MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE

Maryland State Board &
Department of Education

STRATEGIC PLANNING
ENGAGEMENT REPORT

PHASE 2 | FEBRUARY 2023

A COMPANION PIECE TO **THE STRATEGIC PLAN**

This engagement report describes the journey to engage Maryland's diverse stakeholders and use what we have learned to inform the strategic planning process and the Phase 1 & 2 elements: the plan's vision, mission, values, priorities, enablers, goals and metrics. These elements are outlined in detail in the Strategic Plan. This report is a companion piece to the Phase 2 Strategic Plan guidebook, and both documents should be read together for an in-depth understanding of the plan's content and how it originated.

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IMPLEMENTING THE **BLUEPRINT FOR MARYLAND'S FUTURE**

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future was passed by the Maryland General Assembly in 2021 to transform public education in the state into a world-class education system. The legislation presents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to fulfill the promise of an excellent and equitable education for all children in Maryland, especially those who have been historically underserved. The Maryland State Board of Education and the Maryland State Department of Education are collaborating with local education agencies and boards, institutions of higher education, the Accountability and Implementation Board, employers and stakeholders across the state to plan and implement the initiatives in each of the Blueprint's five pillars.

With sweeping policy changes designed to accelerate student achievement, and an unprecedented investment of state and local resources, the Blueprint creates the conditions for truly reimagining the education experience from early childhood to postsecondary success. To accomplish this, the State Board and Maryland State Department of Education are developing a multiyear Strategic Plan that will be released in three phases.

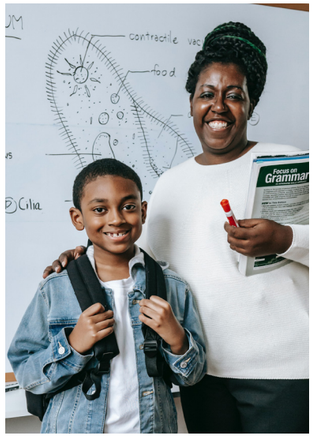
Ultimately, the complete Strategic Plan, released by June 2023, will anchor the vision, mission, values, priorities, enablers, goals, and flagship programs, initiatives, and strategies to the Blueprint's promise of an excellent and equitable education for every student.

5 BLUEPRINT PILLARS

The Blueprint encompasses five pillars, each including key initiatives aimed at transforming the quality of education in Maryland, and narrowing and closing opportunity and achievement gaps.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

- Support more families to access no cost, high-quality Pre-K
- Scale the impact of Patty & Judy Centers
- Expand family options through public/private Pre-K partnerships



HIGH-QUALITY & DIVERSE TEACHERS & LEADERS

- Increasing starting salary to minimum $60,000
- New career ladder and incentives for National Board Certified Teachers up to $17,000
- Raising expectations for teacher preparation and induction

COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS

- New college and career readiness standard by 10th grade
- Aligned curriculum resources and assessments
- College and career readiness and support pathways
- Expanded career and technical education system

MORE RESOURCES FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

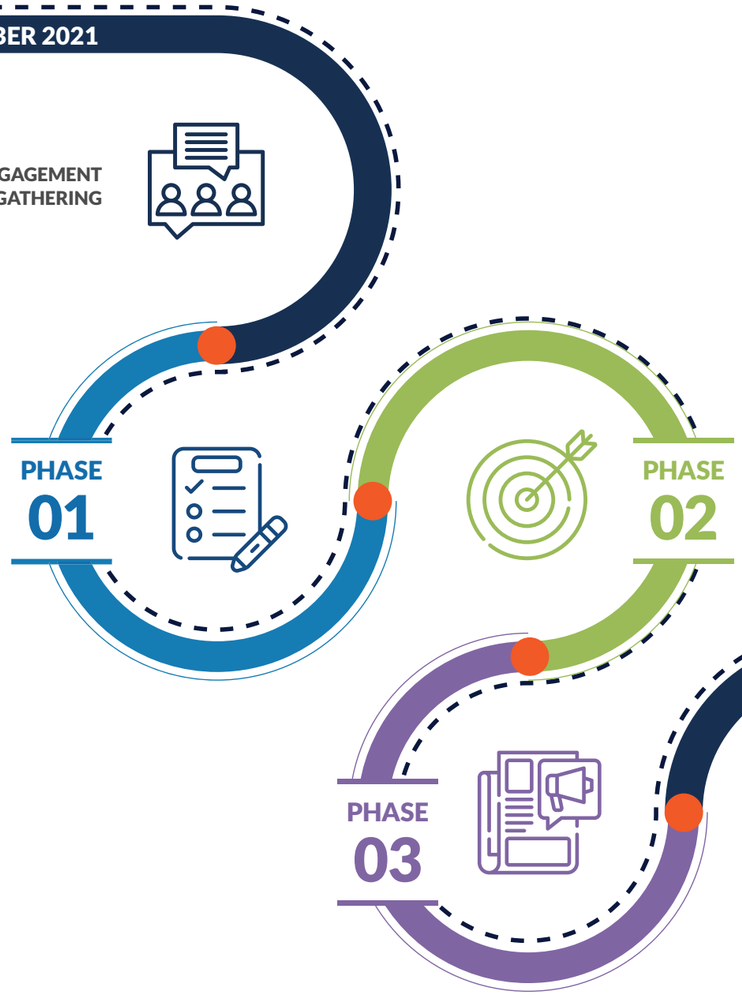
- Community Schools and School-based Health Centers expansion
- Concentration of Poverty grants
- Targeted supports for historically underserved students

GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY

- Expert Review Teams
- Accountability and Implementation Board
- Local education agency Implementation Plans
- Maryland State Department of Education monitoring and technical assistance

STRATEGIC PLAN
TIMELINE OF PHASES

The Maryland State Board of Education and the Maryland State Department of Education have envisioned the development and release of the Strategic Plan in three phases that span from October 2022 to June 2023.



01

OCTOBER 2022

Initial Release Mission, Vision, Values, Priorities and Enablers

02

FEBRUARY 2023

Refine Phase 1 Release Goals and Metrics

03

JUNE 2023

Finalize Phase 1 & 2 Release Targets Identify Flagship Programs, Initiatives, and Strategies

PHASE 01

Extending from November 2021 to October 2022, this phase focused on gaining initial input from a wide range of stakeholders representing the diversity of the state. Through multiple methods, from a statewide survey to roundtables and listening sessions, to the State Superintendent shadowing students in schools throughout the state, we learned what mattered most to our communities to transform public education in Maryland. The feedback we received helped shape the Strategic Plan's foundational elements, specifically the vision, mission, values, priorities, and enablers.

PHASE 02

Between October 2022 and February 2023, the State Board and the Maryland State Department of Education continued to engage with our communities to refine the Phase 1 elements of the Strategic Plan, and develop the goals and metrics linked to each of the priorities and enablers outlined in Phase 1. Engagement took the form of regional data walks with stakeholders, ongoing student shadows, and a new series of roundtables and community events. The goals and metrics released in this phase provide insight on our direction as we move into Phase 3.

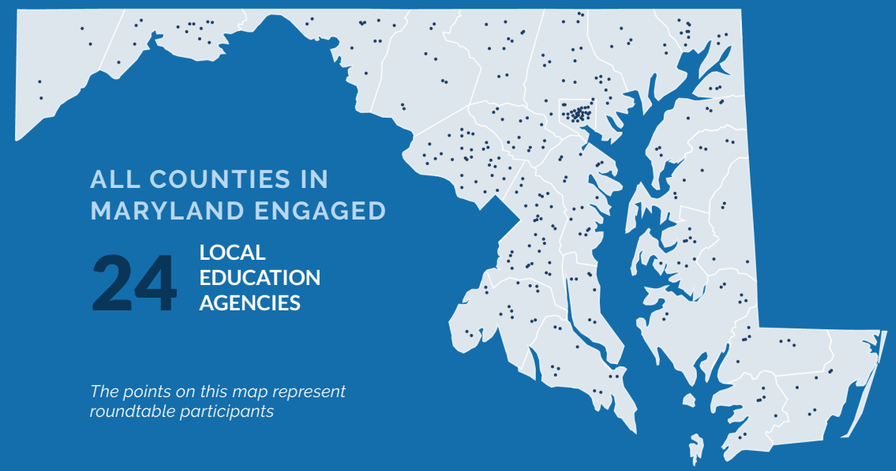
PHASE 03

Between February and June 2023, we will engage with stakeholders to identify flagship strategies, initiatives, and programs and set targets to achieve the goals developed in Phase 2. This work will be informed by best-in-class research and involve in-depth conversations with education experts, practitioners, and decision makers from early childhood to K-12 education and from the business community to institutions of higher education. The complete Strategic Plan will be released in June 2023. It will anchor the vision, mission, values, priorities, enablers, goals, metrics, targets, and the flagship programs, initiatives, and strategies to the Blueprint's promise of an excellent and equitable education for every child.

