

29NOV18 Public Hearing530pm

L Name	F Name	Affiliation	Written Testimony
Albertsen	Randi	Innovations in Education	<input type="checkbox"/>
Altema	Irnande	Mental Health Association of	<input type="checkbox"/>
Becker	Neil	MSEA	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bergman	Dayana	Parent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Calhoun	Victoria		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Carroll	Karen	Center for Art Education, Mar	<input type="checkbox"/>
Damon	Patrick	MSEA	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dancis	Jerome	University of Maryland Mathe	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Dudley	Theresa	MCEA	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gallant	Maya	Intersection Baltimore	<input type="checkbox"/>
Geller	Paul		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Hrinko	Lori	MSEA	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kastle	Denise	Decoding Dyslexia Maryland -	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Lewis	Brittany		<input type="checkbox"/>
McKenna	Melissa		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
McLaughlin	Linda	MSEA	<input type="checkbox"/>
Morris	Jill	MCEA	<input type="checkbox"/>
Owens	Ahniajuho	Intersection Baltimore	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parker	Janna	Constituent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prouty	Doug	MCEA	<input type="checkbox"/>
Raup	Michael		<input type="checkbox"/>
Robinson	Justin	PG County Educators' Associat	<input type="checkbox"/>
Schultz	Laura	Decoding Dyslexia Maryland	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Shroyer	Nathan		<input type="checkbox"/>
Silver	Edward	Kent County Public Schools	<input type="checkbox"/>
Srygley	Mairin	Green Party	<input type="checkbox"/>
Storey	Syretha	MSCCA - NASA Goddard Child	<input type="checkbox"/>
Taylor	Lavonne	MSCCA - Forest Hill Nature Pr	<input type="checkbox"/>
Warzer	Jill		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Zecher	Marilyn		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**REMARKS: Public Hearing: Kirwan Commission -
Victoria Calhoun, Parent and Citizen Anne Arundel County
November 29, 2018 House Office Building, Annapolis, MD**

Dr. Kirwan, and members of the Commission. I am here to express my dismay at the processes this commission has used to conduct the public's business for more than 2 years. I will remind you all that I spoke to you October 25, 2017 public hearing at Largo High School, in Upper Marlboro.

At that time I physically gave you Dr. Kirwan a copy of the Government Accounting Office 12 steps to high-quality cost estimation and I provided you information on the US Army's use of its cost model called the Institutional Training Resource Model (ITRM). What I want the Citizens of this State to know today, is that I feel the information I provided this Commission was summarily and systematically ignored and dismissed. I think the letter from the Attorney General's office included in today's meeting materials supports my opinion. As the last speaker at 11:00pm I felt no one was listening to what I said, but to subsequently have my testimony be mishandled, not included the Commissions meeting minutes and more importantly not thoughtfully considered, is disgraceful and disrespectful to me as a person. The Public has a right to meaningful input and not check the block public meetings.

I wish to state again today that Using Information Age Cost Modeling is the appropriate 21st Century alternative to a 19th Century Funding formula! And anything less only serves to continue to "bin" our children into current educational funding programs that are clearly not working.

Poverty and Race do not cause kids to drop out of schools. Hopelessness does.

Hopeless ness built from: Toxic School cultures that continue to foster low expectations both in the school and in the kids; Teachers that are young, relatively inexperienced and improperly resourced to do their jobs; communities that desperately want to break the poverty lifecycle and look to government for systematic change. This Commission has seemingly failed to challenge a school system that employs a Corporate Model of education that systematically dehumanizes and objectifies the Kids against current best educational system practices. Binning complex human issues into funding programs and allocating money through the use of an antiquated formula based approach is not a 21st Century solution. We cannot afford to throw money at these problems. Clearly with Question 1 approval, 4.4 billion dollars will be available. However the money must be thoughtfully applied to the challenges we face and not thrown into currently failing approaches that are not delivering on the promise of our youth of today.

This is the information age and the citizens of the state deserve systems that are run cost effectively and accountably anything less is negligence. We need to implement a Cost Modeling approach to how we fund our schools.

Thank you.

Victoria Calhoun
(410) 551-8217
Email-chnooker@aol.com

Exceptional Learning Results From Exceptionally Good Textbooks Singapore Yes! Finland No!

By Jerome Dancis, Ph.D. (math)

Associate Professor Emeritus, Department of Mathematics, University of Maryland,
College Park, MD 20742-4015 email jnd@math.umd.edu

1. Using The Exceptionally Good Singapore Mathematics Textbooks Results In Exceptional Learning.
2. Useful International Comparisons (Singapore exceptional; Finland not close)
3. Finland Beware – NOT Beware of Finland

<><><><><><>

1. Using The Exceptionally Good Singapore Mathematics Textbooks Results In Exceptional Learning.

North Middlesex school district had phenomenal achievement, even for Massachusetts :

Comparison of North Middlesex (NM) and State of Massachusetts Results

	<u>Advanced</u>		<u>Proficient</u>	
	<u>NM</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>NM</u>	<u>State</u>
1999	7%	9%	19%	15%
2005	57%	35%	30%	27%

The improvements across the state of Massachusetts were driven by its rigorous Math tests (which were largely written by Mathematicians).

