

Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education
William Brit Kirwan, Chairman



Witness Sign-up sheet

Date of Hearing: September 14, 2017

Location: Stevensville Middle School, Stevensville, Maryland

NAME	ADDRESS & PHONE NUMBER	NAME OF ORGANIZATION (IF APPLICABLE)	WRITTEN TESTIMONY	
			YES	NO
1. Mark Sutherland		Chesapeake Lighthouse Foundation (We have the K-12 Chesapeake Math & IT Academy (CMIT) programs in Prince George's County and our 1st STEM school in Anne Arundel, Chesapeake Science Point Public Charter School serving MS & HS students.)		
2. Duane Arbogast, Ed.D		Chief Innovation Officer Children's Guild		
3. Donna Hanlin		Superintendent, Wicomico County Public Schools		
4. Laura Price		Talbot County Councilmember		
5. Christopher Meyer		Research Analyst Maryland Center on Economic Policy		
6. Annie Mewborn		Talbot County Education Association and the Maryland State Education Association		

7. Jeanne Saum		Decoding Dyslexia of Maryland		
8. David Hanlin				
9. Chuck Callahan				
10. Wilber Levengood				
11. Andy Hollis				
12. Bob Simmons				
13. Mark Anderson		QAC Commissioner		



STEAM Educators

For Maryland's Future Innovators

09/14/2017 - **Public Education Equity:** KIRWIN PUBLIC TESTIMONY - *Commentary for Study on Adequacy of Funding for Education in the State of Maryland (transcript of testimony) as submitted by Mark J. Sutherland, Director of Community Partnerships at The Chesapeake Lighthouse Foundation.*

My name is Mark Sutherland. I am the Community Partnerships Director for **Chesapeake Lighthouse Foundation**, Charter Owner/Operator for Maryland's #1 Public-Charter High School (2017 Niche), **Chesapeake Science Point Public Charter School of Anne Arundel County (CSP)** and the **Chesapeake Math & IT (CMIT) Academies** throughout Prince George's County.

Our STEM/STEAM brands have earned their place among the BEST public schools in this great State of Maryland because of our dedicated & motivated PARENTS-STUDENTS-TEACHERS!

With both pride and humility, I testify before this distinguished commission. We are proud to be in Maryland because of the challenges we have overcome. We are delighted to serve everyone that steps through our school's threshold regardless of income brackets and zip codes. We are 100% PUBLIC EDUCATION and proud to have STEAM education as the backbone of our curriculum success. **We are proud that all of our schools in Maryland serve a minority-majority student population.**

Our non-profit status is an energy source of committed service to public education focused on Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics. STEAM becomes a beacon of our innovation to invent new and creative ways to educate without profit, special interests, or politics.

I am personally humbled by the ability to be a part of an equity conversation and testify before this commission. We want to be treated with public equity by our Districts & State in exchange for above average results.

Our 100% graduation rates, scholarship successes, local, state, and national accolades, the bridging of the achievement gap, and thousands of other awards have an uncanny, unpredictable effect on certain audiences to think *we must be receiving enough public support*.

That assumption is false and jeopardizes sustainability while undermining the sacrifices of our unique, diverse, and growing CLF family of STUDENTS – PARENTS – TEACHERS that make these successes possible. I offer hope. I am not going to stand here and complain. Together, let's continue to serve Maryland's families with equal intent.

In layman's terms, please note the following facts so as to help us as Marylanders achieve what we at CLF know is attainable the moment we restore public equality to all types of public education:

- Here in Maryland, facilities real estate is approx. 40% higher than the national average.
- "Traditional" public schools get keys to their buildings and they should; they're public schools. Public charters are locked out of this same option.
- An average of 20% of a Maryland Public Charter School's Budget goes to FACILITIES. That is approx. \$2,000 per-student.
- This expense is assumed by Public Charter Operators before our students are admitted by the lottery.
- This debt & unfair expense on a public school is assumed by Public Charters before the first per-pupil funding check is cut.
- The inadequacy of this capital improvement & facilities funding fact is that "Traditional Schools" are handed buildings debt free while Charter Schools take on huge debt risks.
- Families choose Charters because the traditional options have lost credit with taxpayers. The exchange of choice is that Charter Schools must "perform" above average consistently or risk losing their Public-Charter. We rise to that challenge. You're all welcome.
- Now, we need public education to be treated wholly by meeting public standards and adequately fund infrastructure so Charter Operators do not build dreams on credit & debt.