OUR OBJECTIVE & OVERVIEW OF ENGAGEMENT

The Maryland State Board of Education and the Maryland State Department of Education are developing a multiyear Strategic Plan for the future of Maryland's education system. Public schools serve to prepare our future workforce and future community leaders, and it is critical that we hear from as many people as possible throughout the process.

The guiding objective is to build processes and create space for stakeholder input as we work to develop a Strategic Plan, while seeking out and prioritizing new and underrepresented voices. This work will be the basis for creating transformational change in Maryland's education system.



The points on this map represent roundtable participants

35,246
CONNECTIONS MADE

STAKEHOLDER TYPES

The primary aim of engagement for the strategic planning process was to gain input from a wide range of stakeholders that represented the diversity of the state. Stakeholders included groups such as: students, families, educators and school/district staff, community organizations, advocates and experts, business community, and higher education partners. More than 35,000 connections were made through virtual and in-person touchpoints.

METHODS OF ENGAGEMENT

A multi-pronged approach was developed to structure engagement for the strategic planning process to ensure flexible, responsive and iterative communication with stakeholders. A combination of virtual and in-person engagement methods were implemented to ensure engagement of stakeholders across Maryland's diverse landscape.

SURVEYS

The purpose of the survey was to allow as many people as possible, in every community and every stakeholder group, to provide feedback on the state of public education in Maryland and the top priorities for improvement.

ROUNDTABLES

The purpose of the roundtables is to engage in dialogue with a specific stakeholder group or with a range of stakeholders on a specific topic through a small group discussion format.

LISTENING SESSIONS

Listening sessions provided a space for community partners to share input on the Strategic Plan. Listening sessions were hosted by external groups with technical assistance provided by Maryland State Department of Education staff.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Community conversations were developed as a mechanism for the State Superintendent to be able to engage specific communities outside of the data collection process for the strategic plan. Similar to roundtables, community conversations engage a small group of stakeholders in a discussion.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Events included presenting the strategic planning process to community organizations, advisory councils, school district and family events, and other stakeholder meetings (festivals, fairs, conferences, etc.)

REGIONAL DATA WALKS

These presentations provided an opportunity for local education leaders to learn about the strategic planning process, discuss and analyze regional data trends, and provide feedback on what they deemed necessary in order to implement the priorities and enablers.

OUTREACH **STRATEGIES**

A variety of outreach strategies were used to communicate with stakeholders in order to invite them to participate in the strategic planning process every step of the way. Staff members engaged with the community through grassroots efforts as well as traditional marketing strategies. The result was an overwhelming number of responses representing the diverse voices of Maryland.

SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

Digital marketing was used in every engagement method throughout the strategic planning process. Social media strategies were used to target large areas of the state and to encourage a wide variety of stakeholders to interact.

RADIO ADVERTISING

Radio spots in both English and Spanish were recorded and distributed on popular radio stations statewide with an emphasis on reaching historically underrepresented and hard-to-reach audiences.

DIRECT MAIL PIECES

Postcards were mailed to zip codes in communities with low survey response rates in both English and Spanish. The mailed pieces included a QR code link directing them to the online survey.

DOOR-TO-DOOR MARKETING

Using United States Census Bureau data, door hangers were distributed to participants in areas with low-response groups and counties, areas with community schools, and areas with underrepresented groups.

EVENT PROMOTION

Maryland State Department of Education staff attended both virtual and in-person events, interacting with participants to promote involvement at community meetings, school and district events, festivals, fairs and conferences.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

An outreach toolkit was developed to include sample language for newsletters and emails, social media graphics, and a flyer translated into English and Spanish to promote the strategic planning survey.

PRESS RELEASES

News media was leveraged to keep stakeholders informed of upcoming events and progress made throughout the strategic planning process. Press releases were distributed prominently on the Maryland State Department of Education website.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Maryland State Department of Education established a community engagement team committed to developing partnerships with community-based organizations, nonprofits, associations, and groups representing Maryland residents.

Every Voice Counts.

The Maryland State Board of Education and the Maryland State Department of Education invite you to participate in their Strategic Planning Survey to help define the future of public school education.

We want to hear from all Maryland residents as we enhance educational opportunities for every Maryland child.

Take the survey today.

Help shape the future of education for every child.

We want to hear from all Maryland residents – with or without school-age children!

Take the survey:

www.marylandpublicschools.org/Survey

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE

BLUEPRINT FOR MARYLAND'S FUTURE

SCAN ME

OUTREACH
EXAMPLES & FIGURES

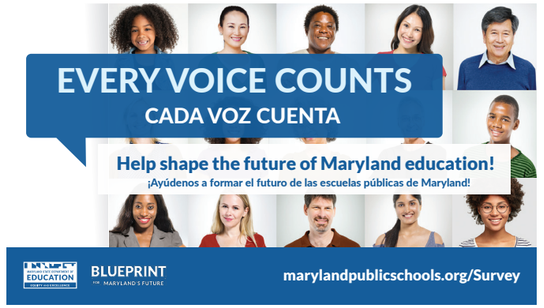
Serving as ambassadors for the Maryland State Board of Education and the Maryland State Department of Education, the engagement team sought out community feedback, built partnerships, hosted town hall meetings, roundtables, workshops, and more. The engagement team was responsible for implementing strategies to reach stakeholders on their terms. Below are a few examples of some of the strategies used during the engagement for the strategic planning process.

EVENT PROMOTION

The Maryland State Department of Education engagement staff attended **97 virtual and in-person events** interacting with **6,950+ participants** to promote the strategic planning survey and provide stakeholders with opportunities to take the survey.

SOCIAL MEDIA

A social media campaign was developed to promote the survey, roundtables, listening sessions, as well as community events. More than **893,515 impressions** were recorded during this time on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, etc.



POSTCARD MAILER

Over **29,700 direct mail pieces** were distributed in three rounds across six counties.

- Baltimore City: 9,592
- Baltimore County: 5,413
- Montgomery County: 1,789
- Prince George's County: 8,265
- Charles County: 2,242
- Somerset County: 2,421

DOOR HANGERS

More than **13,760 door hangers** were distributed in three rounds across four different counties.

- Baltimore City: 5,889
- Baltimore County: 2,824
- Montgomery County: 2,508
- Prince George's County: 2,892

DIGITAL MEDIA

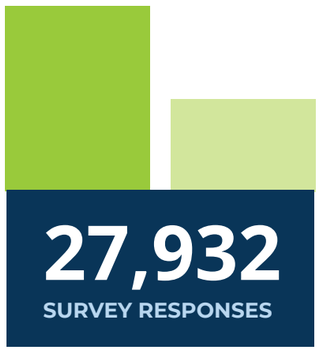
The Maryland State Board of Education and the Maryland State Department of Education publicized recorded versions of roundtables, listening sessions, and community conversations on the MSDE TV YouTube channel. Collectively, those videos received over **11,000 views** and continue to be available to the public.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

An outreach toolkit including sample language for newsletters and emails, social media graphics, and a flyer was distributed to promote the strategic planning survey. The toolkit was emailed to more than **1,125 groups.** Over **20,000 physical flyers** were distributed to close to 100 community partners throughout the state. Posters were displayed in high-traffic areas of public transport and accounted for more than **3.765 million impressions.**

OVERVIEW OF SURVEY

The Maryland State Board of Education and the Maryland State Department of Education developed an online survey to allow everyone in the state to provide feedback on the state of public education in Maryland and the top priorities for improvement. The purpose of the survey was to allow as many people as possible, in every community and every stakeholder group, to share their views to transform Maryland's public education into a best-in-class educational system.

