

**From:** Jane Sundius  
**To:** [Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education; Joy](#); [Madaleno, Richard Senator](#); [McIntosh, Maggie Delegate](#); [Morgan Showalter](#); [Washington, Alonzo Delegate](#); [Ferguson, Bill Senator](#); [Kalman R. Hettleman](#)  
**Cc:** [Sue Fothergill](#)  
**Subject:** Attendance Works Recommendations to Address Racial Disparities in Maryland's Public Schools  
**Date:** Tuesday, September 25, 2018 2:15:16 PM

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Dear Ms Shaeffer, Members of the Kirwan Commission, and Work Group Four:

Attendance Works would like to respond to the request by Work Group Four that stakeholders provide recommendations regarding policies and funding needed to address racial and ethnic disparities.

It is our view that the charge to Work Group 4 is to make recommendations that will provide more resources to students at risk of failure. To date, it has made substantial progress addressing the needs of poor, special education and English learner students, but has not addressed the needs of children of color. While the Commission must be careful to comply with constitutional prohibitions on race-based policies, it should not ignore the very real biases and limitations that children of color face in our schools. It should include policies and programs that will work to eradicate racial and ethnic disparities.

Attendance Works was hopeful that Dr. Toldson would have a chance to review the Work Group materials at this point in the process (i.e. before APA begins estimating costs,) knowing that he would have a more comprehensive and informed set of recommendations than we would. It is our understanding that he will comment later in the process. In the interim, advocates and stakeholders at the Work Group session were asked to send explicit recommendations related to racial disparities for consideration by Wednesday. Thus, we reiterate the recommendations we made in our submitted comments:

1. We urge the Work Group to explicitly acknowledge, in this document, the powerful, inequitable effect of race and ethnicity on students' educational outcomes in Maryland.
2. We recommend that it, and the full Commission, include specific requirements for the Maryland State Department of Education to regularly and, publicly release data that disaggregates student outcomes by both poverty and race for every Maryland school, so that the separate impact of race/ethnicity and poverty are clear.
3. We recommend that schools with high performance disparities for ESSA identified student subgroups be eligible for
  - a. resources to undertake a needs assessment to determine the extent of and steps necessary to address these disparities, and
  - b. funds to support intensive training in racial bias, cultural competence and interventions for all adults in these schools.
  - c. funds to support the implementation of alternatives to suspensions, expulsions, citations, and arrests, including, but not limited to, programs, interventions, pedagogy and curriculum, such as restorative practices, social emotional curricula, and Multi Tiered Systems of Support.

Thank you again for all of your work on this important effort -

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For more information about Attendance Works, please see:

[www.Attendanceworks.org](http://www.Attendanceworks.org)

