



LARRY HOGAN
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MARYLAND
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

November 27, 2018

The Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr.
President of the Senate
State House
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Michael E. Busch
Speaker of the House
State House
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear President Miller and Speaker Busch:

I would like to commend the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education on their hard work and diligence over the past two years, pursuant to House Bill 999/Senate Bill 905. As you know, I have been supportive of and endorsed many of the initial proposals that have come from the Commission.

This past session I signed House Bill 1415 - *Education - Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education*, which implemented preliminary recommendations the Commission made earlier this year. In addition, my budget provided nearly \$12 million to fund a series of education initiatives proposed in the legislation.

I write today to share my views on what I believe is an important area of agreement between the Commission and myself: the imperative of ensuring a strong system of accountability is put in place so that the Commission's recommendations can have a truly transformative impact on our local school systems.

Education has always been, and will continue to remain, my Administration's top priority. I believe that every single child in Maryland deserves a world-class education regardless of what neighborhood they happen to grow up in. The most recent budget that we worked together to pass includes historically high funding for K-12 education for the fourth year in a row. We have consistently invested at levels that are above and beyond the legislative funding formulas, and I am proud that every single school system in Maryland saw an increased investment by the state in this fiscal year.

In the November election, Maryland voters made education funding a top priority by approving Question 1, which I strongly supported, to ensure revenues from casinos are going directly to classrooms to supplement the existing record funding. This will provide an additional \$4.4 billion in aid to schools, which will be crucial to implementing the Commission's recommendations. But providing record funding for our schools isn't enough. With this historic investment of state taxpayer money our citizens, parents, teachers, and especially our students have the right to expect and deserve more accountability, better local management, and the strongest oversight possible.

The authorizing statute specifically tasked the Commission with reviewing and assessing accountability measures as one of the most important components of the Commission's work. Earlier this year I met with Dr. Kirwan and discussed that accountability would be key to implementing the Commission's recommendations. Increased funding and strong accountability are not mutually exclusive; in fact, they must be aligned to ensure that Marylanders are receiving a world class education and good value for the state tax dollars invested.

Our Administration has been leading the fight for more accountability in our local school systems, pushing to raise academic standards, and to root out corruption and mismanagement. Unfortunately, far too many of our deserving children continue to be stuck in schools that have persistently failed to give them the education they deserve. This is unacceptable and we must make it a shared priority to shine a light on this injustice and provide these children with the resources they need - which include the accountability and oversight that have been missing for so long.

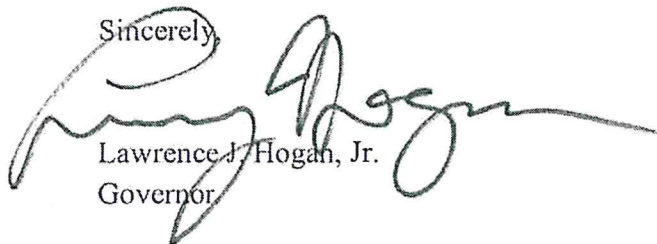
This past session I introduced legislation that would improve upon Maryland's current status of having the second lowest academic accountability ranking in the nation, and which would align our state with the national average under the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). I also strongly opposed the General Assembly's passage of legislation to remove school construction oversight from the state's fiscal leaders, including their own representative, State Treasurer Nancy Kopp.

Amid a number of ethical lapses in multiple local school systems, including criminal convictions, grading irregularities, and procurement crises, I introduced legislation this past session to create an independent education Investigator General. This position, which would be appointed by both of you,, would increase accountability in our schools by allowing Maryland citizens to report potential cases of wrongdoing, abuse, and unethical conduct and would create a fair and transparent system to evaluate these cases. I will be reintroducing this legislation this session and ask for your support.

As the Commission prepares to release their final recommendations, we must make certain that we do not make the same mistakes that were made during the implementation of the Thornton Commission. Mr. Marc Tucker, consultant to the Commission and president of the National Center on Education and the Economy, stated to the Commission at the October 10th meeting, "I think Thornton failed to deliver the improvement in student performance that its authors envisioned because no one was held accountable." We cannot duplicate the failures of the past.

Maryland students, teachers, and taxpayers are giving us a once in a generation opportunity to get this right. Let's not let them down. In the coming days and weeks, I look forward to working in partnership with you and the Commission to ensure that strong accountability measures are a key component to the reforms that could stem from the Commission's report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Larry Hogan", written over the printed name and title.

Lawrence J. Hogan, Jr.
Governor