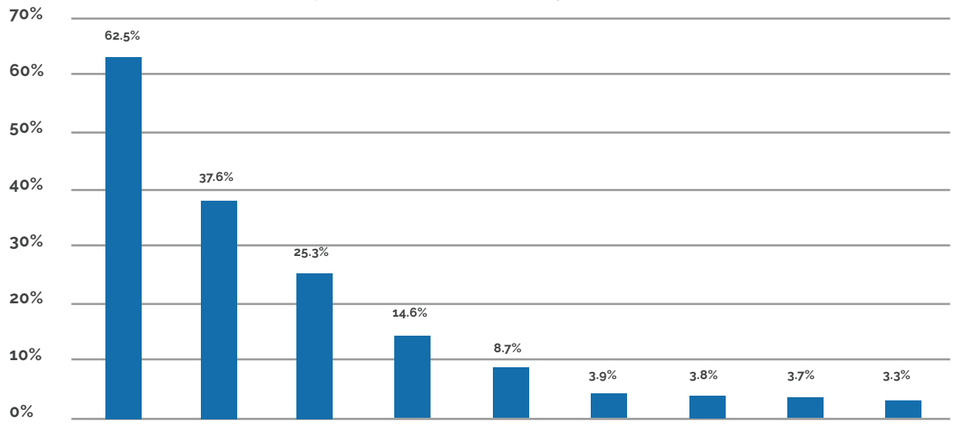


MORE THAN 17,450
PARENTS/GUARDIANS
RESPONDED TO THE SURVEY

SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY STAKEHOLDER GROUP

The survey was launched on January 25, 2022, and it continues to be open. A total of 27,932 respondents from every county in Maryland completed the survey during this period. Survey respondents represented a wide range of stakeholder groups, with parents/guardians, students, and teachers representing the largest number of participants.

Respondent's Connection to Maryland Schools*



*Some respondents selected more than one category

DIVE INTO THE SURVEY RESULTS

MORE THAN
86% BELIEVE THE QUALITY OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS IS "EXTREMELY IMPORTANT" FOR MARYLAND'S SUCCESS AS A STATE

We see great consistency in responses when comparing percentages across stakeholder groups, race/ethnicity, and regions. For stakeholder groups, for example, the percent who answered "extremely important" ranges from 84% for students to 89% for the higher education community.

69% HAVE A POSITIVE OPINION OF MARYLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS' PERFORMANCE

We see important variations by stakeholder group. For example, only 53% of respondents in the business community have a positive opinion, compared to 79% of school leaders. We also see important variations by race/ethnicity, with 81% of Asian respondents holding a positive view compared to 68% of Blacks/African Americans and 71% of Hispanics/Latinos.

This analysis is based on all responses collected as of February 10, 2023, a total of 27,932 responses.

EMERGING PRIORITIES & ENABLERS

When taking a closer look at survey responses, it was clear that regardless of stakeholder type, race/ethnicity, and/or geographic location respondents had similar priorities. The Maryland State Board of Education and the Maryland State Department of Education will continue to survey families and communities and utilize that feedback to inform the next phase of the strategic planning process.

PRIORITY

All Maryland students are proficient in reading by the end of third grade, and those who are not have the necessary supports to become proficient.

PRIORITY

All Maryland students graduate from high school college and career ready, and with an individualized plan to succeed in college, career, and life.

ENABLER

Maryland is ensuring student success by:

- supporting our students' social-emotional learning, health and wellness, and safety;
- enhancing school culture and climate; scaling high-quality wraparound supports and partnerships; and
- strengthening family and community engagement.

ENABLER

Maryland is elevating the stature of the teaching profession by:

- intentionally working to attract, recruit, and retain a highly qualified and diverse workforce;
- setting rigorous standards for educator preparation programs and induction; and
- implementing a career ladder system focused on development and growth opportunities for all educators.

TOP 5 PRIORITIES BY RESPONDENT TYPE

RANKING	STUDENTS	TEACHERS	SCHOOL LEADERS	BUSINESS COMMUNITY
1	Improving reading and writing in the early grades	Improving reading and writing in the early grades	Improving reading and writing in the early grades	Improving reading and writing in the early grades
2	Improving math and science skills	Improving social, emotional, and mental health supports	Developing more excellent teachers	Improving math and science skills
3	Improving social, emotional, and mental health supports	Recognizing and rewarding our best teachers	Improving social, emotional, and mental health supports	Expanding Career and Technical Education programs
4	Developing more excellent teachers	Improving critical thinking, problem solving, collaborative teamwork skills	Improving math and science skills	Improving critical thinking, problem solving, collaborative teamwork skills
5	Improving critical thinking, problem solving, collaborative teamwork skills	Expanding Career and Technical Education programs	Improving critical thinking, problem solving, collaborative teamwork skills	Improving social, emotional, and mental health supports

53% SELECTED **READING & WRITING IN THE EARLY GRADES** AS THEIR TOP PRIORITY

This priority remains at the top of the list when comparing results by stakeholder group and by region. That is also the case when we break down the results by race/ethnicity, with the only exception of Asian respondents, for whom this priority is the second most frequently selected, very closely after math and science skills.

NEARLY 1/3 CHOSE **SUPPORTS FOR SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND MENTAL HEALTH** OR **MATH AND SCIENCE SKILLS**

When looking at the overall results, there were two priorities that received the second largest percentage of responses: supports for social, emotional, and mental health and math and science skills, each selected by nearly a third of respondents.

TEACHERS & BUSINESS LEADERS SELECTED **EXPANDING CTE PROGRAMS** AMONG THE TOP FIVE MOST FREQUENTLY SELECTED PRIORITIES

Expanding Career and Technical Education programs appeared among the five most frequently cited priorities for teachers and business leaders. In addition, recognizing and rewarding best teachers was one of the five most cited priorities for teachers.

MORE THAN 27% CHOSE **DEVELOPING EXCELLENT TEACHERS** OR **CRITICAL THINKING, PROBLEM SOLVING, AND TEAMWORK SKILLS**

More than 27% of respondents selected developing excellent teachers and critical thinking, problem solving, or teamwork skills as their fourth and fifth priorities. School leaders included developing excellent teachers in their top three priorities.

TOP 5 PRIORITIES BY RACE/ETHNICITY

RANKING	BLACK RESPONDENTS	HISPANIC RESPONDENTS	ASIAN RESPONDENTS	WHITE RESPONDENTS
1	Improving reading and writing in the early grades	Improving reading and writing in the early grades	Improving reading and writing in the early grades	Improving reading and writing in the early grades
2	Improving social, emotional, and mental health supports	Improving math and science skills	Improving math and science skills	Improving social, emotional, and mental health supports
3	Improving math and science skills	Improving social, emotional, and mental health supports	Developing more excellent teachers	Improving math and science skills
4	Developing more excellent teachers	Developing more excellent teachers	Improving critical thinking, problem solving, collaborative teamwork skills	Improving critical thinking, problem solving, collaborative teamwork skills
5	Increasing resources to underserved communities	Improving critical thinking, problem solving, collaborative teamwork skills	Improving social, emotional, and mental health supports	Developing more excellent teachers

BLACK RESPONDENTS INCLUDED **RESOURCES TO UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES** IN THEIR TOP FIVE PRIORITIES

There were also differences when comparing results by race/ethnicity and by stakeholder group. Black/African American respondents included resources to underserved communities in their five most frequently selected priorities. This reinforces the unrealized equity work that Maryland needs to do.

ACROSS THE BOARD THE RESPONSES ECHOED THE SAME TOP PRIORITIES OVERALL

Across all racial and ethnic groups improving reading and writing in the early grades was the top priority. The result was the same when the data was analyzed by stakeholder group. This reflects the critical importance that all Maryland students are proficient in reading by the end of third grade, and those who are not have the necessary supports to become proficient.

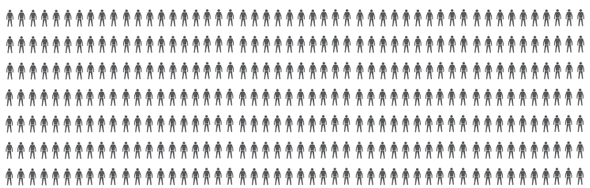
This analysis is based on all responses collected as of February 10, 2023, a total of 27,932 responses.

