

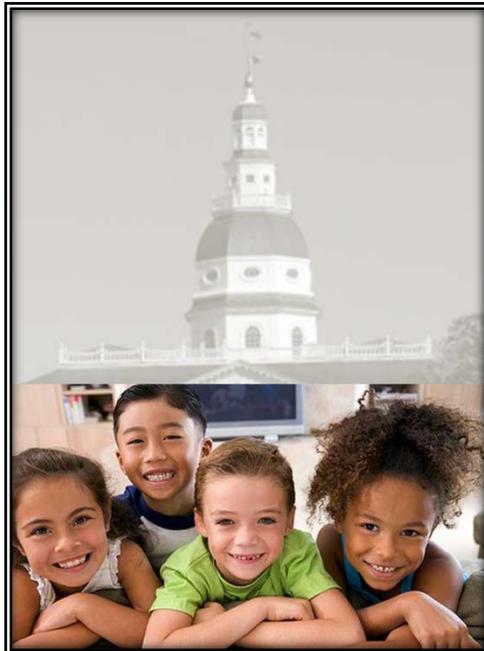
**2021 LEGISLATIVE SESSION
of the Maryland General Assembly**

Board of Education of Frederick County

Legislative Principles and Priorities for Advocacy



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THE ROLE OF LOCAL BOARDS OF EDUCATION

Local boards of education are uniquely positioned to govern and make the decisions that directly impact our students, schools and communities. While guidance and regulations may come from afar, local boards provide critical steady and stable leadership to their districts in a way that takes into consideration local capacity, resources, needs and concerns.

- Local school boards, through their public meetings, attendance at events, and daily discourse and engagement with the community at large, provide citizens the venue for regular, meaningful public dialogue around specific educational goals and expectations for their community's students.
- Local boards of education function within the context of their communities' values and goals. They are best situated to evaluate their schools' strengths, weaknesses, and needs. They are best positioned to identify where, on the path of progress, their district lies, and to determine how best to move forward to meet the broader vision set forth at the state and federal level.
- School boards are also the best positioned to effectively communicate and reflect community concerns, feedback and suggestions on goals, laws and regulations set at the state and federal level. Acting as the local voice and advocate on education issues is an important piece of the local governance that school boards provide.

For these reasons, the Board of Education of Frederick County appreciates and values when legislators consider the role of school boards when deliberating on or enacting any legislation, policy, or reform related to education.

Board of Education

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Karen Yoho, Vice President

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Mia Martinez, Student Member

Superintendent

Dr. Theresa Alban

2021 LEGISLATIVE PRINCIPLES AND POSITIONS FREDERICK COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

The Frederick County Board of Education governs a growing and dynamic school system of nearly 44,000 students, more than 6,000 employees, and 68 schools. The Board is committed to the success, safety and well-being of our students and staff and to our role as a critical contributor to our County's growth and vitality.

Our **top legislative priorities** are aligned to our Board's aspirational goals and commitment to:

- Equip each and every student to be an empowered learner and an engaged citizen to achieve a positive impact in the local and global community.
- Hire, support, and retain staff who champion individual, professional, and student excellence.
- Pursue and utilize all resources strategically and responsibly to achieve identified outcomes and inspire public confidence.
- Nurture relationships with families and the entire community, sharing responsibility for student success and demonstrating pride in all aspects of our school system.
- Promote a culture fostering wellness and civility for students and staff.

We will advocate for:

- Preserving local Board governance and authority over education matters.
- Providing adequate and equitable funding for education to ensure equitable opportunity, preparation for students, and support and investment of staff and educational resources.
- Maintaining a robust level of school construction funding, distributed through a fair and equitable process.
- Collaborating to effectively support the well-being, safety and security of students, staff, and our schools.

I. CONTINUED GOVERNANCE AND AUTHORITY for LOCAL BOARDS OF EDUCATION

The Board of Education of Frederick County believes that local school boards, through their public process of community-based decision making, are best able to balance educational goals, available resources, community input and to provide academic and financial accountability with regards to student learning and achievement.

The Board of Education of Frederick County supports:

- ✓ Continued autonomy for all local boards of education to adopt education policies that promote high standards for academic and fiscal accountability. Students are best served by having an independent local board of education that is engaged with its superintendent and the school community to discuss and to debate important issues that directly impact the quality of education. The success of Maryland schools is a testament to the effectiveness of this governance model.
- ✓ Local decision-making authority in developing curriculum and assessments, in conjunction with the Maryland State Board of Education, as provided by Maryland statute.
- ✓ Legislation that allows flexibility to schools and school systems in meeting state mandates and regulations.
- ✓ Local authority over public schools, including public charter schools, in alignment with the Public Charter School Act of 2003 and the amendments to the Public Charter Improvement Act of 2015.