- The most important thing about this infrastructure funding fact is this money is NOT going to the education of our classrooms.
- Remember, Charter Schools in most states do not have union contracts so they have flexibility on compensation packages: teacher pay, salaries, & benefits. Our Maryland Charter Schools do not have that option.
- SUMMARY: 20% per-pupil funding for facilities + 40% higher real estate market + union contract requirements for all teachers is unsustainable math.

Together, let's add equal signs to this equation by providing facility funding. We applaud Governor Hogan who attempted to solve the facilities inequality in his Charter Bill proposed last year.

Our mission and vision is visible on the faces of our youngest pupils and alumni. We achieve as a community. We rise to the challenges by surpassing local and state public schools in academic success & college readiness. We do more in-class while receiving less.

We continue to focus on the STEAM promises we made to Maryland 13 years ago. 13 years is long-enough to show we have proven good on our promise.

Charter Schools are 100% Public. The clock is ticking and it is now time for all the tip-toe, tap-dancing around the issue folks to stand up for equity and an issue of public education equity and support high-performing Charter Schools in equal measure.

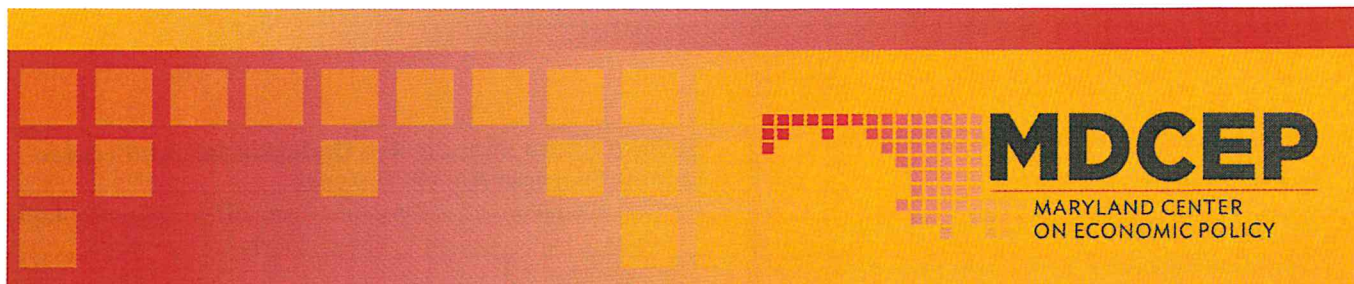
Thank you, distinguished members, for your time and service to public education in Maryland. This Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education is the most promising hope for a sustainable, equitable future for ALL Public Schools in Maryland.

Warmest regards,

Mark J. Sutherland

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September 14, 2017

Investing in Great Schools for All Students

With Effective Supports, Children on the Eastern Shore and across Maryland Can Overcome Barriers to Academic Success

Public education is part of the foundation of a thriving state. High-quality public schools embody our commitment to ensure that all children have the opportunity to learn and succeed. Good schools also strengthen our economy by building a skilled workforce and making Maryland an attractive place to live and do business.

That's why it is essential to guarantee that children in every region of Maryland have access to first-rate public schools. The Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education has a rare opportunity to turn that promise into a reality. If the policy review now under way generates effective reforms, it will benefit children on the Eastern Shore and throughout Maryland for many years to come.

Maryland Should Do More to Help Students Overcome Barriers

One of the most important tasks before the Commission is to design an effective system of supports for students who face obstacles to learning. The Eastern Shore is home to 30,000 public school students in low-income families.ⁱ When families struggle to afford the basics, their children are exposed to risks like hunger, unstable housing, and health problems. These challenges can take a toll on the body and mind, producing physiological stress and interfering with brain development. As a result, children in low-income families often have a harder time in school than their wealthier peers.

Compensatory education aid is an essential policy tool that helps children overcome these barriers. It is a targeted state education grant intended to help school districts effectively serve low-income students. A large body of research shows that providing additional funding—and investing it in evidence-based practices like expanded learning time and one-on-one tutoring—can make a big difference in children's lives. Unfortunately, Maryland's current school funding system leaves too many students behind.

- Twenty of Maryland's 24 school districts are now underfunded—including eight of the nine Eastern Shore districts—thanks to a series of cuts to state aid following the Great Recession.ⁱⁱ These cuts did the most damage in school districts with lower property values and incomes.
- Independent analyses by the Maryland Center on Economic Policy, the National Center on Education and the Economy, and the Education Law Center show that the Maryland school districts facing the greatest obstacles often are less well funded than other districts.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Maryland's compensatory education system is due for updates. The state's method for counting low-income students is becoming less effective, and our system does too little to address the unique challenges facing communities with concentrated poverty. The current reform process represents a chance to address these issues.