OVERVIEW OF ROUNDTABLES

The purpose of the roundtable is to engage in dialogue with a specific stakeholder group or with a range of stakeholders on a specific topic through a small group discussion format. Roundtables were hosted by the Maryland State Board of Education and the Maryland State Department of Education on a virtual streaming platform. They were recorded and live streamed on the MSDE TV YouTube channel where viewers were able to comment and ask questions during the roundtable to expand participation. Transcripts from each roundtable and YouTube chat were analyzed for this engagement method.

28 ROUND TABLES

MORE THAN 350 PARTICIPANTS



ROUNDTABLE TOPICS

In collaboration with community partners and participants, topics were used to develop questions for each roundtable. Stakeholders who represent roles connected to the topic including students, families, educators, school and district leaders, service providers, community partners, etc. were prioritized. This process also ensured geographic, racial/ethnic, linguistic, socioeconomic, age, gender and role diversity in participation.

- STUDENTS
- TEACHERS
- FAMILIES
- MENTAL HEALTH
- CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION
- SCHOOL LEADERS
- BUSINESS LEADERS
- ENGLISH LEARNERS
- SPECIAL EDUCATION
- EDUCATOR DIVERSITY
- EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
- EARLY CAREER & RISING EDUCATORS
- ARTS EDUCATION
- HIGHER EDUCATION
- VIRTUAL SCHOOL
- LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS
- COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
- LOCAL SUPERINTENDENTS

ROUNDTABLE DATA BREAKDOWN

The percentage of participants who identify as Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, and Asian are similar to Maryland's racial and ethnic demographics from the 2021 American Community Survey. When requesting recommendations for roundtable participants, engagement partners were asked to prioritize racial, ethnic, linguistic, and geographic diversity in order to ensure participants reflected the rich diversity of the state.

BY STAKEHOLDER TYPE

STAKEHOLDER TYPE	COUNT	PERCENTAGE
STUDENTS/ FORMER STUDENTS	60	16%
FAMILY MEMBERS	58	16%
EDUCATORS	90	24%
SCHOOL STAFF	13	4%
SCHOOL LEADERS	29	8%
DISTRICT STAFF	29	8%
LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD LEADERS	38	10%
BUSINESS LEADERS	24	7%
HIGHER EDUCATION PARTNERS	6	2%
COMMUNITY PARTNERS	11	3%
OTHER/BLANK	8	2%
TOTAL	**366**	**100%**

Students, families, educators, school and district staff/leaders, community partners, higher education partners, and business leaders participated in roundtable discussions. Educators had the highest, and students had the second highest, levels of participation.

BY GEOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATION

COUNTY/LEA	COUNT	PERCENTAGE
ALLEGANY COUNTY	15	4%
ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY	18	5%
BALTIMORE CITY	37	10%
BALTIMORE COUNTY	26	7%
CALVERT COUNTY	8	2%
CAROLINE COUNTY	4	1%
CARROLL COUNTY	12	3%
CECIL COUNTY	14	4%
CHARLES COUNTY	18	5%
DORCHESTER COUNTY	11	3%
FREDERICK COUNTY	13	4%
GARRETT COUNTY	4	1%
HARFORD COUNTY	7	2%
HOWARD COUNTY	16	4%
KENT COUNTY	8	2%
MONTGOMERY COUNTY	39	11%
PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY	35	10%
QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY	7	2%
SAINT MARY'S COUNTY	11	3%
SOMERSET COUNTY	7	2%
TALBOT COUNTY	9	2%
WASHINGTON COUNTY	13	4%
WICOMICO COUNTY	12	3%
WORCESTER COUNTY	10	3%
OTHER/BLANK	12	3%
TOTAL	**366**	**100%**

Participation in roundtables included each county and Baltimore City. The goal for each roundtable was to have regional representation from the Western, Eastern Shore, Southern, and Central Maryland regions of the state.

BY RACE/ETHNICITY

RACE/ETHNICITY	COUNT	PERCENTAGE	ACS 21
ASIAN	23	6%	7%
BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN	105	29%	29%
HISPANIC/LATINO	40	11%	12%
WHITE	148	40%	47%
BLANK/PREFER NOT TO DISCLOSE/OTHER	50	14%	4%
TOTAL	**366**	**100%**	

Through the registration process, participants were given the option to request interpretation services and translation of materials which allowed the roundtable discussions to include multilingual Marylanders. All roundtables were live streamed on the MSDE TV YouTube channel to allow more public engagement.

ROUNDTABLE PARTICIPANTS REPRESENTED

- GIFTED & TALENTED
- SPECIAL EDUCATION
- MULTILINGUAL
- EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS
- ENGLISH
- MATH & SCIENCE
- SOCIAL STUDIES
- TEACHERS OF COLOR
- CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION
- ART, MUSIC, & THEATRE
- LOCAL STUDENT BOARD MEMBERS
- ADVOCATES
- COMMUNITY SCHOOLS COORDINATORS
- CHILDCARE PROVIDERS
- JUDY CENTER PROGRAMS
- HEAD START

PHASE 1 ROUNDTABLES:
EDUCATOR DIVERSITY & EARLY CAREER & RISING EDUCATORS

Participants in these two roundtables had an opportunity to share their own experiences on teacher diversity and the early stages in the teacher pipeline, from recruitment into the profession to teacher preparation and certification, to their first years in the job.

QUESTIONS ASKED

1. Describe the process of entering the educator workforce including your teacher preparation program, any barriers or supports that facilitated your entry into the educator workforce, and your ideas for improvements to better prepare educators to work in a variety of environments with diverse students.
2. Maryland and many other states are implementing strategies to strengthen the educator pipeline and diversify the workforce including "grow-your-own" programs and other initiatives. How do you think we should be supporting and encouraging students to enter the educator workforce? What other strategies should we consider to recruit more teachers of color in Maryland?
3. What conditions make teaching challenging for educators of color? Can you describe the spoken and unspoken asks and expectations of teachers of color that can make teaching more challenging?
4. What do you need from school systems to better support teachers of color and to elevate their voices?
5. How can school systems better support early career teachers so that they stay beyond the first five years?

KEY TAKEAWAYS

TEACHERS OF COLOR
CITED THEIR OWN EARLY EXPERIENCES WITH LACK OF REPRESENTATION AS HAVING A PROFOUND IMPACT ON THEIR DECISION TO BECOME A TEACHER & STAY IN THE PROFESSION

For some participants, the urgency to address that representation gap is a powerful internal driver. When speaking about recruiting students of color into the teaching profession, participants noted the lack of information for those who may be interested in a career in teaching. As a participant put it, "I had to figure all of that by myself." Another major obstacle for increasing the number of teachers of color, according to participants, was the steep cost of becoming a teacher, suggesting the need for financial assistance in the form of tuition reimbursement, paid internships, and/or stipends for student teachers.

IN THE EARLY STAGES
TEACHERS OF COLOR FACED UNIQUE CHALLENGES DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF THEIR COLLEAGUES

A female teacher recounted, for example, how she had been told by her superiors that her hair was "a little distracting." Teachers of color stated that they were often asked to assist with multiple student support and parent engagement activities beyond teaching such as providing translation services to non-English speaking parents/guardians. Despite the challenges, new teachers of color felt that it was important for them to stay in the profession and "to keep pushing." In their experience, they could truly make a difference not only for students of color but also for all students.

IMPORTANCE OF MENTORS
WAS A COMMON THEME FOR EARLY CAREER SUCCESS AND NEW TEACHER RETENTION AMONGST PARTICIPANTS

This was crucial for all early career educators, including teachers of color. At the same time, participants were aware of the shortcomings in many existing mentor programs that "do it on a surface level" without training mentors, providing mentors with release time, and/or creating structured opportunities for mentees to improve their teaching practice by working closely with their mentors.

> *It was great that I could speak Spanish, like 'Oh my gosh, you understand where these students are coming from.' But it was a double-edged sword because it led to many of my schools that they would ask me during my own personal time, hey, 'I have a parent who doesn't speak English, can you translate?' 'By the way I can't communicate with the student, do you know what's going on?' And I felt like as a new teacher I could not say no and so it was definitely like I was backed into a corner.*

EMERGING PRIORITIES & ENABLERS

During Phase 1 of the strategic planning process, the Maryland State Board of Education and Maryland State Department of Education will engage stakeholders to develop strategies that strengthen every stage of the teacher pipeline, remove barriers for the recruitment and retention of teachers of color, and ensure that all early career and rising educators have the training and support they need to thrive in the profession.

