



**School of Education and Urban Studies
Office of the Dean**

November 17, 2022

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL (aib@maryland.gov)

Isiah Leggett, Esq., Chairman
Accountability and Implementation Board
45 Calvert Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Maryland Blueprint Plan - National Center for the Elimination of Educational Disparities (NCEED)

Dear Chairman Leggett and the Members of the AIB:

Morgan State University commends the effort undertaken by the AIB and its staff to make its work developing the Blueprint for Maryland's Future Statewide Comprehensive Implementation Plan accessible to the public.

As Dean of the School of Education and Urban Studies at Morgan State University, I believe that the policy initiatives outlined in the Blueprint law are largely necessary to prepare Maryland's public school students for success in higher education. However, having reviewed the draft Blueprint implementation plan released by the AIB, I wish to share the following concerns, in hopes that they will be addressed in the final state Blueprint plan:

- “Nearly all students” approach: This past September, Morgan State University launched the National Center for the Elimination of Educational Disparities (NCEED). The Center's core mission is to address issues that affect the opportunity of children to achieve their full academic, personal and career potential, regardless of their zip code and socio-economic status. The “nearly all” language in the law seems to run counter to the premise that schools should aim to allow ALL children to achieve their full potential. AIB should view itself as the entity to investigate, uncover, and address the inequities that inhibit the success of some disadvantaged students. The current language suggests that some education leaders assume that all children are not capable of experiencing success in school;
- Surface-level partnerships with HBCUs, HSI, & MSIs: The Blueprint law is exceedingly clear about its intent for Historically Black Colleges and Universities, as well as Hispanic Serving Institutions and other Minority Serving Institutions, to be engaged in more robust, productive partnerships with local school systems, particularly around educator diversity and student preparation for postsecondary opportunities. However, this plan draft makes inconsistent, passing references to clearly-intended partnership opportunities. The AIB's plan should include measures of accountability for the effectiveness of the implementation of these partnerships, to lend more

weight to the notion that the Blueprint will bridge the gulf between K-12 and higher education; and

- More specific outcome metrics needed: It is not clear at this time how historically underserved and marginalized communities can expect the educational outcomes of their children and community members to be improved by the Blueprint's implementation, nor is it clear what the AIB will be looking for as it exercises its accountability authority and implementation monitoring capacities throughout implementation. The need for greater specificity with respect to the validity of outcome measures is important for all of the objectives listed in the draft plan. An example taken from outcome measure 2 under Pillar 2 illustrates the potential negative impact of the lack of specificity in the description of measures. The language there is "The number of Maryland teacher candidates who pass nationally recognized, portfolio- based assessment of teaching ability...."

It seems important that in the construction, evaluation and interpretation of these assessments they should reflect the diversity of school systems, teacher candidates and teacher preparation programs. This is a validity issue and in the absence of data to support the correlation of these measures with student outcomes, their use could potentially reduce the number of teachers who might be eligible for certification. This would have precisely the opposite effect to the goal of increasing the number and diversity of Maryland teachers. While this example relates to teachers, the same is true of measures used for the evaluation of student outcomes.

We urge the AIB to:

1. Make its language more inclusive so as not to give the impression that the Blueprint does not envisage the success of all of Maryland's children.
2. Make specific provision for the role of HBCUs in the implementation of the plan. The goal of the Blueprint to create a world class education system is only possible if the persistent equity issues are addressed and HBCUs are critical in that regard.
3. Ensure that the outcome measures are designed to be specific to the Maryland context. The national recognition of the measures is less important than context specificity and leaves open the door for economic exploitation by private entities in the design and use of these measures. Such measures should be developed and validated by Maryland assessment experts , teacher educators in IHEs, and school system professionals.

Morgan State University is invested in the success of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, and looks forward to working with the AIB at available engagement opportunities to support the Board's efforts. The National Center for the Elimination of Educational Disparities (NCEED), newly launched at Morgan, will dedicate its efforts to the achievement of the same goals as are articulated in the Blueprint to ensure equity.

Sincerely,



Glenda M. Prime, Ph.D
Dean