The North Middlesex Regional School District credits its exceptional improvement on the Massachusetts Grade 10 Math test to its implementation and use of Singapore Mathematics textbooks in elementary and middle school, not to changes in its Grade 10 math program. (North Middlesex Regional High School is the only high school in North Middlesex Regional School District)

→ **Recommendation.** Provide good textbooks. For the elementary grades, use the Singapore Math textbooks (which were written in simple English for Singapore students for whom English was not their native language.)

This was Recommendation 4 of my presentation to the "[Kirwan] Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education [in Maryland]" at its Oct. 25, 2017 hearing. "

Data for the phenomenal improvement on the California Standards rigorous Grade 5 Math Test at Ramona Elementary School, where nine of every 10 were eligible for free or reduced-price meals (FARM), was presented in the appendix of my presentation:

Singapore Primary Mathematics Texts & Guidance of a Mathematics Professor Jump Scores at an Inner-city Title 1 School

2003-2005: Percent of Students scoring Proficient and Advanced: 43%-56%
2006-2008: Percent of Students scoring Proficient and Advanced: 71%-76%

Before: Percent advanced: 15%-26% Average Scaled scores (all students) 349- 378
 After: Percent advanced: 35%-43% Average Scaled scores 395- 412

2. Useful International Comparisons:

American and Finnish Grade 8 Students *Cannot* Subtract Fractions.

Problem (TIMSS-2011 ¹). Which shows a correct method for finding $1/3 - 1/4$?
 A $(1-1)/(4-3)$ B $1/(4-3)$ C $(3-4)/3$ D $(4-3)/(3*4)$

Percentage of correct answers (D) for Grade 8 students:

U.S. students. 29%,
 Finland 16%
 Massachusetts 44%
 Singapore 83%

Sixth graders should be fluent in adding and subtracting fractions.
 Students, *not* fluent in adding fractions, are *not* ready for a rigorous Pre-Algebra course.

Grade 8 students, who *cannot* subtract fractions, will become at-risk students in a rigorous high school physics course. They are on track for remedial Algebra I, if not remedial Arithmetic, when they attend college.

PISA's "Mathematics Literacy" Test in 2015 for 15 year-old Students

	<u>Scoring in top Level 6</u>	<u>Scoring Levels 5 and 6</u>	<u>Scoring Levels 4,5 and 6</u>
Americans	1%	5%	17%
OECDers ^v	2%	11%	27%
Finland	2%	11%	34%
Singaporeans	12%	35%	57%

The percentage of American scoring in the top two Levels 5 and 6 of the PISA Mathematics literacy test, **dropped in half** from 10% in 2012 to 5% in 2015.

Warning: PISA only purports to measure "Mathematics literacy" and "science literacy", not Mathematics or science. These PISA tests are **not rigorous** science and Mathematics or even Arithmetic tests. Scoring at Levels 4, 5 and 6 are necessary but not sufficient to be on track for learning in a rigorous high school physics course. Students scoring at Levels 6 may still to be on track to become at-risk students in a rigorous high school physics course; they may not know enough Arithmetic. The PISA "Mathematics literacy" test questions are largely straight-forward, multi-step Arithmetic word problems, requiring just simple Arithmetic calculations; no subtracting fractions.

¹ Data from presentation by North Middlesex to National Mathematics Advisory Panel
<http://www2.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/mathpanel/3rd-meeting/presentations/waight.mary.pdf>

² In contrast, Maryland's non-rigorous Math tests were not written by Mathematicians.

³ It was reprinted by **The Nonpartisan Education Review** on its web at
<http://nonpartisaneducation.org/Review/Resources/DancisKirwanTestimony.pdf>
 It may also be found (with difficulty) on the commission's website.

⁴ TIMSS is an international set of good tests on mathematics and science.

⁵ The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD] consists of largely Western European Countries.

**Testimony by Paul Geller, Community Advocate
to the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education
Thursday, November 29, 2018
Annapolis, Maryland**

Commission Members,

Money makes the world go round. And it certainly helps when it comes to education.

A simple haiku: ***Raise revenues with
change to casino gambling
formula. Big bucks!!!***

A funding suggestion made by this Commission would go a long way to gaining the support of Marylanders for implementing your recommendations. All it requires is a simple change to the state constitution. Maryland voters did it on November 6th when they approved the casino lockbox for education, and they can do it again to fund your initiatives.

We need to increase the percentage casinos contribute to our state coffers for three reasons:

1. ***Taxpayers would not pay a penny.*** It would be a no-cost approach to funding your recommendations. Voters in 2012 approved expansion of casinos to include table games based on this wording: ***“Do you favor the expansion of commercial gaming in the State of Maryland for the primary purpose of raising revenue for education...”**** It was clearly sold to us in 2008 and 2012, and implied in numerous promotional materials, that this amendment to our constitution was to benefit education in Maryland. It is incumbent upon us to make this happen.
2. Jurisdictions concerned about the possible loss of state funding due to new formula calculations suggested during Commission deliberations would likely be significantly more supportive of your recommendations.
3. You, the members of this Commission, will be hailed as geniuses for proposing an innovative funding source for your recommendations.

