



Parent Advocacy Consortium (PAC)

September 14, 2018

Dear Kirwan Commission,

The Parent Advocacy Consortium (PAC) is a grassroots organization of parents promoting and protecting the civil rights of our children. We are the parents of children with disabilities and we are deeply concerned with the inadequate priority placed on special education funding. Our children routinely receive sub-par services or are dismissed from services all together. Access to structured literacy intervention, speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and other services our children require is severely limited by lack of sufficient funding. Our children with disabilities experience unconscionable delays in supports and decreased lifetime outcomes as a result. Children with disabilities graduate at a fraction of the rate of children without disabilities, attend college at far fewer rates, and go on to experience decreased lifetime earning. We as a state need to place an equal value on our children with disabilities as we do on our children without disabilities.

We strongly urge the Commission to reconsider maintaining the status quo by establishing a special education weight that only maintains current spending by state and local education agencies. We urge the Commission to hold high expectations for our children with disabilities and take the bold step of improving outcomes for these children. We agree with the recommendations of other special education advocates recommending a special education weight that would result in approximately \$28,000 in funding for each child with a disability attending our Maryland public schools.

PAC members repeatedly hear stories and personally experience the delays in identifying and supporting our children. We strongly urge your support for closing the achievement gap and funding special education at an amount that will improve rather than maintain the current unacceptable outcomes for these children. Effective interventions can alter the course of our children's futures.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Davis'.

Sarah Davis, Founder
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