

DRAFT

A Vision for a World-Class School System

Maryland students will be among the best students in the world, catching up with the students in the countries with the best education performance in the world by using the same strategies that those countries used to get far ahead of Maryland. No less important, Maryland will substantially close the gap between Maryland's top-performing students and those who struggle to keep up, by increasing the proportion of formula funding going to schools serving disadvantaged students, strengthening the coordination of social services to students in schools in high-poverty neighborhoods, extending quality early childhood education to more students who need it, providing strong incentives for Maryland's top teachers and principals to serve in those schools, providing much stronger curriculum support to teachers in those schools designed to help disadvantaged students produce the kind of student work that earn high grades, giving teachers much more time to tutor students who need one-on-one help to catch up and work in teams with disadvantaged students and other teachers to help students who are far behind, focusing state efforts on schools where many students are falling behind and getting them advice and mentoring assistance from some of the best teachers and principals in the state.

To Achieve the Vision....

Maryland will adopt a new 10th grade target for college and career readiness that will create a high bar for all students, but students who have trouble meeting that standard by the end of 10th grade will have two additional years to get there. That target will be based on the literacy required to be successful in the first year of Maryland's open admission post-secondary education institutions. Students who get to this standard by the end of the 10th grade will have access all over Maryland to junior and senior year programs that will prepare them for the most demanding universities in the world, enable them to complete a two-year college associates degree at no cost to the family by the time they graduate high school or go into a demanding career and technical training program in high school that will launch them on a rewarding career at graduation. Schools will be held accountable for their success in getting all students to these standards.

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The teaching profession will be transformed to that of a high status profession, accompanied by the expectations that go along with being a highly paid professional, but the overall cost of the system will increase very little after the transition to the new system because the increased cost of teacher compensation will be offset by decreased cost of high teacher turnover, less need for specialists and managers in district central offices.

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Teachers will spend less of their time in front of classes teaching but they will have more time to tutor students who need individual help and work with small groups

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of students; to work together to improve the curriculum, design highly effective lessons, pinpoint the problems faced by individual students and develop plans for addressing them; all over the world, whenever this has been tried, students perform at much higher levels even with larger classes.

Standards for getting into teacher preparation programs and receiving teacher certification will be much higher but this will not result in a shortage of teachers because as standards for getting into teacher education programs go up, very able high school graduates who would not have considered teaching as a career will start applying because they want a professional education that is demanding and in a field that is perceived to be high status.

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While it will cost more money to attract top high school graduates into teaching, improve teacher education and pay teachers competitive salaries, as Maryland's teachers get better and better, Maryland districts will need fewer school administrators and central office specialists and more of Maryland's tax dollars for education will be spent in the schools and less on the rest of the system.

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Maryland will spend more to provide early childhood education, wrap-around social services and extra teachers for disadvantaged children, but many more of those children will arrive at school ready to learn and they will be much more likely to stay on track to be college-and-career-ready than they are now, becoming tax-paying contributors.

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Maryland will be spending more to help teachers monitor the progress of every student and make sure that, if a student begins to fall behind, that student gets what he or she needs to catch up quickly, which will save much larger sums that are now spent on special education.

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Maryland will spend more to fund a career ladder system for teachers and school leaders, compensating them more as they get better and better at the work and take on more responsibility, but much of that cost will be funded by terminating expenditures on salary increments for taking courses that contribute nothing to the expertise of the teachers and on professional development that has been shown to be very ineffective.

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The new school finance system will more fairly distribute the state's funds to its school districts but it will also constrain how that money is spent by those districts; the districts will have to show that they will spend that money in ways that research shows will get the best results in student performance for the money that is spent.