Casinos have two sources of gambling revenue: Video Lottery Terminals (a.k.a. VLT or video slot machines) and table games (poker, blackjack,...). With VLT revenue, casinos keep 47%; the Education Trust Fund receives 39.7%; and other categories receive the rest. **With table games, however, the casinos win big. Casinos keep 80%; our Education Trust Fund receives a paltry 15% (it used to be 20%); and local jurisdictions receive 5%.**

How can you make a difference? With a haiku! ***Ask your friends here in
Annapolis to change the
formula. Thank you!***

Simple math shows the amount our public schools would gain from this change.

A 50/50 split of table game revenue would benefit the Education Trust Fund to the tune of \$316,144,813.48 annually based on numbers from June 30, 2018**. That would be a gain of \$221,301,369.37 over last year. This is almost equal to the amount needed to serve 70% of all four year olds at or below 300% of the Federal Poverty Level: \$236,475,205 annually***.

Imagine the benefits to society by providing these kids, *our kids*, with free schooling. It would be a life changer. And almost all of it can be paid for with casino table game revenue.

Thank you for your service to this Commission.

Respectfully submitted,



Paul Geller
Community Advocate
ppgusa AT hotmail.com

*Source: November 6, 2012 General Election Ballot
<https://msa.maryland.gov/msa/mdmanual/42electg/html/2012/2012const.html>

Question 7: GAMING EXPANSION - (Chapter 1, Acts of 2012 2nd Special Session)
Do you favor the expansion of commercial gaming in the State of Maryland for the primary purpose of raising revenue for education to authorize video lottery operation licensees to operate "table games" as defined by law; to increase from 15,000 to 16,500 the maximum number of video lottery terminals that may be operated in the State; and to increase from 5 to 6 the maximum number of video lottery operation licenses that may be awarded in the State and allow a video lottery facility to operate in Prince George's County?

Also of note, the original casino gambling legislation for VLTs - Source: November 4, 2008 General Election Ballot
<https://msa.maryland.gov/msa/mdmanual/42electg/html/2008/2008const.html>

Question 2: AUTHORIZING VIDEO LOTTERY TERMINALS (SLOT MACHINES) TO FUND EDUCATION - (Chapter 5, Acts of 2007 Special Session) - (Adds new Article XIX)
Authorizes the State to issue up to five video lottery licenses for the primary purpose of raising revenue for education of children in public schools, prekindergarten through grade 12, public school construction and improvements, and construction of capital projects at community colleges and higher education institutions. No more than a total number of 15,000 video lottery terminals may be authorized in the State, and only one license may be issued for each specified location in Anne Arundel, Cecil, Worcester, and Allegany Counties, and Baltimore City. Any additional forms or expansion of commercial gaming in Maryland is prohibited, unless approved by a voter referendum.

**Source: The Maryland Lottery and Gaming Control Agency website: http://gaming.mdlottery.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/June-2018_press_release_slots-TG.pdf

***Source: Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education website, August 15, 2018 Meeting Materials, Working Group 1, Cost Estimates.
http://dls.maryland.gov/pubs/prod/NoPblTabMtg/CmsnInnovEduc/08_15_2018_WG1_02_Cost_Estimates_PreK.pdf

Kirwan Commission. 11/29/2018.

Denise Kastle – Mother, Decoding Dyslexia representative Queen Anne's County, Maternal/newborn nurse at Medstar Southern MD Hospital, Queen Anne County school substitute nurse, and small business owner.

Cole Kastle – 3rd grader at Bayside Elementary School. Queen Anne's County.

My son, Cole, is a happy, creative, talented 9-year-old. When he began schooling, he was an engaged student, eager to learn. On all of his report cards and in every parent-teacher conference, we were told he was approaching grade level expectations. "Keep up the good work! We love Cole."

Intuitively, we knew this was not completely true. By first grade there were signs that Cole was falling behind in reading. We asked multiple times that year for Cole to be evaluated. Our requests were put off. We were told that he would catch up by the end of the year, that he was progressing. We were told that early testing of a learning disability would result only in putting a label on our child.

I am here to testify that our educational system is failing my child. Dyslexia is not a label, and the school's failure to properly address the issue is condemning my child to a life-long label of illiteracy!

By second grade, when the school finally provided the testing and IEP process we had requested, we learned that Cole was only reading at a beginning kindergarten level. We had lost a good 2 years of critical development time.

As parents, we have worked hard to do our part. Cole went to 2 years of pre-K. We have researched his reading disability extensively. He has attended a summer program for dyslexia given by Georgetown University. And Cole goes to a reading tutor, weekly.

The educational system, on the other hand is failing to do its part. The schools delayed us on getting testing, hid their own assessment scores from us, forced us to learn what information we even needed to ask for, fought us to even use the word dyslexia in the IEP, and now actively tries to avoid giving him the instructional services they know he needs.

As part of the Georgetown study, Cole's IQ was tested. He scored in the 96th percentile. He is an exceptionally bright child. The tragedy is that he, and other students like him, are sabotaged from reaching their maximum potential and indeed are at a heightened risk of failure and even incarceration, simply because the educational system is failing at their most important job. Only our own pushing and fighting is helping Cole get to where he is today. And the school's failures are turning our excited-to-learn son into an increasingly disengaged, at-risk student.

