

Division of Equity and Innovation – Budget Summary

Overview of the Division

The Division of Equity and Innovation, in partnership with students, staff, families, and community members, develops strategic plans, profession learning, programs, and accountability measures to help students formulate and achieve their education and career goals and become valued community members.

The services of this Division are delivered through the budgets of the following programs:

- Chief Equity and Innovation
- Partnerships
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Summer Programs
- Innovative Pathways
- Assessment Program
- Postsecondary Access
- Beyond School Hours Intervention Programs
- Career and Technical Education
- Teacher and Paraprofessional Development Support
- Leadership Development
- Student Access and Achievement

The Division of Equity and Innovation centers the work around belonging and trust, providing access and opportunity, and engaging young people for the future.

Summary of Major Budget Changes for FY 2026

The budget for the Division of Equity and Innovation is increasing by a total of \$14.1 million or 47.97 percent compared to the current budget. This total change in budget is for budget additions and budget realignments. The amount of change for each is:

- Budget additions equal \$6.4 million, a 21.89 percent increase, and a (1.0) net change in FTE positions.
- Budget realignments equal \$7.7 million and the realignment of 18.0 FTE positions.

More specific information on these budget changes is explained below which are followed by schedules summarizing the Division budget and changes by program.

Budget changes are grouped as Mandates, Commitments, Priorities, and Realignments.

- Mandates are budget changes necessary to meet a specific legal requirement. The mandated cost changes in this year's budget support the continued implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.
- Commitments are changes made in the budget to support the costs for existing obligations such as contracts and prior negotiated pay and benefits.
- Priorities represent those budget items to support existing policy, Superintendent or Board defined goals and objectives, and specific issues.
- Realignments represent transfer of funds between programs, state categories and/or spend categories to support existing requirements. Realignments are budget neutral, although there can be significant

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changes between programs and accounts. The FY 2026 budget includes a significant movement of budget authority for budgetary realignments that have been done for three purposes:

- Realignments to meet Blueprint Minimum School Fund reporting requirements. For FY 2026, employee benefits (Social Security, Medicare, pension, and health insurance) have been realigned from the Fixed Charges budget (Program 8001) into each program budget. As a result, all program budgets with positions will show a significant increase in budget reflecting the cost of the employee benefits in the program.
- Realignments for the Superintendent's reorganization of divisions and programs done in July 2025.
- Realignments of existing budget authority to meet budgetary needs and properly classify expenditures by state category, division, program, and/or account.

Budget additions for Mandates, Commitments, Priorities, and Realignments are sub-grouped for clearer understanding of the reason(s) for the budget changes in the division and programs. Each division summary section provides a narrative explanation of budget changes and schedules that present the changes in budget dollars and full-time equivalent (FTE) positions from the current budget. The Factors Influencing and Summary of the Budget in the Executive Summary section of the budget book provides the combined summary of budget changes for all divisions and by state category.

A summary of budget changes for this division is provided below.

Mandates

- \$218,000 – Blueprint requirements for College and Career Readiness (CCR) increase participation in exams for students that are CCR ready in Assessment Program (2801)
- \$200,000 – Blueprint requirements for College and Career Readiness HCC Tuition increases in Postsecondary Access (2802) program.
- \$87,600 – Blueprint requirements for National Board Certification pay for teachers.
- \$150,000 – Blueprint requirements for National Board Certification tuition reimbursement (MSDE funded).
- (\$390,802) – Blueprint requirements for Workforce Development Board in Postsecondary Access (2802) program.

Commitments

- \$368,466 – Benefit cost changes for net change in positions, increases for summer school, and increases for teacher national board certification pay.
- \$204,818 – Health Insurance cost increases based on preliminary actuarial estimates.
- \$300,000 – Negotiated Tuition Reimbursement costs based on historical reimbursement of staff tuition expenses in Teacher and Paraprofessional Development (4801) program.
- \$654,857 – Reclassification of Liaisons in Student Access and Achievement (9501) program.
- \$13,024 – Estimated change in retirement costs for positions included in this division.

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- (\$8,185) – Year-over-Year Personnel Cost Change. This adjustment will appear in all program budgets that have budgeted personnel. A complete explanation for these changes is included in the Factors Influencing in the Executive Summary section of the budget book.