The Board of Education of Frederick County opposes:

- ✗ Any executive, legislative or regulatory actions or initiatives that would have the effect of reducing or circumscribing local board governance, oversight, or budgetary authority.
- ✗ Any proposals to reduce or eliminate the governance and decision-making authority of local board and administrators as a condition for receiving increased state funding.
- ✗ Any efforts to legislate any part of the education program, inclusive of curriculum or assessments, school start and/or end dates and times,
- ✗ Any specialized funding that has the effect of incentivizing the adoption of certain programs, curriculum or assessments that would serve to diminish funding or support for other curricular areas.
- ✗ Legislation relating to charter schools that would diminish the local board's role as primary chartering authority, or otherwise weaken the local board's academic or fiscal accountability oversight.
- ✗ Any efforts to prescribe any single assessment to determine student, teacher, school, or school system performance.

II. FUNDING FOR EDUCATION THAT IS ADEQUATE AND EQUITABLE

The Board of Education of Frederick County acknowledges the importance of a variety of components that equip our students to be empowered learners and engaged citizens who will achieve a positive impact in their communities and the world. The Board is committed to providing quality, well-rounded educational programs, from pre-kindergarten through graduation, while meeting the unique and varied needs of each and every student. The Board also understands the critical need for highly qualified teachers, administrators and staff in meeting school system goals, as well as the necessity for adequate resources and materials to optimize student learning.

The Board of Education of Frederick County supports:

- ✓ Legislative and funding recommendations of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future to update and enhance the public school finance system, and that are consistent with preserving local board governance.

With regards to the recommendations, the Board of Education of Frederick County more specifically supports:

- ✓ Increased funding to enable local school boards to provide equitable access and support for all students, including special education students, English Language Learners, economically disadvantaged students, and underperforming students in order to eliminate achievement gaps.
- ✓ Maintaining the per pupil foundation amount, the provision of increases through a robust annual inflation factor, consideration of unique local cost and capacity through continued wealth equalization of the foundation amount, a local cost factor (i.e. the Geographic Cost of Education Index (GCEI) or Consumer Price Index (CPI)).
- ✓ Supports a per pupil funding allocation for students attending prekindergarten, without any offsetting reduction in compensatory funding.
- ✓ Strengthening funding for special education programs, including formula aid for all special education students and reimbursement for special education students in nonpublic placement.
- ✓ Adequate funding for implementation of initiatives and mandates required in implementation of Maryland's College and Career-Ready Standards (MCCRS), such as investments in curriculum, assessments, evaluation systems, professional development, and technology.
- ✓ Funding for the requirements of the College and Career Readiness and College Completion Act of 2013 and the needs of students for clear and robust pathways toward preparation for college and career, which have required additional investment for the development and implementation of specific courses, offerings (i.e. certifications, internships, high-school and college campus-based programs), additional assessments, transition opportunities, documentation and record-keeping, and financial assistance for students' participation in additional programs, such as tuition and fees for dual enrollment programs.
- ✓ In light of the fluctuation in student enrollments due to the COVID pandemic, the Board supports any legislation that holds school systems harmless from loss of state revenues due to these fluctuations in subsequent years.

The Board of Education of Frederick County opposes:

- ✘ Any new state or federal policies or programs that result in unfunded or underfunded mandates.
- ✘ Mandates that do not include additional state allocations or that weaken the local school system's ability to meet the unique needs of the students and families it serves.
- ✘ Efforts to reduce, limit, or eliminate the governance or decision-making authority of the local board and administrators as a condition of receiving additional or increased State funding.

III. ADEQUATE FUNDING TO IMPROVE SCHOOL FACILITIES AND CREATE CAPACITY

Frederick County is committed to utilizing resources strategically and responsibly to achieve our goals for students while inspiring public trust. The Board of Education is committed to ensuring optimal learning environments and acting as responsible stewards of our public buildings. Though the county enjoys steady population growth, that growth poses challenges in keeping up with the demands for new seats while maintaining and renovating our older facilities to keep up with students' instructional needs.