Better Policy Can Make a Difference

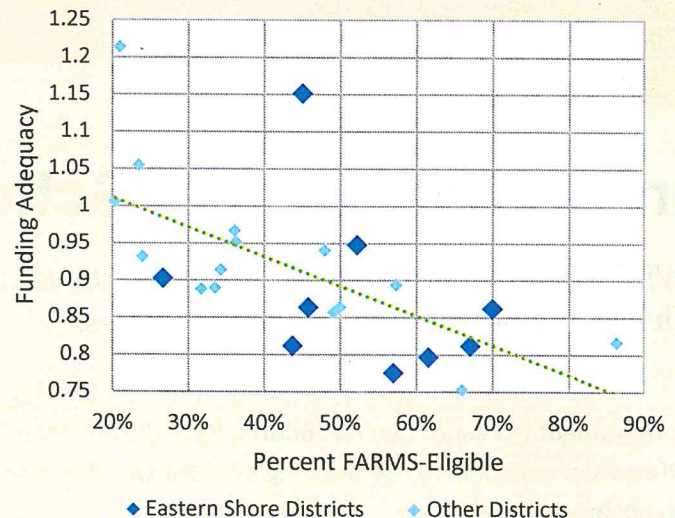
In a new report (available at mdeconomy.org/edfunding), the Maryland Center on Economic Policy examines the state's compensatory education system and recommends policy solutions to make it more effective. Policymakers should take three steps to ensure that all schools have the resources to set children up for success:

- **MODERNIZE THE WAY LOW-INCOME STUDENTS ARE COUNTED.** An effective compensatory education system requires accurate data on the number of low-income students in each school district. The state historically counted students as low income if they were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. This method is less reliable today than in the past because many schools now provide free lunch to every student—including every school in Somerset County. A better measurement method is direct certification, which involves matching school records with existing income data from other public agencies.
- **STRENGTHEN SUPPORT FOR LOW-INCOME DISTRICTS.** Maryland's lower-income school districts are less well funded than wealthier districts, which makes it harder for them to balance their budgets, attract well-qualified teachers, and ensure that students succeed. To fix this imbalance, Maryland should strengthen compensatory education by increasing the low-income student weight used in the funding formula.
- **TARGET RESOURCES TOWARD CONCENTRATIONS OF POVERTY.** Currently, school districts get the same amount of compensatory education aid for each low-income student. However, the barriers students face magnify when large numbers of low-income students attend the same school. This makes it harder for all students in the school to succeed. Providing additional resources in communities that face concentrated poverty would enable students in these areas to access the supports they need to thrive.

Maryland schools at their best show what is possible when we make strong investments in learning. However, too many children on the Eastern Shore and across Maryland do not have the same access to a first-rate education. This Commission has an opportunity to ensure that all children can achieve their full potential. By strengthening Maryland's supports for students who face barriers to learning, we can build an education system to be proud of.

Eastern Shore Schools Are Underfunded, and Lower-Income Districts Are Hit Hardest

Funding adequacy and low income share, 2014–2015 school year



Source: MDCEP analysis of Department of Legislative Services and MD Report Card data.

ⁱ "FY2018 State Aid Calculations," Maryland State Department of Education, June 9, 2017,

<http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/about/Documents/DBS/BudgetRes/StateAidCalculationsFY2018060917.pdf>

ⁱⁱ "Adequacy of Education Funding in Maryland," Department of Legislative Services, January 9, 2017, <http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/Pubs/CommTFWorkgrp/2017-Innovation-Excellence-in-Education-Commission-2017-01-09.pdf#page=77>

ⁱⁱⁱ Christopher Meyer, "Expanding Educational Opportunity in Maryland: The Role of Funding Formulas in Increasing Equity," Maryland Center on Economic Policy, 2017, http://www.mdeconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/MDCEP_EdFundingMD_2017_FNL2lo.pdf
 Bruce Baker, Danielle Farrie, Monete Johnson, Theresa Luhm, and David Sciarra, "Is School Funding Fair? A National Report Card: Sixth Edition," Education Law Center, January 2017, http://www.edlawcenter.org/assets/files/pdfs/publications/National_Report_Card_2017.pdf
 Marc Tucker, "Summary: Gap Analysis for Building Block 2," National Center on Education and the Economy, July 26, 2017, <http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/Pubs/CommTFWorkgrp/2017-Innovation-Excellence-in-Education-Commission-2017-07-26.pdf#page=52>