The way our school handles reading is a very "one size fits all" approach, but even with that they are using the wrong size. I am a nurse, and I ask you, "Would you want to come to my hospital with a specific infection and be asked to wait until the infection has spread to more of your body, then be given a generalized antibiotic that only works for 40% of the cases?" No. Of course not. But that is how our schools manage reading with their sight-word approach. And with their refusal to identify issues early.

I am here to tell you that what is happening to my son and others like him is completely avoidable. The research is abundant and also abundantly clear. The solutions are implementable. We need only the will to make a difference. I urge you to:

1. Implement a phonics-based approach for reading instruction. This is demonstrably better at teaching not only dyslexics to read but also all students
2. Test and identify reading disabilities early. Dyslexia is detectable as early as Kindergarten. And if it is detected at that time, the label the school protests as being so afraid of can actually be remedied.
3. Use literacy programs that have been proven to help Dyslexia, like Orton Gilligam and Wilson Reading program. I would warn against decisions to use any computer based applications that are not proven to help Dyslexic students.

Thank you for your time.

Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education
Testimony of Melissa McKenna
November 29, 2018

Thank you Chairman Kirwan and Commissioners for yet another opportunity to speak as “just a parent.” My name is Melissa McKenna, proud parent of a rapidly aging Maryland public school student and education advocate.

With limited time, as an editor and Shakespearean scholar, “since brevity is the soul of wit,” I present you “More matter, with less art.” Hamlet (2.2.90; 95)

**ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL!
DON'T JUST DO OBSOLETE THINGS BETTER; DO BETTER THINGS.¹**

- **Universal pre-K. However, Do NOT test 4 year olds!** I cannot say this strongly enough. I've seen a 5 year old in tears over the KRAs (Kindergarten Readiness Assessments) be taken out of class and calmed down just enough – to return them to taking the test! As well meaning and detailed as they are, the ELAs (Early Learning Assessments)
 - cannot migrate into the public school system data infrastructure, (therefore useless)
 - rely on direct observation multiple times a year, and (you want teaching OR observation)
 - acknowledge but can't accommodate variations in age-appropriate development. (One kid will read at age 3, another at age 6, period. No matter the “extra supports.”)
- **More counselors, especially in elementary schools.** Not just academic counselors, but mental health professionals: psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers. The American School Counselor Association recommends a 250-to-1 ratio of students to school counselors. Larger jurisdictions may approach that at the secondary level but have no such ratio at the elementary level. For me, this ties with universal pre-K as our #1 priority.
- **On teacher certification and quality:**
 - Asking for too much more will yield less. There's already a teacher shortage. Asking for more education, qualifications, and certifications will only guarantee an ever-shrinking pool of teachers.
 - Create a way to convert foreign degrees and credentials into MSDE-acceptable certifications.
- **Respect our teachers for the professionals they are.** Please trust and respect their professional judgement and techniques. If teachers were allowed to just teach rather than follow a preordained script, maybe more students would want to teach in the future. This kind, generous, rare species of human did not enter the teaching profession to get rich but to help shape our inquisitive children into upstanding, productive citizens.
- **Return “tutoring” to the original “intervention” terminology.** Yes, a “tutor” can have a direct cost correlation that is measurable (and extremely expensive). It's also rigid. One size does not fit all, and there are many qualified, caring volunteers and organizations that may have another approach and certainly at a different cost.
- **10-year phase-in periods are too long!** True for teacher salaries and especially for pre-K. Considering a school career is 13 years, we will miss an entire generation of students. New York City and Mayor DeBlasio did incredible things in 3 years. While not perfect, why has that model not been considered?
- **More funding for special education services.** To label disabilities as mild, moderate, or severe and weigh them differently is just wrong. One single, very heavy weight, please.

¹ The titles of Chapters 8 and 9, Ted Dintersmith's book: *What School Could Be: Insights and Inspiration from Teachers across America*. (Princeton University Press, 2018). A fascinating read this summer. Chapter 8 resonated with me when it discussed the “calculus gap” in high school. (My most detested subject.)

- Don't create more state bureaucracy in governance and oversight. Taxpayers are willing to pay pay teachers more not pay for more paper pushers. School parents loathe increases in "central office" staff. Ensure local jurisdictions retain local control.
- Most importantly, **relationships are key!** This has been proven time after time and cited in peer-reviewed literature. Not just with teachers. Students encounter many staff before they even see their classroom teacher: bus driver, security officer, building services or cafeteria worker. Every single person along the way impacts a child's day and is an opportunity to build a relationship that could make all the difference in that student's academic career and life!

Like intelligence, much is measurable in education, but not everything. In the Commission's work, you want things that can be measured/quantified. Students become scores that translate into success which will be rewarded monetarily. As much as school systems go to every length possible to help students prepare for standardized assessments (quality of teacher, rigor of coursework, wraparound services), they can't control everything. It becomes the "other" outside variables of that particular day and time that will influence the score the most (uncooperative ChromeBook, interrupted wifi, room too hot/too cold, hungry, sleep/well rested, health, ...).

Would you believe that relationships are measurable? They are. So for those of you that are data-driven, evidence-based, and need measurements, there are formal surveys² or it could be as simple as having the child draw some pictures.³

We're human, things change daily, hourly. Our tiny (or not so tiny) children are humans, not databots. What works one day may not work the next. What works for one may or may not work for others. **One size does not fit all!** If there's not enough flexibility, failure will be a certainty.