The Board of Education of Frederick County supports:

- ✓ A state funding level of \$400 million for school construction and renovation projects for FY 2022 to provide the State's share of approved projects to annually fund major construction, renovation and systemic projects.
- ✓ A required state cost share, for those projects that are in the state construction program, to cover school construction cost increases resulting from new state laws, mandated in regulations.
- ✓ Continued improvements, including those set forth in the 21st Century School Facilities Act of 2018, to the processes of the State public school construction program and local facilities funding which enhance funding for school facilities, improve processes and increase efficiencies and flexibility in a way that ensures quality and accountability.
- ✓ Establishment of adequate financial support for construction or facilities strategies and practices that encourage efficiencies, sustainability, use of renewable resources and lessens environmental impact.
- ✓ The development of innovative funding policies, strategies, and alternate financing models, outside of the State public school construction program, including public-private partnerships, and alternative methods of deliver or procurement, to meet increasing school facility needs.
- ✓ A statewide facilities assessment for the purpose of establishing an accurate inventory and status of school facilities, that is the result of and executed in collaboration with local governments, school boards and school systems.
- ✓ A hold harmless provision regarding the *Capital Grant Program for Local School Systems with Significant Enrollment Growth or Relocatable Classrooms (EGRC)* due to the uncertainty as we enter the FY 22 budget cycle. The *EGRC* was first established in 2015 and provides additional funding for the capital improvement program. Eligibility is determined based on school system's experiencing significant enrollment growth or using a significant number of relocatable classrooms. FY21 was the first year since the program's inception that FCPS has been eligible based on our significant enrollment growth. Significant enrollment growth is defined as enrollment growth that has exceeded 150% of the statewide average over the last five years.

Project Priorities for State Funding
 Frederick County Public Schools FY22 CIP Request to State
 (Includes requests for State funds only in \$000)

	PROJECT	REQUEST	FY22 STATE REQUEST
1	Blue Heron ES	Construction Funding	\$5,000
2	Rock Creek Replacement	Construction Funding	\$4,000
3	Waverley ES Replacement	Construction Funding	\$4,500
4	Brunswick ES Replacement	Construction Funding	\$2,500
5	Limited Renovation Project	Local Planning Approval/Limited Renovation Construction Funding	LP/\$3,200
6	Urbana ES Replacement	Construction Funding	\$4,026
7	Brunswick MS Roof	Systemic Construction Funding	\$333

TOTAL \$23,560

The Board of Education of Frederick County **opposes**:

- ✘ Any mandate regarding school size or standardized design for school facilities, which would limit local authority over design, construction, procurement, maintenance, or operations.
- ✘ Establishment of a “one size fits all” approach in determining State participation, the State cost share, and the prioritization of school facilities projects.
- ✘ The development of any competitive grant program that would compete with or replace funding from the current State Public School Construction Program.

IV. STUDENT HEALTH AND SCHOOL SAFETY AND SECURITY

The Board of Education of Frederick County supports:

- ✓ A collaborative approach between local boards and federal, state, local elected officials in developing and implementing local public school health, safety, and security programs.
- ✓ Local board discretion to adopt policies and allocate resources to support improvements in student behavioral, emotional and physical health and well-being.
- ✓ Local flexibility to create and enforce consistent and fair disciplinary standards in order to respond to infractions of the rules committed by individual students.
- ✓ Federal, state and local government funding for local public school safety programs, and the wide array of behavioral and emotional health and public safety services provided by other public and private entities, which are essential to maintaining safe schools and access to a quality education for all students.
- ✓ Local discretion to adopt programs and policies to maintain and improve school safety, including positive behavior intervention strategies to prevent and mitigate disruptions, and emergency plans to deal with any crisis that may occur in the school.
- ✓ Adequate federal, state and local government funding to local public schools to implement, with fidelity, behavioral and emotional health and public safety programs.

The Board of Education of Frederick County opposes:

- ✗ Any unilateral State or local mandates that dictate the provision of programs, supports and resources for physical, mental and behavioral health, inclusive of specific staff or positions.
- ✗ Any unfunded mandate for physical or health instruction, and/or physical, health, behavioral, or emotional health requirements that do not include additional state allocations.
- ✗ Any statewide or "one-size-fits-all" approach that would dictate or limit local board authority, or the local board's ability to meet the needs of local students and families.
- ✗ Legislation or regulations that would unduly limit the authority or ability of school administrators and local boards of education to ensure the safety of all students and staff.