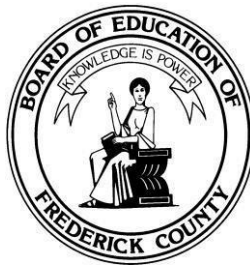


**2024 LEGISLATIVE SESSION
of the Maryland General Assembly**

**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

Nancy Allen

David Bass

Rae Gallagher

Jason "Mr. J" Johnson

Sue Johnson

Dean Rose

Karen Yoho

Brooke Lieberman, Student Member

Superintendent

Dr. Cheryl Dyson

2024 LEGISLATIVE PRINCIPLES AND POSITIONS FREDERICK COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

The Frederick County Board of Education governs a growing and dynamic school system of almost 47,000 students, more than 7,368 employees, and 69 school buildings. 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 community** sharing responsibility for and pride in student success and our school system.
- **Promote a culture of 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 in 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**:

- ✓ Adequate funding as it relates to the implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future legislation (SB1030, HB1300, & HB1372) to support salary enhancements, and to provide equitable access and supports for all students, including pre-kindergarten students, special education students, English Learners, economically disadvantaged students, and underperforming students in order to eliminate achievement gaps.
- ✓ Adequate deadlines for the requirements of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future legislation.
- ✓ Efforts to review, consolidate, and reduce unnecessary, overburdensome, or duplicate financial reporting requirements.
- ✓ Any legislation, now and in subsequent years, that holds school systems harmless from loss of state revenues due to the continued fluctuation in student enrollments due to the COVID pandemic.
- ✓ Efforts to increase local funding commitments and requirements as it relates to the Blueprint for Maryland's Future legislation.

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 \$600 million for school construction and renovation projects for FY 2024 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.
- ✓ New state construction funding targeted to assist school systems meet the facility needs of the Blueprint legislation as it relates to pre-kindergarten classrooms and career and technical education (CTE) facilities.

Project Priorities for State Funding
Frederick County Public Schools FY25 CIP Request to
State (Includes requests for State funds only in \$000)

	Project	Request	FY 25 State Request
1	Ballenger Creek ES limited renovation	Limited Renovation Funding	\$550
2	Spring Ridge ES limited renovation	Limited Renovation Funding	\$4,231
3	Yellow Springs ES replacement	Construction Funding	\$20,847
4	Middletown ES/MS replacement	Construction Funding	\$13,913
5	New Elementary School #41 (eastern Frederick area)	Local Planning Approval/Design	LP/\$12,232
6	Brunswick HS replacement	Local Planning Approval/ Design	LP/\$6,263
7	Liberty ES replacement	Local Planning Approval/ Design	LP/\$11,100
8	Twin Ridge ES limited renovation	Local Planning Approval/ Limited Renovation Funding	LP/\$9,425
9	Hillcrest ES limited renovation	Local Planning Approval/ Design	LP/\$569
10	Middletown HS roof replacement	Systemic Construction Funding	\$569
11	Walkersville MS roof replacement	Systemic Construction Funding	\$1,608
12	Tuscarora HS roof & flashing replacement	Local Planning Approval/Construction Funding	\$157

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.