Feedback on Career Counseling Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)—feedback provided to LEAs on the initial and revised versions of the Career Counseling MOU.
- Career Counseling MOU–most recent version of the LEA's MOU.

Once the Board has approved LEA plans, LEAs will submit their final 2023 implementation plans to AIB that reflect the approved revisions they submitted to both MSDE and AIB. This final version will be posted on the

AIB website, including a Spanish translation version when available. Final Career Counseling MOUs will also be posted on the AIB website.

AIB Feedback

During the review process, AIB reviewers identified numerous areas of strength and opportunities for improvement in each LEA plan. A summary of the highlights are provided below. Additional feedback will be provided to LEAs as part of ongoing technical assistance to support LEAs as they implement their 2023 plans and develop their five-year plans for submission in 2024.

Areas of Strength and Opportunity	• Garrett County Public Schools (GCPS) has a strong partnership with Frostburg State University and has created a solid Professional Development Schools (PDS) model. Pre-service teachers are learning the GCPS content and approach while in college which provides a seamless transition to teaching in the district. • GCPS has embraced the National Board Certification (NBC) process for teachers and has created a strong plan to launch the initiative. Many strategies have been identified to recruit teachers to increase the number of NBC teachers, which will both incentivize teachers for holding the credential and increase the professionalism of the workforce. • In developing plans for students not yet demonstrating College and Career Readiness (CCR), GCPS intentionally incorporated parent/family involvement in the process which not only informs them of the concern(s) and strategies, but pulls them into the work with a full understanding of their child's growth areas.
Areas for Further Growth and Improvement	• GCPS should continue to increase opportunities for stakeholders to be involved in the development of plans that support Blueprint initiatives to provide not just information, but opportunities for stakeholders to share needs and brainstorm solutions. • As the teacher shortage is affecting districts across the nation, GCPS is encouraged to expand Grow-Your-Own initiatives and the Teach Academy of Maryland (TAM) program quickly. Providing current staff the opportunity to upskill and fill a critical needs position in the district will be a win-win for the employees and district. Also, TAM can provide students interested in teaching and related fields (speech, media, psychology) an early start on their degree while building an internal pipeline of teacher candidates. • GCPS is in the process of reviewing and revising its Comprehensive Literacy Plan and developing a Comprehensive Mathematics Plan. While this work is underway, ensure alignment to the Blueprint expectations and a strong foundation of Universal Design of Instruction planning to include built-in supports for students who struggle to master content according to the expectation. In these processes, make sure to include stakeholders for both informational purposes and seeking their input. • Capacity for district-level job embedded professional development is cited as a challenge for the district given the current teacher shortage. Consider ways to use

	this as an opportunity to begin developing Career Ladder initiatives that allow strong teachers/teacher leaders to engage in leadership opportunities, such as providing professional development to teachers across the district. ● AIB and CTE Committee staff are continuing to work with the GCPS Career Counseling partners to finalize their MOU. **Plan approval is conditioned on submission of a final MOU that meets the requirements.**