



Monica E. Goldson, Ed.D.
Interim Chief Executive Officer

VIA ELECTRONIC EMAIL

October 1, 2018

Dear Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education:

Thank you, Dr. Kirwan, and members of the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education, for your commitment to educational equity in the State of Maryland. Overall, the Commission's work will serve as a catalyst to improve educational outcomes for all students in Maryland; however, in particular in Prince George's County, the Commission recommendations could have a transformative effect if acted upon in the upcoming legislative session. Our district is making progress toward implementation in many of the areas of focus and we look forward to partnering with our Prince George's County House Delegation, State Senators, County Council and Board of Education to see these recommendations into fruition.

My staff and I reviewed the recommendations from the Commission and offer these small revisions or areas of clarification for the Commission review (see attached document). Please feel free to contact me if at any point you have additional questions or want to follow up on our recommended revisions.

Again, on behalf of the 134,000 students in Prince George's County Public Schools, thank you for your dedication to improving the lives of all Maryland students. Please feel free to contact me if at any point you have additional questions or want to follow up on our recommended revisions.

Sincerely,

Monica E. Goldson, Ed.D.
Interim Chief Executive Officer

Attachment

- c: Members, Prince George's County State Senate
Members, Prince George's County House Delegation
Members, Prince George's County Council
Members, Prince George's County Board of Education

Kirwan Commission: Early Childhood

Element Detail 1a. – Full-day prekindergarten programs better prepare students for kindergarten and the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment and help low-income parents who can't afford the skyrocketing costs of childcare. Currently, the state of Maryland requires school districts to offer half-day prekindergarten programs but does not provide funding for full-day kindergarten. The state also does not include prekindergarten students in its funding formula, which serves as a disincentive to offer full-day prekindergarten.

Kirwan Commission: More Resources for At-Risk Students

Element Detail 4a. – Should the fixed weights be prioritized to ensure the students with the highest needs receive the necessary resources? Currently, formula-based funding may provide additional resources to students who do not demonstrate need, which may limit the availability of resources for students who do.

Element Detail 4a. – What is the purpose of the needs assessment if the identification of additional resources is based on the number of free and reduced meal students?

Element Detail 4a. – Prince George's County Public Schools supports the implementation of the Community Schools model. For consideration, allow LEA to identify the best position level to ensure implementation of the program is done with fidelity. Current recommendation for the position to be a Vice Principal/administrator is restrictive.

Element Detail 4d. – English Learner teachers must have specialized training and proficiency in other languages. There should be some consideration for the impact this may have on recruitment of this hard to staff area.

Kirwan Commission: High Quality Teachers & Leaders Section

Element Detail 2A. – Consider adding a 7th Design Assumption that requires universities to ground teacher preparation in current theory, practices and research that mirror the existing dynamics of schools and the populations in which they serve. (Rationale: Many universities rely heavily upon historical frameworks and theory for teacher preparation while falling short of meeting the demands of today's diverse learner, assessment models and universal curricula.)

Element 2A.2. – Consider adding language about *encouraging teachers to complete a portion of their practicum in school settings that are culturally diverse. (Rationale: Culturally diverse schools provide seminal training on cognitive function and cultural paradigms; yet, far too often, these schools are overlooked as models for new teacher training. Considering the diverging dynamics of schools in the state of Maryland, providing beginning teachers with this type of preparation will equip them with the knowledge and skills necessary to work in schools where there are often shortages of highly skilled new teachers.) *or encourage districts/universities to offer practica in high needs, high poverty schools

Element 2.G.8.I. – Remove word “Key.” (Rationale: The use of the term “key” is arbitrary and subjective in this context. “Senior teachers that hold a doctorate...” suffices.)

Element 2a. – Teacher preparation will be much more rigorous, and induction will be integrated with teacher preparation more systematically.

1. Universities offer teacher training programs and evaluate their students' competencies at a level of rigor comparable to the countries with the top student performance by:

Consider including course(s) in the K-5/6-12 teacher preparation programs that focus on [technological literacy](#). This will build a pre-service teacher's competency around the use of technology and relevant multimedia tools and resources that will improve their ability to seamlessly integrate technological practices into instruction that will stimulate and foster students' ability to become technological literate citizens. (Rationale: Technological literacy is extremely relevant to the students we teach each day and a teacher's pedagogy needs to match a student's [digital native] capacity.)

2. The practicum in teacher training will produce teachers whose knowledge and skills are comparable in every way to the knowledge and skills of the teachers produced by the teacher training institutions in the top-performing countries. Consider adding the opportunity to extend the practicum experience to a full school year. Then, it may be helpful to include those students who have successfully completed the prerequisite courses and are ready to engage in the practicum experience to receive a financial stipend (provided in partnership between the state and the IHE) for their year-long practicum to offset the lack of an opportunity to work a job which may gravely impact their ability to provide for themselves during that year. (Rationale: The above recommendation *not being considered* can grossly impact the pre-service teachers from the minority racial groups we are trying to attract into the education field. In our experience, many of these students more times than often have financial challenges and/or are receiving financial aid services just to stay in school.)

2A.2a. Recommendation of adding 12 additional credit hours to the pre-service program: If a university decided to add 12 credit hours, consider using these additional credit hours for a dual purpose: 1. to satisfy the beginning requirements credit hours toward an additional certification (in high needs specialty areas – special education, ELL, STEM, etc.) if the student decides to return to the same IHE, or 2. toward a master's degree if the student decides to return to the same IHE. (Rationale: The above incentive gives the additional semester exponential value in the following ways: enhance their practice and expertise once they become an in-service teacher; increase their future earning potential; and impact entry into the teacher leader pipeline/succession.)