

WHAT IS “AT RISK”? Under Maryland Education Article §8-701

“At risk youth” means an individual who meets at least two of the eligibility criteria determined by the Department and an operator that may include: (1) Being eligible for free or reduced price meals; (2) A record of suspensions, office referrals, or chronic truancy; (3) A failure to achieve a proficient or advanced level on State assessments in reading or mathematics, or both; (4) Having a disability; (5) A referral from a teacher, counselor, social worker, or community based service organization; (6) The head of household is a single parent; (7) The head of household is not a custodial parent; (8) The adjusted gross family income is below the federally established poverty guidelines; (9) The family receives temporary cash assistance under the State Family Investment Program; or (10) A member of the family has been incarcerated.

The State has identified schools that are “at risk” and has defined those as “schools where 61% or more of students earn a performance level of one or two on the state assessment for mathematics or English language arts (ELA).”¹ For example, of the 38 high schools that are considered *at risk*, 22 are in Baltimore City and 11 are in PG County. This number is alarming, especially since in PG County approximately 90% of the student population is either African-American or Latino.² Baltimore City has nearly the same percentage with approximately 80% being African American and roughly 10 percent Latino.

Generally speaking, however, the term *at-risk* is often used to describe students or groups of students who are considered to have a higher probability of failing academically or dropping out of school.ⁱ The term may be applied to students who face circumstances that could jeopardize their ability to complete school, such as homelessness, incarceration, teenage pregnancy, low test scores, disciplinary problems, grade retentions, or other learning-related factors that could adversely affect the educational performance and attainment of some students.ⁱⁱ

Under federal law, unless a participating school is operating a schoolwide program, the school must focus Title I services on children who are failing, or most *at risk of failing*, to meet State academic standards.



Most of our “at risk” students attend school in Baltimore City and/or PG County; they are also African-American & Latino.

¹ <http://marylandpublicschools.org/stateboard/Documents/03202018/TabE-DefinitionAtRisk.pdf>

² <http://www.pgcps.org/facts-and-figures/>

The Kirwan Commission

Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education



Students who receive compensatory aid has also been discussed in *this* workgroup as being at risk.³

WHAT DO WE NEED? Since Workgroup 4 has a primary task to make recommendations for *more resources for at risk students*, we ask that this workgroup focus more intentionally at eliminating schools in Maryland that are at risk. Those schools unfortunately, have a predominate make-up of African American and Latino. Workgroup 4 has a lot to consider, however ACY would like to see this workgroup clearly define the term “at risk” and seek to eliminate racial injustice in Maryland’s education system.

NEXT MEETING:

August 9, 2018

9:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Working Group 4 - Room 150

House Office Building, Annapolis

WANT TO SUBMIT TESTIMONY?

WORKING GROUP 4 WILL BE TAKING PUBLIC TESTIMONY FROM 9:30 TO 10:00 AM AND IT WILL BE LIMITED TO 3 MINUTES PER PERSON OR GROUP. IF YOU WISH TO TESTIFY PLEASE EMAIL THE COMMISSION AT PREK-12INNOVATIONANDEXCELLENCECOMMISSION@MLIS.STATE.MD.US OR CALL MINDY MCCONVILLE AT 410-946-5510 BY NOON ON AUGUST 8 TO SIGN UP.

EMAIL:

The Kirwan Commission at PreK12InnovationandExcellenceCommission@mlis.state.md.us

LINKS FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Kirwan Commission Homepage <http://dls.maryland.gov/policy-areas/commission-on-innovation-and-excellence-in-education>
- Study of Adequacy of Funding for Education in the State Of Maryland Homepage (MSDE) <http://marylandpublicschools.org/Pages/adequacystudy/index.aspx>
- National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE): *9 Building Blocks for a World-Class Education System* <http://ncee.org/what-we-do/center-on-international-education-benchmarking/9-building-blocks/> (Report: <http://ncee.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/9-blocksv011217.pdf>)

More Resources for At Risk Students Commission Members

- Joy Schaefer (Moderator)
- Buzzy Hettleman
- Richard Madaleno
- Maggie McIntosh
- Morgan Showalter
- Alonzo Washington

For more information about the At-Risk Workgroup or to join the movement to eliminate risks for African-American and Latino children and youth at school, contact Shamarla R. McCoy, J.D. Education Policy Director at smccoy@acy.org.

ⁱ <https://www.edglossary.org/at-risk/>

ⁱⁱ Id.

³Overview of Education Funding in Maryland <http://dls.maryland.gov/pubs/prod/Educ/OverviewOfEducationFundingInMaryland.pdf>