Don't forget the infrastructure! Facilities will be needed to house these programs on a large scale. Commensurate increases to the capital education budget will be necessary, as well as true partnerships with businesses, an nonprofit and faith providers.

We need to invest in our most precious and important resource: our children, who truly are our collective future. Remember that behind all these numbers are eager faces and inquisitive young minds and they are counting on us.

Our children only get one shot at each grade. They are the age they are only once. They don't get a do over. They need the best from their schools and state, and all of us – advocates and electeds, educators and community – every year.

I hope that "at [a] more consider'd time [you]'ll read,/Answer, and think upon this business. (Hamlet 2.2.81-82)

Thank you again for affording me this opportunity to address you today and for all your work on behalf of our kids.

Melissa McKenna
melmckenna@utexas.edu

2 Student-teacher relationship scale (STRS; Pianta, 2001), teacher-student relationship inventory (TSRI, Ang, 2005), Classroom assessment scoring system (CLASS; Pianta, La Paro & Hamre, 2006), Assessment of learner-centered practices (ALCP; McCombs, 2004), Teacher treatment inventory (Weinstein & Marshall, 1984).
3 Feelings about school (Harrison, Clarke, & Ungerer, 2007).



November 29, 2018

Dear Commissioners:

Decoding Dyslexia Maryland is a parent-led, volunteer grassroots network of teachers, parents and students who want to ensure that Maryland's PK-12 system teaches all students to read, write and spell on grade level regardless of zip code, income, family background or experiences.

On behalf of our 13 local and regional chapters and thousands of members across the state, we would like to express our gratitude for your commitment to equity, improved student academic outcomes, and adequate funding for education.

In acknowledging the Commission's commitment to improved student outcomes, Decoding Dyslexia Maryland suggests amending the language in Working Groups 1 and 3 to fully address an early warning system for students and provide adequate funding and resources to prevent reading failure.

Universal Reading Screening is a Critical First Step in an Early Warning System

1. **According to MSDE, "Screening is a critical component of an education system designed to provide early intervention.** Not only is it important to pick up on the early warning signs of students who are at risk of academic failure, but also to focus on appropriate instruction and use of evidence based interventions."¹
2. The Commission is focused on preventing reading achievement gaps -- education research supports universal reading screening as a critical part of a prevention model²
3. Screening determines which students are at risk and will likely struggle to read on grade level -- it's like taking a temperature before you have a fever as opposed to waiting until a fever develops.
4. To intervene early when it's more effective and efficient.
5. Screening can identify where core reading instruction is not adequate and needs to be adjusted or revamped.

¹ [MSDE Technical Assistance Bulletin, Specific Learning Disability and Supplement 2017](#)

²Catts, Hugh W.; Nielsen, Diane Corcoran; Bridges, Mindy Sittner; Liu, Yi Syuan; Bontempo, Daniel E., [Early Identification of Reading Disabilities within an RTI Framework](#), Journal of Learning Disabilities, v48 n3 p. 281-297 May-June 2015

Joseph Torgesen, Ph.D., Director Emeritus: Florida Center for Reading Research has testified for years that:³

“Using measures currently available, we can accurately determine which students are likely to struggle with reading starting in preschool or kindergarten.” (Florida Center for Reading Research, 2010)

Dr. Torgesen further states:

“In fourth grade, students need 2 hours of instructional time to make the same gains as made in 30 minutes of instructional time in Kindergarten.”

Suggested Amendments listed below, would : **Element 3a, 10.31, (no markup):**

1. **Element 3a policy statement: change “formative” assessment to “student” assessment**
 - a. **Rationale:**
 - i. Using the term formative could preclude the use of valid and reliable screening measures that can predict if a student will struggle to attain academic skills like reading.
 - ii. Using the term formative might indicate that the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA), included Working Group 1, Element 1c, is a psychometrically valid “early warning assessment,” which it is not. The KRA doesn’t provide educators with data they need to determine risks or plan instruction.
 - iii. Adding “student” before assessment indicates that student information and not system information is sought in order to determine what a student needs to be successful.
 - b. **Element 3a.** “Develop a fully aligned instructional system, including curriculum frameworks, course syllabi and assessments, together with clear examples of standard setting work and ~~formative~~ **student** assessments to ensure that students stay on track.”
2. **Element 3a, 4b: We suggest 1) listing the components of an an early warning system and 2) clarifying the language to emphasize prevention.**
 - a. Rationale: Listing the components and adding specific language provides clarity of purpose and funding.
 - b. **Suggested Language (in red):** “In the core subjects of English, math, science, and history/social studies, an assessment system designed to assess students’ acquisition of the qualities specified in the curriculum standards and frameworks must include: a. Summative assessments that meet federal requirements; b.

³ Torgesen, Joseph A., [Avoiding the Devastating Downward Spiral](#): The Evidence That Early Intervention Prevents Reading Failure, *American Educator*, Fall 2004.

Assessments (which may be State and/or local) that provide means by which to determine whether students have met the State CCR standard and “early warnings” which includes universal screening, informal diagnostics, progress monitoring and other assessments by which teachers and school leaders can identify those who are at risk for ~~beginning to~~ falling behind, which will enable them to work together more successfully to ~~diagnose-identify~~ the issues and help get those students back on track to meet the CCR standard (See Working Group 2 recommendations on use of the school day and teachers’ time); and c. Evidence of meeting high school graduation requirements.