Current Funding											Table D.3a Impact of CWI on Total Program Amount								
County	State Aid without GCEI	GCEI Variable	2017 GCEI From MSDE	2017 Total State Education Aid	2016 Total Local Appropriation	State + Local Total	% Local Funding	Local Funding % Rank	2016 MSDE Education Effort	FTE Enrollment	Total Per Pupil Funding	Total Funding Rank	Local Per Pupil Funding	Local Funding Rank	Total Program With CWI	Total Program Without CWI	Difference	% Chg	
Allegany	\$ 76,397,409	0	\$ -	\$ 76,397,409	\$ 29,837,545	\$ 106,234,954	28%	20	1.21	8317	\$ 12,773	10	\$ 3,588	20	106,193,944	130,941,978	(24,748,034)		
Anne Arundel	331,282,342	0.018	9,783,912	341,066,254	620,575,900	\$ 961,642,154	65%	6	1.36	78233	\$ 12,292	14	\$ 7,932	6	1,161,936,991	1,047,733,987	114,203,004		
Baltimore	833,274,063	0.008	5,966,978	839,241,041	258,212,181	\$ 1,097,453,222	24%	22	1.15	79158	\$ 13,864	6	\$ 3,262	22	1,449,109,710	1,359,389,971	89,719,739		
Baltimore City	591,501,044	0.042	22,692,097	614,193,141	748,849,077	\$ 1,363,042,218	55%	11	1.51	107378	\$ 12,694	11	\$ 6,974	11	1,636,358,800	1,536,487,136	99,871,664		
Calvert	77,680,276	0.021	2,276,909	79,957,185	114,876,122	\$ 194,833,307	59%	8	1.60	15607	\$ 12,484	13	\$ 7,361	7	225,294,976	208,799,793	16,495,183		
Caroline	50,864,322	0	-	50,864,322	13,765,180	\$ 64,629,502	21%	24	0.93	5305	\$ 12,183	17	\$ 2,595	24	73,873,587	80,036,389	(6,162,802)		
Carroll	125,214,726	0.014	2,453,243	127,667,969	176,202,000	\$ 303,869,969	58%	9	1.53	25178	\$ 12,069	18	\$ 6,998	10	338,196,159	343,346,354	(5,150,195)		
Cecil	104,332,703	0	-	104,332,703	79,750,778	\$ 184,083,481	43%	16	1.41	15102	\$ 12,189	16	\$ 5,281	17	220,398,254	220,398,254	-		
Charles	161,287,155	0.02	3,547,566	164,834,721	166,121,100	\$ 330,955,821	50%	14	1.71	25475	\$ 12,991	8	\$ 6,521	12	370,978,635	351,638,517	19,340,118		
Dorchester	39,392,736	0	-	39,392,736	18,963,336	\$ 58,356,072	32%	19	1.20	4515	\$ 12,925	9	\$ 4,200	19	63,156,163	68,424,879	(5,268,716)		
Frederick	220,885,608	0.024	6,583,696	227,469,304	239,238,105	\$ 466,707,409	51%	13	1.48	39478	\$ 11,822	20	\$ 6,060	14	560,038,906	534,898,669	25,140,237		
Garrett	19,458,679	0	-	19,458,679	26,590,600	\$ 46,049,279	58%	9	1.19	3682	\$ 12,507	12	\$ 7,222	8	45,089,530	55,597,447	(10,507,917)		
Harford	198,420,445	0	-	198,420,445	228,208,971	\$ 426,629,416	53%	12	1.38	36640	\$ 11,644	22	\$ 6,228	13	550,008,571	512,589,534	37,419,037		
Howard	228,143,954	0.015	5,592,344	233,736,298	544,144,625	\$ 777,880,923	70%	3	1.93	53674	\$ 14,493	2	\$ 10,138	2	766,474,431	677,696,225	88,778,206		
Kent	8,206,468	0.01	133,082	8,339,550	17,432,020	\$ 25,771,570	68%	5	1.14	1912	\$ 13,479	7	\$ 9,117	4	28,665,436	31,056,810	(2,391,374)		
Montgomery	603,376,278	0.034	35,976,870	639,353,148	1,507,631,597	\$ 2,146,984,745	70%	3	1.53	152043	\$ 14,121	3	\$ 9,916	3	2,467,169,557	2,115,925,864	351,243,693		
Prince George's	1,022,168,711	0.048	41,083,951	1,063,252,662	669,292,125	\$ 1,732,544,787	39%	17	1.48	123191	\$ 14,064	4	\$ 5,433	16	2,110,671,451	1,869,505,271	241,166,180		
Queen Anne's	32,872,840	0.011	571,562	33,444,402	52,850,293	\$ 86,294,695	61%	7	1.27	7462	\$ 11,565	23	\$ 7,083	9	95,172,967	103,112,640	(7,939,673)		
Somerset	28,461,948	0	-	28,461,948	9,395,088	\$ 37,857,036	25%	21	1.21	2716	\$ 13,939	5	\$ 3,459	21	252,865,758	234,351,954	18,513,804		
St. Mary's	99,608,582	0.002	235,871	99,844,453	98,015,001	\$ 197,859,454	50%	14	1.35	16948	\$ 11,675	21	\$ 5,783	15	43,559,075	46,290,197	(2,731,122)		
Talbot	13,112,682	0	-	13,112,682	36,216,540	\$ 49,329,222	73%	2	0.85	4401	\$ 11,209	24	\$ 8,229	5	58,485,958	63,365,068	(4,879,110)		
Washington	165,314,485	0	-	165,314,485	94,844,030	\$ 260,158,515	36%	18	1.29	21724	\$ 11,976	19	\$ 4,366	18	300,346,598	313,841,795	(13,495,197)		
Wicomico	139,171,672	0	-	139,171,672	41,306,646	\$ 180,478,318	23%	23	1.08	14762	\$ 12,226	15	\$ 2,798	23	203,312,762	216,060,321	(12,747,559)		
Worcester	18,967,262	0	-	18,967,262	78,718,960	\$ 97,686,222	81%	1	1.14	6275	\$ 15,568	1	\$ 12,545	1	89,045,641	94,628,736	(5,583,095)		
Total	\$ 5,189,396,390		\$ 136,898,081	\$ 5,326,294,471	\$ 5,871,037,820	\$ 11,197,332,291				\$ 845,861	\$ 13,238		\$ 153,088		\$ 13,216,403,860	\$ 12,216,117,789	\$ 1,000,286,071		
										Average Local Per Pupil				24 \$ 6,379					