ENABLER

Maryland is elevating the stature of the teaching profession by:

- intentionally working to attract, recruit, and retain a highly qualified and diverse workforce;
- setting rigorous standards for educator preparation programs and induction; and
- implementing a career ladder system focused on development and growth opportunities for all educators.

PHASE 1 ROUNDTABLES: STUDENTS & FAMILIES

These two roundtables offered participants an opportunity to provide feedback on what is working well and what needs improvement in their school community, their local education agency, and public education in the state. Participants shared their views about the effects of the pandemic, students' preparation for college and careers, the qualities of the most impactful teachers, and where to invest resources to improve education.

QUESTIONS ASKED

1. How has your student been impacted academically and social-emotionally by the COVID-19 pandemic and what mental health supports are available to your student and family through your local school? What supports are working well and what would you like schools to do better?
2. What aspects of your school community could be improved to benefit everyone?
3. Do you feel that the way education is designed in Maryland is best preparing you/your student for future college and careers? Why or why not? If not, what would you change?
4. When considering the teacher who has had the most profound impact on you/your student's learning experience and academic success, what qualities did that individual bring to the classroom?
5. If you had one million dollars to invest in your school/your local education agency, how would you spend the money?

KEY TAKEAWAYS

STUDENTS TALKED ABOUT SPECIFIC CLASSROOM STRATEGIES THAT THE MOST IMPACTFUL TEACHERS WOULD USE

Student participants identified classroom strategies that the most impactful teachers would use to keep students engaged and help them develop their knowledge and skills. One approach that stood out in students' comments was teachers' openness to learn from students by voluntarily engaging in student-led activities and by asking students themselves how to improve their own teaching.

COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS WAS AN AREA WHERE BOTH PARENTS/GUARDIANS AND STUDENTS FOUND ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

While some of the participants were benefiting from high-quality career and technical education and other specialized programs, they acknowledged that these opportunities were not always well known or equitably distributed. Participants advocated for greater investment in career counseling and for an expansion of college and career courses during high school to better prepare all students for postsecondary success.

FAMILY MEMBERS TALKED ABOUT THE PROFOUND IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC ON THEIR CHILDREN'S ABILITY TO LEARN, THEIR EMOTIONAL WELLBEING, AND THEIR SENSE OF CONNECTION

Beyond the immediate impact on their own children, participants reflected on how the pandemic had laid bare long-standing unmet needs and profound deficits in services for students and their families, from food insecurity to uneven access to reliable internet to a chronic shortage of mental health services. The pandemic heightened these needs and created more urgency for finding solutions. Participants called for greater availability of counselors in school buildings and for better education for both parents/guardians and students regarding mental health and emotional wellbeing.

> *"My kid was in second grade before, but now he's on third grade, but last year he fell behind so much when the pandemic started. I don't speak a word of English and his teacher doesn't speak a word of Spanish and my kid was falling behind more and more… and she tried everything, absolutely everything to be able to communicate directly with me so we could do something about it. And she would find, for example, a Google translator, other type of chats that would be helpful for us to communicate. …He was able to catch up with all the content and his peers…"*

EMERGING PRIORITIES & ENABLERS

The Maryland State Board of Education and Maryland State Department of Education will focus on supporting our schools, local education agencies, families, and decision makers by producing relevant, timely, and high-quality data and reporting, and enabling educators to make the best use of their resources to meet the needs of our students and accelerate student achievement.

PRIORITY

All Maryland students graduate from high school college and career ready, and with an individualized plan to succeed in college, career, and life.

ENABLER

Maryland is ensuring student success by:

- supporting our students' social-emotional learning, health and wellness, and safety;
- enhancing school culture and climate;
- scaling high-quality wraparound supports and partnerships; and strengthening family and community engagement.

PHASE 1 ROUNDTABLES:
BUSINESS LEADERS & CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION

The participants in the business leaders roundtable included business executives and entrepreneurs representing corporations, trade associations, and workforce development groups. A diverse group of participants contributed to the career and technical education roundtable, from employers, community-based CTE providers, and government officials to educators, students, and former students. In both events, the discussion was focused on areas of strength and areas in need of improvement in CTE programs in Maryland. Participants also had the opportunity to propose their own innovative ideas to improve and expand CTE programs, apprenticeships, and industry recognized credentials.

QUESTIONS ASKED

1. For those of you who have experienced CTE classes and programs, what is working well? What can be better? What are your ideas for innovative practices?
2. The Blueprint for Maryland's Future places an emphasis on industry credentials. So, for those of you that have earned or are earning an industry credential, what has worked well regarding the process to earn a credential and what can be improved?
3. And for the employers, what successes and barriers are you seeing [regarding the process for students to earn an industry recognized credential] and how can you creatively problem solve to overcome those barriers?
4. How can the education and business communities work together more creatively and collaboratively to grow work-based learning opportunities for Maryland public school students?
5. If you had $1 million to invest in your local school CTE program, what would you spend the money on?

KEY TAKEAWAYS

STUDENT PARTICIPANTS WHO HAD RECENTLY COMPLETED INTERNSHIPS, APPRENTICESHIPS, AND OTHER FORMS OF WORK-BASED LEARNING HAD FOUND IMMENSE VALUE IN THESE PROGRAMS

Work-based learning experiences provided students with a unique opportunity to explore a career path through hands-on work and determine, based on first-hand knowledge, if that path was the right fit. Beyond the opportunities for career exploration, students spoke about the tangible benefits of completing a CTE program for postsecondary success. For those who expected to go to college, CTE programs offered the chance of earning college credits and acquiring valuable experience that could have a positive weight in college applications. For those who planned to enter the workforce as their immediate next step, completing a CTE program, especially if they earned an industry recognized credential along the way, could be their ticket to a well-paid job after graduating high school.

SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND CTE PROGRAMS AND INCREASE THE NUMBER OF HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES WHO COMPLETE AN APPRENTICESHIP OR AN INDUSTRY RECOGNIZED CREDENTIAL

In the view of participants, greater flexibility in the school schedule was needed for students to be able to complete all their CTE requirements, especially the work-based experience. In addition to greater flexibility in the school schedule, employers recommended streamlining how the educational system reaches out to business leaders. Some of the participants would like to see better coordination within the educational system, at the state level, if possible, to facilitate collaboration between education and industry.

EQUALIZING THE IMPORTANCE GIVEN TO CTE AND COLLEGE IN HOW THE STATE, SCHOOLS, AND FAMILIES PREPARE YOUTH FOR THE FUTURE

While roundtable participants had a positive view of existing apprenticeships and other forms of work-based learning, they also recognized serious shortcomings in the CTE landscape in the state. Prominent among these were insufficient communication to students and parents/guardians regarding CTE opportunities, low employer and student participation, and a prevalent view of CTE as a backup to college rather than as an attractive primary educational and career path.

> *I think that there's a certain... just education that needs to happen around apprenticeship as a pathway to a career. I know that I've worked in high school settings for a while, and it was always college, college, college. If you can't do college, then maybe an apprenticeship or something, but that's just an incorrect and an uninformed opinion. It's because individuals don't understand all of the benefits.*

EMERGING PRIORITIES & ENABLERS

(a)(1) On or before December 1, 2022, the Career and Technical Education Committee shall establish, for each school year between the 2023-2024 school year and the 2030-2031 school year, inclusive, statewide goals that reach 45% by the 2030-2031 school year, for the percentage of high school students who, prior to graduation, complete the high school level of a registered apprenticeship or an industry-recognized occupational credential. (Education §21–204)

ENABLER Maryland's classrooms challenge, support, and inspire students. Therefore, our schools will be equipped with high-quality curricula, lessons, assessments, and systems for intervention and acceleration.

PRIORITY All Maryland students enter high school on track to meet the college and career readiness standard by the end of 10th grade, and are engaged socially, emotionally, and academically to succeed in progressively challenging and advanced level coursework aligned to college and career pathways.

