



Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education

William E. Kirwan
Chairman

January 9, 2017

The Honorable Larry Hogan
The Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr.
The Honorable Michael E. Busch
The Honorable Joan Carter Conway
The Honorable Edward J. Kasemeyer
The Honorable Sheila E. Hixson
The Honorable Maggie McIntosh

Ladies and Gentlemen:

As required by Chapters 701 and 702 of the 2016 session, I am pleased to submit this interim report of the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education. First, I want to thank you for appointing such a knowledgeable and diverse group of individuals who, to a person, are dedicated to addressing the education needs and interests of Maryland's students.

We have just begun our exploration of the wide ranging charges and responsibilities for this commission that are stated in the legislation. Therefore, as an interim report, this letter makes no recommendations for actions. It does, however, contain a synopsis of our activities thus far, as well as our vision for the work we will embark on during 2017, leading to our final report and recommendations presented to you in December 2017.

Our first meeting was held on September 29, 2016, with the main goal of introducing ourselves, providing background information for the commission, and reviewing the charge of the commission. Specifically, Dr. Karen B. Salmon, State Superintendent of Schools, presented an overview of education policy since 2002, the year in which the Commission on Education Finance, Equity, and Excellence, known as the Thornton Commission, completed its work. The Department of Legislative Services provided an overview of education funding in Maryland since 2002. Finally, the Maryland State Department of Education presented an update on the study of adequacy of education funding in Maryland by Augenblick, Palaich, and Associates (APA), as well as additional reports on various adequacy-related topics that APA produced.

During the second meeting, which was held on October 31, 2016, the commission focused on the federal and international landscape of education policy in terms of accountability and student performance. Lee Posey from the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) presented an overview of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act as well as summarized a report recently completed by NCSL in collaboration with a group of legislators and legislative staff from various states called *No Time to Lose: How to Build a World-Class Education System State by State*. The commission then heard from Marc Tucker with the National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE), who presented lessons learned from top performing education systems in other countries and in the United States, such as Massachusetts. Finally, David Driscoll, the former Commissioner of Education in Massachusetts, joined Mark Tucker for a discussion of how Massachusetts implemented education reforms that led to Massachusetts becoming a top performing system in the world.

On December 8, 2016, APA presented its *Final Report of the Study of Adequacy of Funding for Education in Maryland* to the commission and recommendations for altering the current education funding formulas and requirements. In total, APA recommended increasing prekindergarten to grade 12 (P-12) funding by \$2.9 billion, including a \$1.9 billion increase in State funds and \$1.0 billion in local funds. The recommendations are summarized in the Issue Papers for the 2017 legislative session prepared by the Department of Legislative Services, which can be found here: <http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/Pubs/legislegal/2017rs-Issue-Papers.pdf#page=76>

During the December 8, 2016, meeting, Julie Bell with NCSL described the *No Time to Lose* report in more depth by identifying four common elements that can be seen in top-performing nations' education systems and the next steps that states can take, including benchmarking current state policies against top-performing systems and conducting a gap analysis. Finally, Betsy Brown Ruzzi, with NCEE, reviewed the results from the latest administration of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) that were announced on December 7, 2016. PISA is an international comparative study of 15-year-old students' knowledge of mathematics, reading, and science conducted every three years. The United States average student performance in science and reading was flat, ranking twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth, respectively, out of the 72 international education systems participating in PISA 2015; this is about the same as the PISA 2012 results for the United States. However, U.S. students' performance overall dropped to fortieth in mathematics. Massachusetts moved up in the international rankings, to fifth in reading, ninth in science, and thirty-fourth in math, if Massachusetts and other subnational systems (e.g., Ontario, Canada) were countries.

The commission concluded the December 8 meeting by agreeing to use the four common elements of world-class education systems from the NCSL report as its framework to evaluate Maryland's education system and make recommendations for funding and innovative policies aimed at moving Maryland's education system from one of the best in the United States to one of the best in the world.

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While that concluded our work during the 2016 interim, the commission will also be meeting on January 9, 2017, to hear about structuring the education system to retain existing and produce more high-quality teachers and principals. The commission will also discuss the benchmarking process that will be used to evaluate Maryland's education system so that this work can be completed while the commission itself take a hiatus during the legislative session. While the commission will not hold meetings during the legislative session, commission members will have ample time to read through the APA report to prepare for the work of the commission during the 2017 interim.

Should you wish to view any of our meetings or review the materials that have been presented to us, you may use this link: <http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/Pubs/CommTFWorkgrp/2016-Innovation-Excellence-in-Education-Commission.pdf>. We look forward with great enthusiasm to continuing our work and presenting you with a comprehensive report responsive to your charge in December 2017.

Sincerely,



William E. Kirwan
Chair

WEK/RHH/mlm

Enclosure

cc: Member, Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education

Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education 2016 Interim Membership Roster

William E. Kirwan, Chair

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