

WCPS | Washington County Public Schools

BLUEPRINT

for our students' future

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future, referred to as the Blueprint, is a law that was passed in 2021. The intent of the Blueprint is to create transformational change in Maryland's public education system. It will increase annual education funding by more than \$3.8 billion over the next ten years.

The Blueprint was written based on recommendations from the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education, also known as the Kirwan Commission. The Kirwan commission was tasked with:

- 1) making policy recommendations to enable Maryland's schools to perform at the level of the best-performing school systems in the world, and
- 2) proposing changes to the current funding formulas for schools. This diverse group of stakeholders worked together for four years to study education and craft a report that was used as the foundation for the Blueprint.

Learn how WCPS is implementing the Blueprint > > >

PILLAR 1 EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Numerous research studies prove the academic benefits of prekindergarten (Pre-K). Investment in high-quality early childhood education and learning experiences leads to more opportunities for children across the state to succeed as they begin their school careers. The Blueprint expands full-day Pre-K access so that all children are ready to learn and be successful when they enter kindergarten.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- *Increasing investment in high-quality early childhood education, including:*
 - *A significant expansion of free full-day Pre-K for all 3- and 4-year-olds from low-income households (up to 300% of the federal poverty level) and available to all other 4-year-olds with fees set by a sliding scale so that all children have the opportunity to begin kindergarten ready to learn.*
- *Funding for both public-school-based and community-based Pre-K programs, with rigorous quality standards for all providers.*
- *Increasing the number of early childhood education teachers through tuition assistance and financial support for those pursuing credentials and degrees.*
- *Expanding Patty Centers (for pre-and post-natal support), Judy Centers (for early childhood education and family support), and support(s) for young children with disabilities and their families.*

How is WASHINGTON COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS (WCPS) Implementing the Blueprint?

- WCPS offers Pre-K to all 4-year-olds in Washington County, regardless of income level.
- WCPS has Pre-K classrooms in every elementary school and two high schools.
- WCPS continues to explore community partnerships to expand 3-year-old Pre-K for all eligible students.
- WCPS currently ranks 4th in Maryland for Kindergarten Readiness.
- WCPS offers unique professional development opportunities to Pre-K teachers and paraprofessionals.
- WCPS has three Judy Centers located at: Bester Elementary, Emma K. Doub Elementary, and Ruth Ann Monroe Primary.
- WCPS has one Patty Center, located at 221 McRand Court, Hagerstown, MD.

PILLAR 2 HIGH-QUALITY & DIVERSE TEACHERS & LEADERS

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future is elevating the stature of the teaching profession through the implementation of a career ladder, competitive salaries, and raising expectations for teacher preparation, induction, and mentoring programs to attract and retain high-quality teachers.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- *Preparing new teachers through completion of a full year of student teaching experience.*
- *Attracting more teachers to Maryland public schools.*
- *Raising teacher pay to make it equitable with other highly trained professionals with the same amount of education. The starting teacher salary will be \$60,000 by July 1, 2026.*
- *Increasing, through National Board Certification (NBC), a teacher's salary by \$10,000. NBC teachers who teach at an identified low-performing school earn an additional salary increase of \$7,000. Individuals who receive the salary enhancement must meet the requirements in the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) guidelines.*
- *Improving teacher retention rates by developing a career ladder that increases planning, professional learning, and collaboration time in schools.*
- *Providing leadership development to ensure leaders have the knowledge and skillset necessary to lead schools at the highest level.*

How is WASHINGTON COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS (WCPS) Implementing the Blueprint?

- WCPS is on track to meet the starting salary requirement and currently has the highest starting teacher salary in Maryland.
- WCPS increased planning time for teachers by implementing a standard high school schedule and will implement a standard middle school schedule for school year 2023-24.
- WCPS staff are exploring new elementary models to increase planning, collaboration, and professional learning opportunities.
- developed an NBC cohort model led by teachers who currently have their NBC.
- WCPS has partnered with Wilson College to include the NBC process as part of their Master's Degree track.
- WCPS is collaborating with local colleges to prepare for full year student teaching experiences.
- WCPS has created a college pathway for high school students to begin college courses in Education.
- WCPS has partnered with the Maryland Accelerates program to offer a one-year residency program for adults who hold a bachelor's degree and are interested in becoming certified teachers.

