

# ADVOCATES

FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

*Advocates for Children and Youth (ACY) is a statewide non-partisan non-profit focused on improving the lives and experiences of Maryland's children through policy change and program improvement. Our multi-issue platform helps us to improve the entirety of children's worlds—the systems they touch, the people they interact with, and the environment where they live.*

September 14, 2018

To: The Commission on Innovation and Excellence, Kirwan Commission  
Cc: Legislative Black Caucus

*Submitted via email:*

[PreK-12InnovationandExcellenceCommission@mlis.state.md.us](mailto:PreK-12InnovationandExcellenceCommission@mlis.state.md.us); [Black.Caucus@house.state.md.us](mailto:Black.Caucus@house.state.md.us)

## Addressing Race Equity in Maryland's Education Funding Formula

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of Advocates for Children and Youth (ACY). ACY has been engaged with the work of the Kirwan Commission and has addressed ongoing concerns about equity in general, but more specifically as it pertains to race. We have addressed grave concerns over the lack of demographic diversity of commissioners as well as the lack of intentionality in looking at historic underfunding in predominately African American jurisdictions and what costs will be associated with remedying these inequities.

During the 2018 legislative session, we supported HB 1697 that would amend the Maryland constitution to require the casino gaming revenue to be used for education. We submitted an amendment to request that this revenue be targeted to address racial inequities in the state of Maryland, especially since Maryland is comprised of approximately 30% African American and 10% Latino.<sup>1</sup> In addition to racial demographics, we have had ongoing concerns that community and family engagement has been lackluster as well as engagement with HBCUs in the state and other higher education institutions such as community colleges, that serve a predominate population of African American and Latino students.

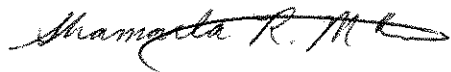
LEAs in jurisdictions that have been gravely underfunded and have the most "at risk" schools in the State of Maryland should not have to choose between hiring a new teacher and sending someone to Annapolis to engage with the work of the Kirwan Commission. Therefore:

**We urge the Kirwan Commission to require the State of Maryland to: FULLY FUND A RACE EQUITY COMMISSION** that is comprised of a demographic more reflective of the State of Maryland, in order to create equity in the decision-making process, measure negative externalities in the Kirwan recommendations and proposed subsequent legislation, collect and analyze data and conduct intensive quantitative and qualitative research on racial inequities in Maryland and social impact analysis (SIA). This Commission should be housed in the GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY so that robust policies that address racial disparities can be a measure of accountability for school improvement and performance.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/md>

For more information, please contact Shamarla R. McCoy, J.D. at [smccoy@acy.org](mailto:smccoy@acy.org) for more information and a more detailed analysis of race equity in education funding.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shamarla R. McCoy". The signature is written in black ink and includes a stylized flourish at the end.

Shamarla R. McCoy, J.D.  
Education Policy Director  
Advocates for Children and Youth