Priorities

- \$675,240 – Placeholder for employee compensation increases subject to collective bargaining.
- \$3,706,000 – Summer Programs (2401) transitioning from expiring COVID-Relief grants. These funds will return the BSAP and G/T summer programs to full capacity and continue to provide Innovative Pathways High School Programs and Academic Intervention Programming for rising grades 1-8.
- \$300,000 – Evening School wages for increase in student enrollment for discipline/threat assessment/suspensions in Innovative Pathways (2601) program
- \$180,540 – Increase of 1.0 Technical Assistant position and 1.0 Facilitator position in Chief Equity and Innovation (0108) program to support Summer and Academic Intervention programs.
- \$94,000 – Restoration of MESA program in Partnerships (0105) program.
- (\$302,410) – Reduction of (2.0) Teacher positions and (1.0) Special Education Teacher position in Innovative Pathways (2601) program. This will eliminate the Innovative Pathways Virtual High School program due to insufficient funding to expand to additional grade levels beyond grades 9 and 10 and continued low enrollment in the program.

Realignments

- \$4,944,760 – Realignment of Employee Health Insurance, Social Security, Medicare, and Retirement from Fixed Charges to the programs in the Equity and Innovation Division.
- \$2,848,632 – Realignment of 18.0 FTE positions and associated salaries, wages, and non-personnel funding for FY 2025 reorganization.
- (\$106,000) – Realignment of Howard County Community College shuttle services from Postsecondary Access (2802) program to Student Transportation (6801) program.

Summary schedules of these changes are presented in the following pages.

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SUMMARY OF FY 2026 PROPOSED BUDGET										
Program	Program Number	Approved Budget FY 2025	Total Additions	Total Realignments	Net Budget Changes	Net Budget Changes FTE	Superintendent Proposed FY 2026	\$ Change From FY 2025	% Change from FY 2025	
Chief Equity and Innovation Partnerships Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Summer Programs Innovative Pathways Assessment Program Postsecondary Access Beyond School Hours Intervention Programs Career and Technical Education Teacher and Paraprofessional Development Leadership Development Student Access and Achievement	0108	\$ -	\$ 394,521	\$ 3,520,701	\$ 3,915,222	22.00	\$ 3,915,222	\$ 3,915,222	0.00%	
	0105	116,010	103,189	29,276	132,465	-	248,475	132,465	114.18%	
	0106	1,252,621	63,822	303,685	367,507	-	1,620,128	367,507	29.34%	
	2401	2,195,523	3,983,695	162,242	4,145,937	-	6,341,460	4,145,937	188.84%	
	2601	1,035,469	(52,251)	130,562	78,311	(3.00)	1,113,780	78,311	7.56%	
	2801	1,095,000	218,000	606,107	824,107	-	1,919,107	824,107	75.26%	
	2802	3,867,783	(156,800)	4,073,219	3,916,419	14.00	7,784,202	3,916,419	101.26%	
	3501	911,565	-	49,570	49,570	-	961,135	49,570	5.44%	
	3901	9,022,826	353,503	(2,830,087)	(2,476,584)	(13.00)	6,546,242	(2,476,584)	-27.45%	
	4801	3,841,514	482,031	256,419	738,450	-	4,579,964	738,450	19.22%	
	4802	605,261	49,014	144,099	193,113	-	798,374	193,113	31.91%	
	9501	5,528,976	1,012,424	1,241,599	2,254,023	(3.00)	7,782,999	2,254,023	40.77%	
Equity and Innovation Total		\$ 29,472,548	\$ 6,451,148	\$ 7,687,392	\$ 14,138,540	17.00	\$ 43,611,088	\$ 14,138,540	47.97%	

