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Testimony before the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs and the Budget and Taxation Committees

In SUPPORT of Senate Bill 1030- The Blueprint for Maryland's Future

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The legislation at hand is a part of the culmination of a multi-year effort to re-imagine the way we view public education in Maryland. Often referred to as a once-in-a-generation undertaking, the adoption of the recommendations of the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education (Kirwan Commission) are long-awaited and enthusiastically received.

ACY generally supports the many aspects of Senate Bill 1030, including but not limited to:

- Each of the Blueprint's four guiding principles
- Early supports and interventions for young children and their families
- College and career readiness
- Additional supports and services for students who need them
- **Additional resources, supports, and services for children living in high-need communities**
- Equitable learning outcomes
- **Equitable distribution of funding across jurisdictions (and within them)**

Students, families, and communities in every jurisdiction of Maryland stand to benefit from the passage of the Kirwan Commission's recommendations into law. For years, Maryland has funded public education in a regressive manner, allocating resources to jurisdictions inequitably. This has resulted in some jurisdictions with students who face significant non-academic and academic barriers to learning being underfunded while jurisdictions with less severe student need receiving funds above and beyond their respective requirements.¹

76% of student poverty in Maryland exists outside of Baltimore City. This is not a Baltimore-versus-everyone-else issue. What's more, 63% of all low-income students in Maryland are enrolled in districts with poverty rates of 15% or below.² **When we fail to disaggregate data, it's easy to assume that poverty is only an issue in some parts of our state and it's just as easy to ignore racial disparities in other data that arise as a consequence.** It is also quite tempting to overlook the needs of these students when conversations about massive funding investments, like the one proposed by SB 1030, occur. We might defer to the logic that, at only 15% of a jurisdiction's

¹ The Urban Institute. "Do Poor Kids Get Their Fair Share of School Funding?" https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/90586/school_funding_brief.pdf May 2017.

² *ibid*

student population, low-income students will magically come by the services and supports they need access to. That is not the reality we live in and **we must remember that each statistic represents a student's life**. School staff know that the presence of unmet needs in even one student has a behavioral spillover effect on the rest of the class and the rest of the school. **Our solution must be to meet the need, not to punitively punish the student for their behavior or academic engagement and/or performance.** We're encouraged by the Blueprint's support.

In Maryland, not a single jurisdiction exists that doesn't have at least one school with at least 40% of students living in concentrated poverty.³ Income inequality is on the rise, and unless we take advantage of public systems like education now, we will continue to see the negative impacts of living in poverty be exacerbated.⁴ To demonstrate the urgency of passing SB 1030 with its funding intact, the student poverty and school suspension data for each jurisdiction is listed below.⁵ For all the reasons above and below, **ACY urges a favorable report on this bill.**

Jurisdiction	Student Poverty	School Suspension
Allegany	22.8% or 2,793 students	5.3% or 434 students
Anne Arundel	8% or 10,158 students	5.5% or 4,438 students
Baltimore	10.4% or 18,533 students	5.8% or 6,349 students
Baltimore City	31.8% or 39,518 students	5.1% or 3,923 students
Calvert	7% or 1,493 students	3.1% or 475 students
Caroline	20.5% or 1,576 students	3.9% or 215 students
Carroll	5.5% or 2,015 students	2.8% or 692 students
Cecil	13.2% or 3,057 students	8.5% or 1,264 students
Charles	9.8% or 3,731 students	5.4% or 1,409 students
Dorchester	26.9% or 1,794 students	10% or 453 students
Frederick	7.6% or 4,422 students	2.8% or 1,159 students
Garrett	18.7% or 1,002 students	2.5% or 93 students
Harford	8.5% or 4,766 students	6% or 2,223 students
Howard	6.4% or 5,049 students	2.2% or 1,225 students
Kent	20.4% or 616 students	9.2% or 172 students
Montgomery	9.3% or 22,623 students	1.6 or 2,507 students
Prince George's	11.8% 23,522 students	6.3% or 8,014 students
Queen Anne's	9.5% or 1,011 students	2.4% or 182 students
Saint Mary's	11.4% or 3,136 students	3.5% or 111 students
Somerset	32.6% or 1,420 students	14% or 380 students
Talbot	14.8% or 994 students	3.3% or 145 students
Washington	18.7% or 6,098 students	2.7% or 591 students
Wicomico	20.5% or 4,597 students	8.5% or 1,217 students
Worcester	16.1% or 1,440 students	3.5% or 224 students

³ Strong Schools Maryland. 2018.

⁴ Center for Budget and Policy Priorities. "Pulling Apart: Income Inequality Has Grown in Maryland" <https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/Maryland.pdf>. November 2012.

⁵ Advocates for Children and Youth County-Level Fact Sheets 2019.