

Division of Academics – Budget Summary

Overview of the Division

The purpose of the Division of Academics is to ensure that each child graduates or receives a certificate of program completion and is ready for post-secondary education, career, and life. The Division of Academics is organized into two departments:

- **Department of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment** – Provides curriculum, materials of instruction, professional learning, and support to schools, students, and families to ensure high-quality learning occurs for all students each day.
- **Department of Special Education** – Provides learners with disabilities, birth to age 21, high-quality services within their homes, community, and/or school settings to improve outcomes for learners who receive early intervention and special education services.

The overarching Division budgets include the following programs:

- Chief Academic Officer
- Academic Support for Schools

The Division of Academics inspires students, staff, and the community through an instructional program that is rigorous, globally relevant, and engaging for each learner.

The Division of Academics staff design programs, professional learning, community engagement, and curriculum that works to ensure every student receives a solid education through access to high-quality first instruction, appropriate interventions, individualized instruction, differentiated supports, and access to flexible learning opportunities. Division staff provide support to school staff, students, and families so that all students experience authentic learning, including equitable opportunities to earn college credit or industry certification, to prepare students for future careers and life. Additional focus is also placed on students' social emotional learning and mental health while working to mitigate gaps in academic learning. Family and community partnerships are uplifted to maximize opportunities for learners, birth to 21.

The Division of Academics advances this budget to increase and plan for resource alignments to further address student needs in the areas of early childhood development, reading, mathematics, language development, and special education. Increases to the Division budgets primarily reflect equity-based decision making necessary for serving more students experiencing learning challenges.

Summary of Major Budget Changes for FY 2027

The budget for the Division of Academics is increasing by a total of \$340,783 or 3.83 percent compared to the current budget. This total change in budget supports funding for existing service commitments, employee compensation and benefits, priorities, and realignments. The specific amounts for each major budget grouping are:

- Existing Service Commitments – \$(16,413)
- Employee Compensation and Benefits – \$333,421
- Priorities – \$100,000
- Realignments – \$(76,225)

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These budget groups are used to explain why the budget is changing by organizing adjustments into major categories and subcategories. Definitions of each major group, along with associated subgroups, are provided below. Note, some divisions will not have budget changes in every major group or subgroup.

Existing Service Commitments reflect budget changes necessary to continue the provision of current services.

These changes include, but are not limited to:

- Blueprint for Maryland's Future
 - Collaborative Time Per Pupil
 - Multilingual Learners
 - Prekindergarten Expansion
- Staffing changes based on enrollment fluctuations
- Special education service levels, contract costs, compliance requirements, and non-public placements
- Student transportation
- Financial and contractual obligations
- Position reclassifications
- Utilities
- Year-over-year personnel cost changes
- Other cost changes required to maintain existing services

Employee Compensation and Benefits include budget changes that support employee pay and benefit obligations and projected cost increases, such as:

- Employee compensation placeholders for negotiated labor contracts and contracts under negotiation
- Costs associated with previously negotiated pay and benefits
- Employee health insurance changes based on actuarial projections and centrally determined rates
- Blueprint-related National Board Certification and maintenance pay
- Other employee benefit cost adjustments

Priorities represent budget changes that support existing policies, Superintendent or Board-defined goals, and Strategic Plan priorities, including:

- Strengthen Learning & Instruction
- Cultivate Student Belonging & Well-Being
- Foster Staff Growth & Engagement
- Enhance Systemic Planning & Procedures
- Partner with Families & Community

One-Time Funding Items consist of non-recurring budget costs that have been specifically approved by the Maryland State Department of Education as one-time expenditures.

Base Budget Reductions are reductions to existing services funded in the base budget (FY 2026 Approved Budget) that are implemented to align expenditure growth with available revenue. These reductions are categorized as:

- School-Based Reductions, which directly affect school instruction and operations; and
- Non-School-Based Reductions, which impact Central Office services and systemwide costs that support students, staff, and school operations.

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Realignments represent transfers of funds between programs, state categories, and/or expenditure categories to support existing requirements. While realignments are budget neutral overall, they may result in significant changes among programs and accounts. The FY 2027 budget includes realignments for two primary purposes:

- Adjustments related to the reorganization of divisions and programs; and
- Redistribution of existing budget authority to address budgetary needs and ensure expenditures are properly classified by state category, division, program, and/or account.

This Division Summary section provides a narrative explanation of budget changes, accompanied by supporting schedules that present changes in budgeted dollars and full-time equivalent (FTE) positions relative to the current budget. A consolidated summary of budget changes for all divisions and by state category is provided in the **Factors Influencing and Summary of the Budget** section of the Executive Summary in the budget book.

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

Existing Service Commitments

- \$(11,370) – Reclassification approved – wages reallocated from Academic Support for Schools (3202) to Elementary Language Arts (0710) to offset an FY 2026 reclassification of a teacher position from 10 months to 11 months.
- \$(5,043) – 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 and Summary of the Budget in the Executive Summary section of the budget book.

Employee Compensation and Benefits

- \$251,831 – Placeholder for employee compensation increases subject to collective bargaining.
- \$81,590 – Health Insurance cost increases based on preliminary actuarial estimates.

Priorities

- \$100,000 – To *Strengthen Learning and Instruction* by increasing the textbook budget for elementary materials (High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) workbooks).

Realignments

- \$(76,225) – Realignment of budget authority among Academics (0304) and (3202), and Department of Special Education (3321), to better utilize funds to meet division needs.

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

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SUMMARY OF FY 2027 SUPERINTENDENT'S PROPOSED BUDGET							
Program	Program Number	Approved Budget FY 2026	Budget Additions and Base Reductions	Total Realalignments	Net Budget Changes	Net Budget Changes FTE	Superintendent Proposed FY 2027
Chief Academic Officer	0304	\$ 7,281,638	\$ 328,378	\$ 10,765	\$ 339,143	-	\$ 7,620,781
Academic Support for Schools	3202	1,606,796	88,630	(86,990)	1,640	-	1,608,436
Academics Total		\$ 8,888,434	\$ 417,008	\$ (76,225)	\$ 340,783	-	\$ 9,229,217
							\$ 340,783
							3.83%

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SUMMARY OF FY 2027 BUDGET CHANGES BY PROGRAM AND SUMMARY GROUPINGS						
General Fund	0304	3202	Academic Support for Schools	FTE	Total	Total FTE
PROGRAMS	Chief Academic Officer	FTE				
Reclassifications-Approved	\$ -	\$ (5,043)	\$ (11,370)	-	\$ (11,370)	-
Year over Year Personnel Cost Change						
Subtotal Existing Service Commitments	(5,043)	-	(11,370)	-	(16,413)	-
EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS						
Employee Compensation-Placeholder	\$ 251,831	-	\$ -	-	\$ 251,831	-
Health Insurance	81,590	-	-	-	81,590	-
Subtotal Employee Compensation and Benefits	333,421	-	-	-	333,421	-
PRIORITIES						
Strengthen Learning & Instruction	\$ -	-	\$ 100,000	-	\$ 100,000	-
Subtotal Priorities	-	-	100,000	-	100,000	-
328,378	-	88,630	-	417,008	-	
10,765	-	(86,990)	-	(76,225)	-	
DIVISION TOTAL	\$ 339,143	-	\$ 1,640	-	\$ 340,783	-