MERIN THOMAS,
STUDENT MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

SUMMARY OF PHASE 2
ROUNDTABLE SESSIONS

Different from Phase 1 roundtables which covered a wide range of topics and stakeholder groups, Phase 2 roundtables prioritized students, families, educators, and business leaders. Participants learned about Phase 1 of the Strategic Plan and voted on their top priorities and enablers during the sessions. The roundtable discussion questions allowed participants to give input on the remaining phases of the strategic planning process and focused on the priorities and enablers that participants ranked most important.

QUESTIONS ASKED

1. How can you support this priority or enabler?
2. What challenges do you think may come up?
3. What supports or strategies will be needed?
4. What does success for this priority look like?

KEY TAKEAWAYS

STUDENTS POINTED OUT THAT THEY SHOULD HAVE THE ABILITY TO CHANGE THEIR PATH IN HIGH SCHOOL WHEN TAKING CTE COURSES, AND NOT BE FORCED TO COMMIT TO THE SAME SET OF COURSES.

Many students explained that they do not know what they want and that they need an opportunity to explore multiple avenues and "make mistakes." Some students felt that exposure to a wide number of extracurriculars and "niche" classes in middle school would help them balance their interests. One idea that was suggested was pairing students with mentors. Students also recognized the importance of collaboration between counties, schools, and local businesses to help guide their apprenticeship programs.

FAMILIES DISCUSSED THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHER TRAINING, SUPPORT, AND INCENTIVES FOR RETAINING HIGH-QUALITY TEACHERS.

Participants noted that addressing this need would include allowing early career teachers to have a longer induction period, assigning a mentor, providing continuing education classes, having a support system for how to navigate issues, and having a clear career ladder with incentives to recruit and retain high-quality teachers particularly in historically underserved communities and schools. Participants advocated for engaging and including diverse families more intentionally. Additionally, families expressed that a more diverse workforce representative of the student population is needed to accelerate student learning.

EDUCATORS ADDRESSED THE CHALLENGES THAT MAY ARISE AS WE PREPARE FOR A DIVERSE AND QUALITY WORKFORCE SUCH AS BARRIERS TO ENTRY AND DISINTEREST IN THE PROFESSION.

Several participants thought that while increased salary is a component in drawing in and retaining high-quality educators, there are other structural challenges that make a career in teaching less attractive. Teachers are experiencing burn out, absences are high, there are not enough substitute teachers to fill in, and more is being added to their plate rather than being removed. Participants reiterated that support and mentorship are essential for new teachers, and identified traditional and rigid requirements for certification as a potential barrier that limits the teacher pipeline.

> *"Teachers are burnt out. We are going to hit a national crisis if something isn't done… I'm one of those people that was born a teacher, never joked about doing anything else. Being an educator, I love what I do, but we're tired."*

PRIORITIES & ENABLERS BY RANK

TOP PRIORITY FOR STUDENTS & BUSINESS LEADERS

All Maryland students graduate from high school college and career ready, and with an individualized plan to succeed in college, career, and life.

TOP ENABLER FOR FAMILIES & EDUCATORS

Maryland is elevating the stature of the teaching profession by:

- intentionally working to attract, recruit, and retain a highly qualified and diverse workforce;
- setting rigorous standards for educator preparation programs and induction; and
- implementing a career ladder system focused on development and growth opportunities for all educators.

OVERVIEW OF **LISTENING SESSIONS**

The purpose of listening sessions are to provide a flexible format for stakeholders and community partners to share input on the Strategic Plan. Listening sessions were hosted by external groups with guidance and technical assistance provided by Maryland State Department of Education staff. The number of participants in each session ranged from small to large groups where facilitators posed the same questions in each group and note-takers recorded participant responses. Listening sessions were held in-person and virtually.

26 LISTENING SESSIONS

MORE THAN

1,600

PARTICIPANTS

LISTENING SESSIONS **BY GROUP**

Listening sessions were scheduled with stakeholders and community partners or held during previously scheduled events. Maryland State Department of Education staff supported and attended each session. A question framework provided an opportunity for participants to share their thoughts and experiences on each of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future pillars that were most applicable to the stakeholder groups. Community partners and Maryland State Department of Education staff collaborated to ensure questions used stakeholder-friendly language and represented the specific groups' priorities.

- PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT EXPRESS (PFE)
- SPECIAL EDUCATION FAMILY SUPPORT COORDINATORS
- SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICE PROVIDER COLLABORATIVE STEERING COMMITTEE
- CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION LOCAL DIRECTORS AND POSTSECONDARY CTE MEETING
- STATE INTERAGENCY COORDINATING COUNCIL
- PRINCIPAL SUPERVISORY MEETING
- WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT ALIGNMENT (WIOA)
- GIFTED AND TALENTED ADVISORY COUNCIL
- NONPUBLIC SCHOOL LISTENING SESSION
- FREE STATE PTA LISTENING SESSION
- MARYLAND ASSOCIATION OF STUDENT COUNCILS CONVENTION (MASC)
- MARYLAND STATE CHILD CARE ASSOCIATION (MSCCA) CONFERENCE
- GREATER SALISBURY COMMITTEE
- MCCACET COMMUNITY COLLEGE MEETING LISTENING SESSION
- SPECIAL EDUCATION STATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND SPECIAL EDUCATION COUNTY ADVISORY COMMITTEE JOINT MEETING (SESAC/SECAC)
- TEACH IN MARYLAND LISTENING SESSION
- COMMUNITY W.E.L.L. LISTENING SESSION
- BLACK & BROWN COALITION LISTENING SESSION
- MARYLAND AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION FOUNDATION LISTENING SESSION
- MOVING DORCHESTER FORWARD
- MARYLAND AGRICULTURAL EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION SUMMER CONFERENCE
- CASA LISTENING SESSION

EMERGING PRIORITIES & ENABLERS

Listening session participants represented a vast array of community organizations and their comments touched on several Strategic Plan priorities and enablers. As the Maryland State Board of Education and the Maryland State Department of Education move into the next phases of strategic planning, engagement with stakeholders will continue in earnest. This will ensure that the goals, flagship programs, initiatives, and strategies selected to achieve these priorities remain closely attuned to the needs, expectations, and hopes of Maryland's diverse communities.

PRIORITY

All Maryland students are prepared socially, emotionally, and academically for success in kindergarten.

PRIORITY

All Maryland students graduate from high school college and career ready, and with an individualized plan to succeed in college, career, and life.

ENABLER

Maryland is elevating the stature of the teaching profession by:

- intentionally working to attract, recruit, and retain a highly qualified and diverse workforce;
- setting rigorous standards for educator preparation programs and induction;
- and implementing a career ladder system focused on development and growth opportunities for all educators.

ENABLER

Maryland is supporting our schools, local education agencies, families, and decision makers by producing relevant, timely, and high-quality data and reporting, and enabling educators to make the best use of their resources to meet the needs of our students and accelerate student achievement.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

PARTICIPANTS WELCOMED THE RESOURCES MADE AVAILABLE BY THE BLUEPRINT FOR BROADENING THE AVAILABILITY AND EXPANDING ACCESS TO PRE-K AND EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

Participants also spoke positively about the Blueprint's emphasis on promoting quality through the Maryland Excels quality rating system, which institutes a bonus for providers if they achieve and maintain quality standards. At the same time, participants spoke about potential challenges that may delay Pre-K expansion, particularly with regards to finding qualified teachers. Some expressed frustration with the existing credential review process and the time it takes, while others feared that new requirements for early childhood education teachers could exacerbate the existing staffing shortages.

CONCERNS WITH SHORTAGES EXTENDED BEYOND THE WORLD OF PRE-K AND EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

To address these concerns, participants shared proposals and strategies already underway to recruit, prepare, train, and retain highly qualified and diverse teachers and leaders. Participants proposed subsidizing training for all teachers who service English learners, funding professional development in special education for all general education teachers, and expanding "grow your own" programs as a strategy for getting students of diverse backgrounds into the teacher workforce.

PARTICIPANTS SHARED THE IMPORTANCE OF ENSURING THAT ALL TEACHERS DEVELOP CULTURAL COMPETENCE

This expectation came up prominently when participants were asked what they would do if they had a million dollars to invest in their school communities. As it was explained, the money could be spent on funding to provide professional development for teachers to better understand the lives of their students and the way this impacts teaching and learning.