Additional Comments

1. We support the testimony offered by the Education Advocacy Coalition
2. We support the testimony offered by the Maryland Education Coalition
3. **We support the language offered by Commissioner Hettleman on the tutor to student ratio, substituting “ratio to be further determined.”** The tutor to student ratio should be informed by universal screening results and the instructional needs of the students.
4. We support an increased compensatory education weight of 97% or higher to ensure equity.
5. We support providing students in grades 4-12 with evidence based interventions as well as the materials and professional learning needed to provide reading instruction/interventions to students.

Respectfully,

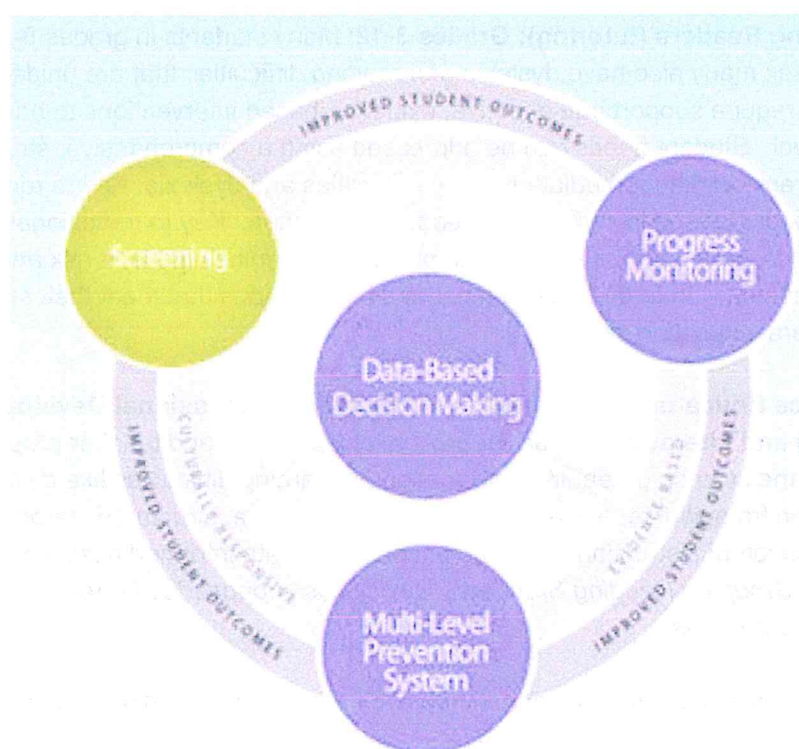
Karleen Spitulnik
Laura Schultz
Decoding Dyslexia Maryland

Attachment 1:

Summary of Prior Feedback

Summary of Prior Feedback and Testimony to the Kirwan Commission from Decoding Dyslexia Maryland:

1. **Preventative Reading Framework.** Universal screening is part of a fully aligned instructional system to prevent reading failure. Psychometrically valid and reliable screening measures can predict if a student will struggle to attain reading skills. Screening is a cost effective, first step in an aligned prevention model and is often part of a high quality, multi-level instructional program (see [Assessment, Curriculum and Instruction Bulletin, MSDE](#) and the [Maryland Comprehensive Literacy Plan](#)).



Center for Response to Intervention, American Institute for Research, AIR

2. If Maryland is to prevent and eliminate reading achievement gaps, learning who is struggling before they fall behind is a key prevention component. ([Center on Response to Intervention, Screening briefs. Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research \(Retrieved from <http://www.rti4success.org/resource/screening-briefs>\)](#), [Screen & Intervene Collaborative: Catts, H. W., Nielsen, D. C., Bridges, M. S., Liu, Y. S., & Bontempo, D. E. \(2015\). Early identification of reading disabilities within an RTI](#)

[framework. Journal of Learning Disabilities, 48\(3\), 281-297.\)](#)

3. **Special Education:** Funding must be increased to meet the needs of all students who are evaluated and subsequently identified for special education. DDMD supports comprehensive, professional learning for educators so they can provide comprehensive literacy instruction and interventions needed by at risk students and students with dyslexia in Maryland. Structured literacy refers to both the elements and principles of evidence based reading instruction and includes phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension taught explicitly and systematically. [See ESSA Subpart 2--Literacy Education for All, Results for the Nation: SEC. 2221. {20 U.S.C. 6641} PURPOSES; DEFINITIONS.](#)
4. **Struggling Readers (tutoring): Grades 3-12:** Many students in grades 3-12 read below grade level; many also have dyslexia and reading difficulties that are unidentified. These students require support and effective, evidence-based interventions to bring them to grade level. Student needs can be addressed using a comprehensive, structured literacy framework to remediate reading difficulties and dyslexia. Key to remediation is professional learning in code based reading instruction. Key to transitional tutoring is ensuring an early warning system is in place to determine who is at risk and provide those students with further assessment and interventions that meet their specific needs in a general education setting.
5. **In-Service Educator Preparation and Continuing Professional Development in Reading and Literacy:** Support for professional learning and teacher preparation that includes the science of reading, information on learning difficulties like dyslexia, prevention frameworks, evidence based comprehensive, structured literacy instruction, intensification of instruction and interventions, and data informed assessments. *The Working Group on Reading Standards Revision is supposed to be ready to release the Revised Standards.*
6. **Investing in Educators:** Support increasing educator opportunities and pay.
7. **Teacher Preparation, Schools of Education:** Support for educator certification in the science of reading and best practices to teach reading to all students; accountability and oversight of teacher preparation universities, teaching faculty certification and credentialing in reading, and a practicum/mentoring year to increase classroom effectiveness.