COMMISSION ON INNOVATION & EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

Chairman, Kirwan, members of the Commission

My name is David Hanlin. I am a resident of Wicomico County. I am here as a concerned citizen and business person.

In 2011, while consulting with various businesses around the State one of the most frequent concern I heard from clients and friends was about the quality of the work force. The work force was described as falling short on 1) initiative, 2) the ability to work in teams, 3) self direction, 4) critical thinking, and 4) work ethic.

It struck me that much of what they were describing was similar to descriptions of executive function in children. Learning more, I discovered that 90% of these skills are developed before age 5.

I have since learned that other skills equally if not more important to successful lives also develop primarily before age 5. Reading, language, and writing skills are critical, yet assessments point to wide spread cause for concern here, too. Often people point to the schools as failing our students and our families. This criticism is misdirected, because the implied expectations are unrealistic in many cases.

The Campaign for Grade Level Reading has found that "Reading proficiency by third grade is the most important predictor of high school graduation and career success. Yet every year, more than 80 percent of low-income children miss this crucial milestone." Why? Too many children start kindergarten lacking basic language skills. While this statistic is striking, the phenomenon is not limited to children from poverty or who are raised in homes where English is not the primary language.

Even middle class families often face obstacles that prevent them from fully preparing young children to start school ready to learn. Regardless of race, gender, or socio-economic status, when five year old children start kindergarten 1 ½ to 2 years behind they are likely not going to be successful as students or as adults. Too many never catch up.

Some people argue that preparing children is the family's responsibility. This may be true. But the way the system works today, too many children are failing. Relying solely on families is not working. Children should have access to an age appropriate learning environment that is of high quality can in the most critical years of development. I believe that only then will the foundation be established to build the world class public education system that this Commission is striving to define.

I urge this Commission to include in its report a recommendation to establish and design a funding scheme for a state-wide system of universal pre-k. It should be a mixed system built around the public school system, but which recognizes the needs and contributions of high quality private licensed providers. In this way quality can be best assured and fiscal responsibility exercised. In such a system each LEA should have maximum flexibility to meet the needs of its communities.

Nobel Laureate James Heckman said, "The best way to improve the American workforce in the 21st century is to invest in early childhood education, to ensure that even the most disadvantaged children have the opportunity to succeed alongside their more advantaged peers." But investment in early childhood education will benefit all of Maryland's children.

September 14, 2017

vensville Middle School