



Maryland Alliance for Racial Equity in Education

July 22, 2021

Accountability and Implementation Board Nominating Committee
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chairwoman Sauls and Members of the Blueprint's Nominations Committee,

The **Maryland Alliance for Race Equity in Education (MAREE)** is a coalition of education advocacy, civil rights, and community-based organizations that are committed to eliminating racial disparities in Maryland's education system. While the *Blueprint for Maryland's Future* legislation includes criteria for members of the Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB), we urge you to consider additional criteria to ensure that the board has comprehensive knowledge of the racial disparities in Maryland public schools and expertise in race-conscious practices to ensure that Black and Brown schoolchildren are provided an education that is culturally responsive and effective in helping them meet achievement standards and succeed in attaining their goals in life beyond their PreK-12 experience.

MAREE members worked with the "Kirwan" Commission and with the General Assembly to incorporate in the *Blueprint for Maryland's Future* best practices in policy that have proven to be effective in increasing equitable outcomes for students who are Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and from low-income families. Despite experiencing decades of underfunding, many of the students and parents in our network are excited about the new *Blueprint* programs and increased funding for their schools. We are at the very beginning of implementation and MAREE is poised to ensure that the *Blueprint* will not be another "Thornton". The state must follow through on its promise to deliver a fully-funded, world class education for all Maryland students.

Given the AIB's central role in the *Blueprint's* implementation and the overall demographics and chronic racial disparities among Maryland's public school students, MAREE is strongly advocating for board members with the following expertise and/or status:

- Vast experience and success in implementing multicultural, antiracist, and race equitable education practices in school settings or across large systems;
- A student, parent, and/or advocate grounded in the community, with vast experience learning, advocating, or working in schools with high poverty and majority Black and Brown students;
- Vast experience as a teacher, paraprofessional, or other professional staffing role in Title 1 schools and high poverty schools, with predominantly Black and Brown students;

- Deep knowledge and understanding of Maryland's racial disparities in outcomes including academic achievement, suspensions/expulsions, graduation, attendance, and in college and careers beyond;
- Deep knowledge and understanding of the root causes behind these disparities and race equitable approaches to closing the achievement and opportunity gap;
- Knowledge of effective policies and practices to attract and retain Black teachers and teachers of color;
- Knowledge about the history and current funding trends for Maryland school districts. Some school districts, mostly those of low-wealth with majority Black and Brown students, have been more underfunded than others, which will affect the ability of these districts to implement *Blueprint* programs and meet state-adopted standards.

Our nation is undergoing a reckoning on race and decades of inequitable school funding and race-blind policies continue to be a major barrier to ensuring that Black and Brown students have equal opportunity to succeed in school and in college and their careers beyond. It is time to reverse this trend and the first step is to ensure that the AIB has members with the right expertise.

MAREE is requesting a meeting with you to discuss our recommendations. Further, we are urging the Nominations Committee to hold at least one statewide public meeting and ensure that impacted constituents, especially students and parents in the most underfunded and underresourced schools, have the opportunity to provide input on their priorities for AIB member criteria. Please contact Frank Patinella, Senior Education Advocate at the ACLU of Maryland, at 443.540.2771 or patinella@aclu-md.org to schedule a meeting.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

sharlimar douglass
Chair, Maryland Alliance for Race Equity in Education

Members

1977-II Action Group
Advocates for Youth and Children
Baltimore Corps
Attendance Works
Strong Schools Maryland
Family League of Baltimore
World Class Graduates
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