> *...Our students are going to feel more comfortable if there are people that look like them in the school; we are using the 'grow your own,' but it will be 7-10 years before we see the fruits of our labor... we are looking at our young teachers now to see who has leadership qualities and how we can build upon this.*

PARTICIPANTS RECOMMEND MUCH GREATER COLLABORATION AND CONNECTIVITY BETWEEN EDUCATION AND INDUSTRY

Among the Blueprint strategies that generated most interest among participants were those related to college and career readiness. Participants were encouraged by the Blueprint's mandate that students be college and career ready by the end of the 10th grade, and that they be able to select among pathways leading to postsecondary success. Participants conveyed excitement about initiatives and programs that were already expanding dual enrollment and apprenticeships and had concrete suggestions on how to bring those opportunities to scale. In the view of participants, stronger connections between education and business could take many forms, from a collaborative approach to career exploration and curriculum development to inviting employers to conduct interviewing and hiring in the school building. Participants imagined a future in which students would experience a seamless transition from career exploration to preparation and training, and from credentialing to hiring and career success.

> *Starting with K-5, offer career explorations and field trips to employers of career clusters like hospitals, police stations, and ports. Employers can implement 'adopt-a-class' and speaker series to educate students about various occupations in middle school, along with programming at the school level in career explorations. Structured CTE curriculum and apprenticeship pathways with local employers will offer the final piece of direct hire.*

CREATING SEAMLESS AND EQUITABLE PATHS TOWARDS FURTHER EDUCATION AND CAREERS WOULD REQUIRE MORE RESOURCES TO ENSURE THAT ALL STUDENTS ARE SUCCESSFUL

Participants shared positive examples of ongoing work to support students based on need, such as hiring additional bilingual staff to better communicate with English learners and their families, utilizing federal funds to develop multi-tiered systems of supports (MTSS) aimed at meeting students' academic, behavioral, social, and emotional needs, and leveraging the Blueprint's Concentration of Poverty grants to provide wraparound supports. While noting real progress in the efforts to build and expand support systems and resources for students, participants also acknowledged the challenges ahead. Participants advocated for more counselors, greater access to mental health and wellness services, greater availability of services for multilingual students and families, and better transition paths out of high school for students with disabilities. Participants also stressed the central role of parents/guardians in supporting their children's success in school, even more so in the case of students with disabilities, and called for districts and schools to provide more educational resources to parents/guardians to assist them in this role.

OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY EVENTS & CONVERSATIONS

Community conversations were developed as a mechanism for the State Superintendent to directly engage with specific communities, especially historically underserved groups. Similar to roundtables, community conversations feature a small group of stakeholders in a discussion. These conversations are co-facilitated by the State Superintendent and a community leader. Topics and questions were developed in collaboration between community leaders, community organizations, and Maryland State Department of Education staff. Community conversations were held in-person and virtually.

24 LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES ENGAGED

STUDENT SHADOWS

Since joining the State Department of Education in July 2021, State Superintendent Mohammed Choudhury has visited all of Maryland's local education agencies - **23 counties and Baltimore City** - to engage with students, staff, principals, and local superintendents throughout the state. Visits consisted of shadowing a student during classes, school programs, lunch and even recess! During these fully-immersive experiences, the State Superintendent actively participated in classwork, physical education, and student-led meetings. These shadows were followed by a shadow of the local education agency's superintendent and/or school principal. Each visit was documented on the Maryland State Department of Education's social media platforms detailing the day's happenings.

DORCHESTER COUNTY

State Superintendent Choudhury shadowed a Mace's Lane Middle School 8th-grade student in Dorchester County Public Schools. The visit involved analyzing primary sources about the Whiskey Rebellion in Social Studies and experimenting with potential and kinetic energy in Science. Up next was a shadow of 'busy bee' Principal Gibson at the Sandy Hill Elementary School 'hive' where educators teach students using the Science of Reading strategies.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

State Superintendent Choudhury shadowed 12th-grade student Jorge, an aspiring architect enrolled in the Architecture Program at Thomas Edison High School of Technology and the Engineering Academy at Wheaton High School. The first class of the day was Architecture, where students engaged in a group review of student-drafted site plans. Next up, Calculus with Applications and exercises in finding the derivative of functions. After a morning of learning with Jorge, Superintendent Choudhury was welcomed with "a-deer-able" student art for the shadow of Principal Steffan at Highland Elementary School, where educators and staff prioritize their students' writing and publishing.

WICOMICO COUNTY

State Superintendent Choudhury shadowed Cayson, a 2nd-grade Beaver Run Elementary School student. Their morning of learning was filled with phonics lessons, sentence-building puzzles, and a class read-aloud of "Monkey and Rabbit." During Music class, students engaged in festive singing and dancing. Next, he shadowed Wicomico County Superintendent Dr. Micah Stauffer at Junior Achievement of the Eastern Shore. Their mission is to inspire and prepare youth to succeed with learning focused on financial literacy, workforce and entrepreneurship.

OVERVIEW OF REGIONAL DATA WALKS

The Regional Data Walks provide an opportunity for local boards of education and local education agency staff to learn about the strategic planning process, discuss and analyze local education data trends, and provide feedback on what they deemed necessary to implement the priorities and enablers. Attendees included local school board members, local superintendents, and district staff. Participants engaged in interactive data walks focused on regional data related to the specific priorities and enablers outlined in the Strategic Plan.

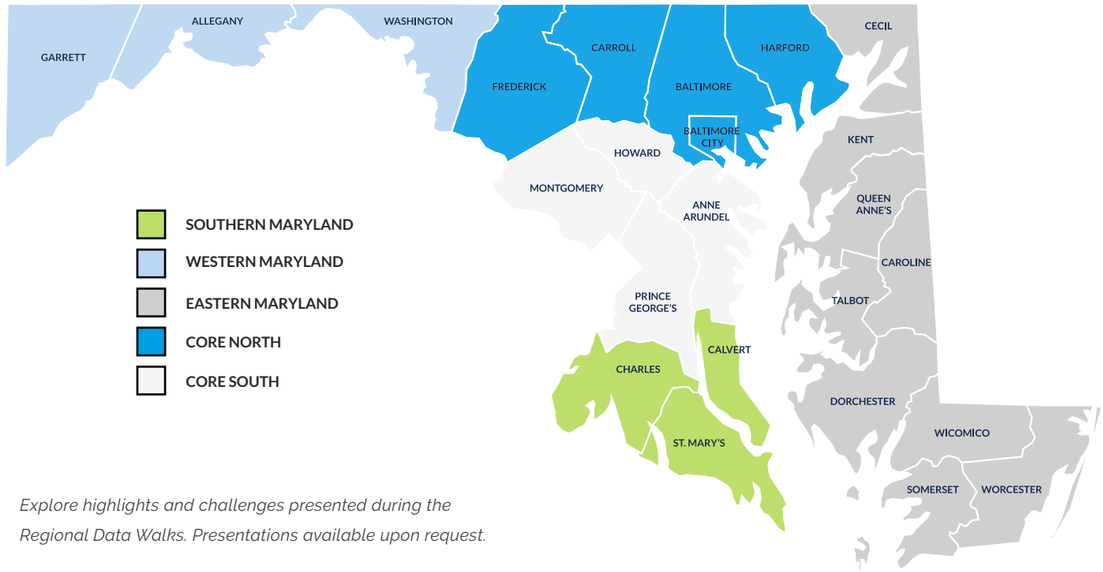
5 REGIONS ACROSS THE STATE PARTICIPATED

QUESTIONS ASKED

Participants were asked to answer the following questions for each priority and enabler based on the regional data presented during the data walk.

1. What are your initial reactions to this data?
2. What actions can you take or are you taking to support progress related to this priority?
3. What barriers or risks do you foresee and what support might you need to address these?

REGIONS IN MARYLAND BY COUNTY



Explore highlights and challenges presented during the Regional Data Walks. Presentations available upon request.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

STAFFING WAS FREQUENTLY MENTIONED

PARTICULARLY FINANCIAL INCENTIVES, STAFFING CHALLENGES, AND A NEED FOR CERTAIN TYPES OF STAFF.