PILLAR 3 COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS (CCR)

The Blueprint ensures Maryland graduates are prepared for success in college and/or the workforce. The Blueprint requires schools to provide structures and plans for students who demonstrate the need for support.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- *Establishing curriculum frameworks, syllabi, and assessments that help students to achieve CCR status in English literacy and mathematics by the end of 10th grade.*
- *Providing interventions for students not on track to become CCR, beginning with students as early as Pre-Kindergarten.*
- *Providing staff with high-quality instructional materials and professional learning opportunities.*
- *Creating a rigorous Career and Technical Education (CTE) system as the primary credential that produces graduates ready and qualified to work within in-demand fields that will propel Maryland's economic future.*
- *Providing students with access to several college and career pathways at no cost to the student. Pathways are flexible and allow students to develop in-depth knowledge of a subject area and earn postsecondary credits and industry credentials.*

How is WASHINGTON COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS (WCPS) Implementing the Blueprint?

- WCPS Essential Curriculum provides teachers access to MSDE standards, assessments, and model unit plans developed by teachers and administrators.
- WCPS has adopted highly rated, content-rich instructional materials in literacy, aligned to Science of Reading, and mathematics to ensure a fully aligned instructional program.
- WCPS recently purchased Synergy Analytics and Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) to ensure school staff can identify students with gaps in learning and create individualized plans to help support their learning.
- WCPS has interventions and supports included in the essential curriculum. All elementary students receive 90 minutes of instruction in English Language Arts and mathematics daily.
 - WCPS has planned for students in grades 6-8 to receive 90 minutes of daily instruction in both English Language Arts and mathematics beginning in the 2023-24 school year.
- WCPS has established an estimated \$800,000 in funding to cover dual enrollment costs for the 2022-23 school year through Hagerstown Community College (HCC) Partnership. Additional funding will be made available in future school years to increase access to this opportunity for all students.
- WCPS offers Advanced Placement® and dual credit opportunities in every high school, with new and expanded opportunities for the 2023-24 school year.
- WCPS continues to offer International Baccalaureate® Programming at North Hagerstown High School and Northern Middle School.
- WCPS continues to expand and refine CTE pathways.

PILLAR 4 MORE RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS TO BE SUCCESSFUL

The Blueprint focuses on strengthening wraparound services through the expansion of community schools. A wraparound service is a service provided before, during, or after the school day. In Maryland, a community school is any school that receives Concentration of Poverty (COP) Grants. COP grants will be awarded to schools who have at least 55% of students eligible to receive free or reduced meals.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- *Increasing funding for special education, English learners, and students who qualify for free or reduced meals.*
- *Establishing or enhancing community schools in areas of concentrated poverty.*
- *Supporting student behavioral health needs.*
- *Enhancing student health services.*

How is WASHINGTON COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS (WCPS) Implementing the Blueprint?

- WCPS currently has community schools at Bester Elementary, Eastern Elementary, Hickory Elementary, Jonathan Hager Elementary, Lincolnshire Elementary, Pangborn Elementary, Ruth Ann Monroe Primary, and Salem Avenue Elementary.
- WCPS will develop community schools at the following schools during the 2023-24 school year: E. Russell Hicks Middle, Marshall Street, South Hagerstown High, and Western Heights Middle.
- WCPS provides a community coordinator and nurse at each of the community schools.
- WCPS provides wraparound services at all schools.
- WCPS provides mental health services at all schools.
- WCPS has expanded services to English Learners by hiring additional tutors and teachers.
- WCPS has hired a Supervisor of Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA) for the 2022-23 school year and added BCBA positions to support special education programs.
- WCPS has developed a framework of Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) and provides ongoing professional learning for administrators and support staff on the implementation of MTSS.

PILLAR 5 GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future involves coordination between many agencies and institutions. The Blueprint establishes an Accountability Implementation Board (AIB) and Expert Review Teams (ERT). These entities hold the State and local education agencies accountable for Blueprint implementation.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- *The AIB is an independent group responsible for developing the comprehensive 10-year plan and holding the state and counties accountable for implementing the Blueprint.*
- *The Career and Technical Education Committee, governed by the AIB, is tasked to build an integrated, globally competitive CTE framework for public school students, institutions of postsecondary education, and the workforce.*
- *Educators and administrators are members of the ERTs. The ERTs conduct interviews, observe classes, and use other data to analyze Blueprint implementation. The ERTs will collaborate with school-based faculty and staff and local school system staff to determine reasons why student progress is insufficient and develop recommendations, measures, and strategies.*
- *A Blueprint Coordinator is required in each school system. The coordinator is responsible for overseeing and coordinating the implementation of the Blueprint. WCPS hired a Blueprint Coordinator in July 2022.*

WCPS

Washington County Public Schools

RESOURCES



Kirwan Commission Report



MSDE Blueprint



AIB Site



WCPS Blueprint Site