Jill Warzer, Baltimore City
Testimony to the Kirwan Commission on Equity and Excellence in Education
November 29, 2019

Good Evening Dr. Kirwan, Commissioners. Thank you for your prolonged concentration during this long day, and your dedication to the difficult tasks of this commission. My name is Jill Warzer. I am a 20 year Baltimore City resident and homeowner. From 1997- 2006, I served Baltimore City Schools as a Music, and then Specialist for all the Fine Arts, returning to the classroom to teach music and then English to Speakers of Other Languages. Since retiring in 2016, I have continued active engagement with students and City Schools, supporting immigrant and refugee students in afterschool programs. I also serve on the Teacher Democracy Project Parent Power sub-group and the steering committee for the Baltimore Arts Education Initiative (BAEI) , charged with supporting City Schools to implement a five year plan to expand arts education to meet COMAR, and support student success. You heard earlier from Julia DiBussolo, Director of Arts Everyday regarding the plan. I am speaking from 40 years of experience as an educator, and for the students, parents, teachers, school administrators, and community members who testified in listening sessions and at City school board and City Council meetings during the development process of the BAEI.

I am here today to ask the Commission to specifically include comprehensive, sequential fine arts education in the funding formula, to ensure that Maryland's commitment to arts education as an essential component of a complete education can become a reality for Baltimore City and other students in high-poverty districts. I agree with the suggestion presented earlier:

- 1) include arts education within the base adequate funding formula to enable districts to provide an instructional program in Dance, Media Arts, Music, Theatre, and Visual Art as outlined in the Code of Maryland regulations (COMAR 13A.04.16);
- 2) Support a base funding formula that enables districts to support a student to arts teacher ratio:
 - 150-450:1 per arts discipline at elementary school level;
 - 750-900:1.5/2 per arts discipline at middle school level;
 - 1200-2000:3/5 per arts discipline at high school level;
- 3) Align instructional systems to include standards, or curricular frameworks with embedded standards as stipulated in COMAR for core subjects. In Maryland, a core academic subject is

one where students receive core content credit which includes Fine Arts: dance, media arts, music, theatre and visual arts.

Why is a specific designation imperative? During the Thornton Commission hearings, I listened, possibly in this very chamber, to a student from Edmondson Westside HS display exhibit A- a severely battered sousaphone, veteran of many marching band seasons, and beg for adequate funding that would allow his school to purchase new instruments. During those same years, I bit my tongue listening to the music supervisor from Montgomery County complain that he only had \$75,000 to spend on string instruments that year, (we hardly had any string programs) and the Baltimore County Music Supervisor describe how he went to the school board to ask for funds to replace their instrument inventory over three years and the board granted sufficient funding, three million dollars at my best recollection to replace them all at once. During my nine years as City Schools Music/Fine Arts Specialist, I never had a budget for purchase of arts supplies and materials.

Between 2003 and 2008, with the infusion of Thornton funds, City Schools increased fine arts staffing each year reaching 378 by 2007-2008, according to the database I kept as Fine Arts Specialist using Human Capital records. We were also able to partner with the VH-1 Save the Music program and receive instrument packages to start instrumental music programs in 85 schools, based on the requirement that the school system staff at least a part-time music teacher. Half of the two million dollar funds for the instruments were raised from Baltimore corporations and foundations, facilitated by the Mayor and City Council. Then the Thornton funds leveled. During 2017-2018, there were only 175 teachers in all arts subjects serving the districts' approximately 82,000 students. The VH1 partnership and most of those music programs have ended. Is there a correlation? Yes, I believe there is.

Did you see the 2018 Superbowl half time show with Justin Timberlake and the University of Minnesota Marching Band, resplendent in tuxedos, performing his hit, *Suit and Tie*? That score was prepared, and the band rehearsed by none other than Baltimore's own trumpeter/composer Dontae Winslow. Dontae began playing the trumpet at Cross Country Elementary School, continuing at Falstaff Middle School, the Baltimore School for the Arts, NYU, and Peabody Conservatory. Dontae credits music with saving his life, living with his mother who suffered and subsequently died, from AIDS and addiction. But today, there is no band program at Cross Country Elementary or at Falstaff or at the majority of schools in Baltimore City. If you cross the

county line in any direction, you will find one at every school. How many Dontaes are losing for lack of access to arts study?

We all know of Frederick Douglass' inspirational struggle to learn to read, and the result of that accomplishment. But did you know that Douglass learned to play the violin while despondent in Scotland, away from his family, and continued to play all his life? His grandson, Joseph, became a concert violinist, the first African American to tour Europe with a classical ensemble, and later a music professor at Howard University. Clearly, he took his grandfather's interest in music to the next level.