Participants pushed for an increase in salaries, as well as multiple pathways to teacher certification. Participants also supported lower student to teacher ratios. Some respondents provided suggestions to increase the teacher pipeline through "Grow Your Own" efforts. Lastly, participants shared there should be more positions to support student well-being such as mental health professionals, psychological personnel, and therapists, as students are demonstrating a need to learn positive behavior.

PARTICIPANTS FELT THAT

STUDENTS NEED MORE TIME AND SUPPORT IN FIGURING OUT THEIR CAREER PATH.

Participants noted that to prepare students for college and careers, there should be more opportunities for internships and apprenticeships that allow for seamless pathways into careers after high school. Additionally, concerns were raised about barriers to dual enrollment, particularly for students of color.

MANY RESPONDENTS

REPORTED THAT THEY GAINED INSIGHTS FROM THE DATA WALK ABOUT THEIR LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY (LEA) AND OTHER LEAS.

Participants were interested in connecting with other LEAs and learning strategies and ideas from each other. A number of respondents contrasted outcomes in their LEA to outcomes with other LEAs, noting those who were doing particularly well and those who needed more support.

WHAT WE **LEARNED SO FAR**

> *Stakeholders have stressed key areas for improvement, the unmet challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, and urgency about the need to transform educational experiences for all students at scale, especially those who have been historically underserved.*

Marylanders across our state have conveyed a strong commitment and enduring support for public education. When asked how important the quality of Maryland's public schools are to the success of the state, an overwhelming majority have said that it is extremely important. A strong majority have a positive view of Maryland public schools' performance. At the same time, a diverse array of stakeholders have stressed key areas for improvement, the unmet challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, and urgency about the need to transform educational experiences for all students at scale, especially those who have been historically underserved.

Ensuring high-quality reading and writing learning experiences in the early grades was a top priority among all stakeholder groups who completed the strategic planning survey. This reflects the critical importance that all Maryland students are proficient in reading by the end of third grade, and those who are not have the necessary supports to become proficient. Additionally, stakeholder groups, including teachers and school leaders, prioritized developing excellent teachers and recognizing and rewarding the best teachers among their top five priorities.

Furthermore, in addition to survey responses, in-depth dialogues fostered by roundtables highlighted meaningful nuances in the views and aspirations of Marylanders across our state. Black/African American respondents emphasized resources such as access to advanced course work and pathways, and high-quality teachers for underserved communities in their most frequently cited priorities. Participants in our educator roundtables stressed the urgency of addressing representation gaps in the teaching profession, supporting new teachers' growth through close collaboration, observation, and feedback from highly effective mentors, and expanding access to job-embedded professional learning opportunities. Students and parents/guardians, in turn, advocated for stronger wraparound supports, engagement, and better educational resources for families to support their students success in school. Leaders from the business community passionately spoke about the need to elevate career and technical education and ensuring better coordination between industry and the educational system to facilitate students' access and success with career exploration, work-based learning, and job placement opportunities.

Many of the themes that were prominent in the strategic planning survey and roundtables also emerged during listening sessions. Participants stressed the importance of strengthening health and wellness supports for students. They also emphasized creating seamless and equitable pathways to college and careers and the expectation that institutions of higher education, employers, and the educational system must collaborate effectively to make those pathways a reality for every Maryland student. Listening sessions also called attention to additional priorities, such as the need to address teacher shortages and expanding high-quality Pre-K and early childhood programs.

As we entered Phase 2 of our engagement efforts, we heard stakeholders advocate for innovative ways to recruit and retain high-quality teachers and staff during the Regional Data Walks. The feedback mirrored previous conversations about pathways to college and careers and exposing students to more opportunities earlier in their educational journey. Data walks fostered a collaborative environment where local education leaders could connect and learn from one another reflecting a clear demand for more opportunities like this in the future.

The Maryland State Board of Education and the Maryland State Department of Education look forward to continuing to engage Marylanders as we move into Phase 3 of the strategic planning process. Together, we will develop the targets that must be met to fulfil our goals on a specific timeline, as well as the flagship strategies, initiatives, and programs outlining the concrete work that needs to be completed for achieving each priority and enabler.

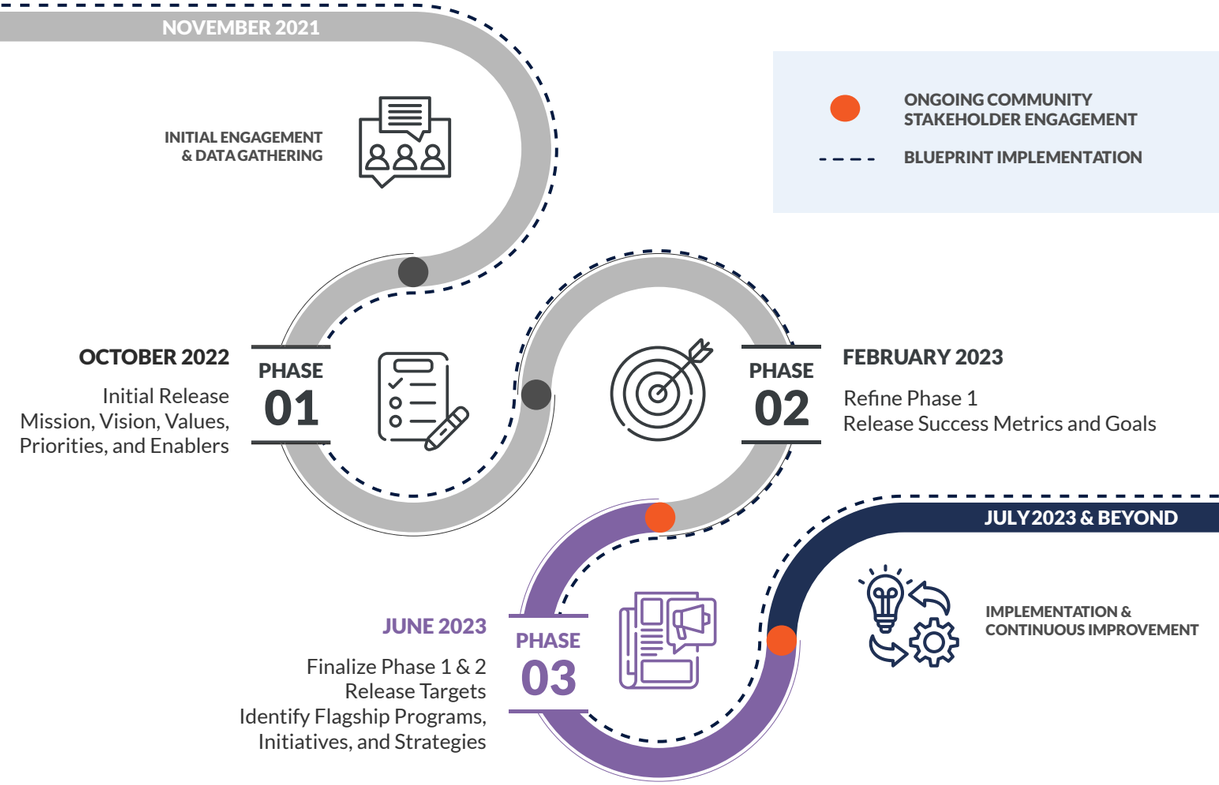
WHAT IS
COMING NEXT

03

JUNE 2023

Finalize Phase 1 & 2
Release Targets
Identify Flagship Programs, Initiatives, and Strategies

Between February and June 2023, we will engage with stakeholders to identify flagship strategies, initiatives, and programs and set targets to achieve the goals developed in Phase 2. This work will be informed by best-in-class research and involve in-depth conversations with education experts, practitioners, and decision makers from early childhood to K-12 education and from the business community to institutions of higher education. The complete Strategic Plan will be released in June 2023. It will anchor the vision, mission, values, priorities, enablers, goals, metrics, targets, and the flagship programs, initiatives, and strategies to the Blueprint's promise of an excellent and equitable education for every child.



SCAN ME

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

We want to hear from all Maryland residents as we enhance educational opportunities for every Maryland child. The Maryland State Board of Education and the Maryland State Department of Education invite you to participate in their strategic planning survey to help define the future of public school education.

CONTACT US

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