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SUMMARY OF FY 2026 BUDGET CHANGES BY PROGRAM AND SUMMARY GROUPINGS									
General Fund		0108	0106		0105	2401	2601		
PROGRAMS		Chief Equity and Innovation	FTE	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	FTE	Partnerships	FTE	Summer Programs	Innovative Pathways
MANDATES									
Blueprint-College and Career Readiness		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Blueprint-National Board Certification		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Blueprint-Workforce Development		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Subtotal Mandates		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
COMMITMENTS									
Benefit Cost-New Positions		52,225	-	-	-	6,426	-	277,695	(59,277)
Health Insurance		25,445	-	10,814	-	1,272	-	-	5,089
Labor Contracts		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Reclassifications		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Retirement		3,609	-	5,075	-	435	-	-	11,515
Year over Year Personnel Cost Change		17,787	-	(9,585)	-	(3,345)	-	-	(11,892)
Subtotal Commitments		99,066	-	6,304	-	4,788	-	277,695	(54,565)
PRIORITIES									
Employee Compensation		114,915	-	57,518	-	4,401	-	-	4,724
COVID Grants-Transition		-	-	-	-	-	-	3,706,000	300,000
Priorities-Other		180,540	2.00	-	-	94,000	-	-	(302,410)
Subtotal Priorities		295,455	2.00	57,518	-	98,401	-	3,706,000	2,314
SUBTOTAL BUDGET ADDITIONS		394,521	2.00	63,822	-	103,189	-	3,983,695	(52,251)
Budget Realignments		3,520,701	20.00	303,685	-	29,276	-	162,242	130,562
DIVISION TOTAL		3,915,222	22.00	367,507	-	132,465	-	4,145,937	78,311

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SUMMARY OF FY 2026 BUDGET CHANGES BY PROGRAM AND SUMMARY GROUPINGS									
General Fund		2801	2802	3501	3901	4801			
PROGRAMS		Assessment Program	Postsecondary Access	Beyond School Hours Intervention Programs	Career and Technical Education	Teacher and Paraprofessional Development	FTE	FTE	FTE
MANDATES									
Blueprint-College and Career Readiness		218,000	-	200,000	-	-	-	-	-
Blueprint-National Board Certification		-	-	-	-	87,600	-	150,000	-
Blueprint-Workforce Development		-	(390,802)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Subtotal Mandates		218,000	(190,802)	-	87,600	-	-	150,000	-
COMMITMENTS									
Benefit Cost-New Positions		-	-	-	-	10,784	-	-	-
Health Insurance		-	19,081	-	-	48,348	-	6,361	-
Labor Contracts		-	-	-	-	-	-	300,000	-
Reclassifications		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Retirement		-	(62,747)	-	-	9,992	-	4,284	-
Year over Year Personnel Cost Change		-	(122)	-	-	44,166	-	(16,959)	-
Subtotal Commitments		-	(43,788)	-	113,290	-	-	293,686	-
PRIORITIES									
Employee Compensation		-	77,790	-	-	152,613	-	38,345	-
COVID Grants-Transition		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Priorities-Other		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Subtotal Priorities		-	77,790	-	152,613	-	-	38,345	-
SUBTOTAL BUDGET ADDITIONS		218,000	(156,800)	-	353,503	-	-	482,031	-
Budget Realignments		606,107	4,073,219	14.00	(2,830,087)	(13.00)	-	256,419	-
DIVISION TOTAL		824,107	3,916,419	14.00	(2,476,584)	(13.00)	-	738,450	-

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SUMMARY OF FY 2026 BUDGET CHANGES BY PROGRAM AND SUMMARY GROUPINGS						
General Fund		4802	9501			
PROGRAMS	MANDATES	Leadership Development	Student Access and Achievement		Total	Total FTE
			FTE	Achievement		
	Blueprint-College and Career Readiness	-	-	-	418,000	-
	Blueprint-National Board Certification	-	-	-	237,600	-
	Blueprint-Workforce Development	-	-	-	(390,802)	-
	Subtotal Mandates	-	-	-	264,798	-
	COMMITMENTS					
	Benefit Cost-New Positions	-	-	80,613	368,466	-
	Health Insurance	4,453	-	83,955	204,818	-
	Labor Contracts	-	-	-	300,000	-
	Reclassifications	-	-	654,857	654,857	-
	Retirement	2,380	-	38,481	13,024	-
	Year over Year Personnel Cost Change	27,992	-	(56,227)	(8,185)	-
	Subtotal Commitments	34,825	-	801,679	1,532,980	-
	PRIORITIES					
	Employee Compensation	14,189	-	210,745	675,240	-
	COVID Grants-Transition	-	-	-	4,006,000	-
	Priorities-Other	-	-	-	(27,870)	(1.00)
	Subtotal Priorities	14,189	-	210,745	4,653,370	(1.00)
	SUBTOTAL BUDGET ADDITIONS	49,014	-	1,012,424	6,451,148	(1.00)
	Budget Realignments	144,099	-	1,241,599	7,687,392	18.00
	DIVISION TOTAL	193,113	-	2,254,023	14,138,540	17.00