The deficiencies in arts education for youth in communities of poverty could be seen as a kind of cultural disenfranchisement. How is it that these students, whose community, and possibly personal histories include enormous contributions to music and arts recognized as distinctly American around the globe, do not have the opportunity to develop their capacities in the arts as do students in other Maryland districts? The arts education in-equities also limit students' ability to develop sufficiently participate in annual statewide festivals and exhibits, to pursue post high school study and careers and participate fully in Baltimore's burgeoning arts community.

I want to close by saying that although I have given music related examples, my career in arts education over 40 years confirms similar value in visual arts, theatre, dance and as is so important now-media arts. Also, the value and need for arts education includes rural communities as well. I began my career in 1983 in Vermont's impoverished "Northeast Kingdom," in a town population 800. Despite a very low tax base, the town has maintained arts programs to this day, recognizing their value for the students and the community.

Arts have been a valued component of American public education since the Boston Public Schools adopted Lowell Mason's proposal for music programs in all its public schools in 1838. Mason, whose hymn "*Nearer My God to Thee*, you may know, also organized the first Sunday School for African American children in 1826, while working as a banker in Savannah, Georgia. He clearly believed in educational equity.

In short, I urge the Commission, to ensure access to quality arts education for all Maryland students by specific inclusion in the funding formula.

Thank you for your consideration.

ADDENDUM:

Dontae Winslow – rehearsing Minnesota Marching band for 2018 Superbowl w/ a little bit of the performance. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3d37VmeKotM>

Dontae Winslow – Master class testimony about what music has done for him Watch 4:37- 7:47 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cRNIQ-uv-2U>

“I can not imagine my life if I didn’t have a music program in my school.”— Beyonce

“Music is not a recreation for the elite, but a source of spiritual strength which all cultured people should endeavor to turn into public property. Real art is one of the most powerful forces in the rise of mankind, and he who renders it accessible to as many people as possible is a benefactor of humanity.

- Zoltan Kodaly, Hungarian composer and educator

“The arts naturally teach the skills and competencies necessary for a creative and competent workforce” Dr. Arnold Packer, Secretary’s (of Labor) Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills for the 21st Century (SCANS) Report, US Department of Labor

“The poem, the song, the picture is only water drawn from the people and it should be given back to them in a cup of beauty so that they may drink, and in drinking understand themselves.” Federico Garcia Lorca, Spanish poet

I wanted to connect my guitar to human emotions.

— B. B. King

We wanted to know whether individuals involved in the arts are getting something out of their experiences, and whether those results can be documented...[we concluded] the abilities involved in dealing with the visual arts – with sculpture or painting, with dance, mime, use of the body, and so on – all represent separate sets of cognitive skills. If we omit those areas from the curriculum, we are in effect shortchanging the mind (pg. 30).

Brandt, R. (1988). On assessment in the arts: a conversation with Howard Gardner. *Educational Leadership*, 45(4), 30-34.

Marilyn Zecher, M.A., CALT
501 McArthur Dr.
Rockville MD 20850

Testimony Before the Kirwan Commission
November 29, 2018

My name is Marilyn Zecher. I am a product of Montgomery County Public Schools in Maryland. I am mildly dyslexic. I was able to read in school but not efficiently and my spelling was always a weakness. My high school counselor tried to dissuade me from going to college.

I attended the University of Maryland on a teaching grant. I earned a solid B average though there were struggles. I did not entirely read a single textbook assigned and experienced difficulty reading music which was the focus of my major, music education. No one could tell me why, though I was identified as being very bright, I struggled academically and had to work so hard to achieve. It was always tied to reading.

I was fortunate to land a teaching position in a school which had a special program for teaching reading and language to students who read below grade level (PGCPS). The staff, who were familiar with dyslexia, helped me gain definition about my learning differences. When the county in which I taught required every teacher to take a special education course, I elected to take the reading instruction course for the program in my county. It changed my life.

I learned the structure and phonology of the English language, earned a second bachelor's and a master's degree in English, then went on to achieve certification as a Language Therapist- at the national level. I achieved a Maryland state teaching certification of Advanced Professional Certificate with a Reading Endorsement. I became a public school teacher of English and Reading. I now train teachers nationally in both language and math.

My testimony is unique because I was a public school teacher trained in scientific based reading instruction by a Maryland Public School System. I taught large classes of students, between 80 and 100 students per day, who were all reading between one and five years below grade level, and who

were NOT identified as learning disabled. I used structured literacy to help these students achieve or move closer to grade level skills. Many of my middle school students went on to honors classes at their high schools.

I come to speak to you today because I know from 40 years teaching that preventing reading failure is imperative. Reading failure has economic and social costs. Students who do not receive appropriate literacy instruction end up disproportionately involved in our judicial system, or on public assistance. It also is far too expensive to train teachers after they are already in the classroom.

What we do know is that identification and appropriate early instruction significantly lower the numbers of students needing more intensive instruction and trained interventionists later on. We know that early screening and intervention is the most cost effective and humane way to prevent the consequences of reading failure to both students and our society.

The measures advocated by the consortium of groups endorsing early screening and science based reading instruction are exactly what is appropriate and right as beginning to solving the crisis we currently have in reading failure in this country. Let us begin in Maryland to make a difference in the lives of children, families, and in our society by adopting these measures.

Thank you.