

## **Cost Savings and Offsets Draft Proposal for Commission**

### **Class Size**

The Commission is basing its recommendations for advancing the quality of PreK-12 education in Maryland on the proven practices of the best performing school systems in the world. A common element of these systems is a well-prepared professional teaching faculty, appropriately compensated, with ample time for collaboration with other teachers and developing curricula and teaching strategies based on best practices. The Commission proposes that Maryland adopt this model and transform teaching into a high status profession as top performers have.

Most high performing systems are able to afford their high performing schools, which are staffed by expert, professional teachers, in part by having much larger class sizes (30-40 students, even higher in some countries) than in the U.S. where the national average is 26.

While some U.S. education research supports the premise that smaller class sizes are beneficial for student achievement up to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, essentially none shows that modest increases in class sizes in grade levels above 3<sup>rd</sup> grade result in a negative impact on student performance. In fact, a recent Brookings Institution report said, “There is no research from the U.S. that directly compares class size reduction (CSR) to specific alternative investments, but one careful analysis of several educational interventions found CSR to be the least cost– effective of those studied.”

In Maryland, the average class size is presently 20.5. The Commission recommends that as the State adds substantial numbers of new teachers in Maryland schools in the coming decade, which will allow school systems across the State to redesign the way they deploy teachers so that students that need the most help get it and teachers have the time to work with their colleagues to improve their practice, the State make a modest adjustment in its average class size.

Specifically, the Commission recommends that the State base its foundation funding on the assumption that, as the recommended changes in teacher quality and collaboration time are implemented by districts and student outcomes improve, the statewide average class size should gradually increase from 20.5 to approximately 23. The Commission urges districts to approach that average, without increasing class sizes in grades kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade or allowing any classes to get unreasonably large.

For every 1 student increase in class size, the estimated cost savings is \$118 million (excluding K–3 classes). To increase the statewide average class size from 20.5 to 23, the estimated cost savings totals \$295 million.