



Maryland Education Coalition

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MEC STATEMENT - KIRWAN COMMISSION HEARING – November 29, 2018

The Maryland Education Coalition (MEC) thanks each of the Commissioners under the leadership of Dr. Kirwan, with support from Department of Legislative Services, contractors or advisors in what can result in the most important actions in Maryland since the implementation of the Thornton Commission recommendations.

Consistent with language throughout the federal *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)*, we are key stakeholders, consistently providing meaningful contributions in the decision-making process throughout the Maryland public education community. As such, we briefly offer the following comments based on our understanding of the current recommendations and pending actions of the commission:

➤ **MEC supports systematic accountability**, has been directly involved in the development and review of master plans, local and state budgets and implementation of such at the state, local and school level. **We are concern with statements by some that imply that Thornton failed to deliver significant student performance improvements and lack accountability.**

Evidence shows that during the first several years of Thornton, lower performing school districts continuously improved and began closing gaps. This slowed down when the economic crisis began, and funds for some of our least wealthy school systems and students began to decrease. Several of these school districts also were held financially accountable with tens of millions held by the state for extended periods holding school systems, schools and students back, because underfunded districts with significant needs had to make no-win choices.

We believe any punitive accountability measures should be a last resort, pending adequate, equitable funding for all, paired with time for implementation and support services or resources as needed.

➤ **MEC is in general agreement with the current contents of the Early Childhood Education recommendations with the following exception:**

- **We urge the commission to move up the implementation timeline from ten, to 3-5, years for the expansion of full-day Pre-K for three- and four-year-olds for those school districts that have significantly below average academic performance, low wealth and high percentages children of color, low-income, special needs and ELL students** (See attachment 1)

➤ **MEC also supports the expansion of Community Schools for those school communities with significantly high levels of poverty**, especially if before and after school programs, additional academic supports, social, health or family services are less accessible within those communities.

➤ **MEC strongly believes that recommendation 3a (*College and Career Readiness Pathways*) must be amended to ensure universal reading, hearing and vision screening is a requirement, especially in the early childhood and primary grades**, so interventions and supports to ensure each student is on the path for College and Career Readiness. **This is an investment that will provide cost savings and student improvements later on.**

➤ MEC believes **High Quality Teachers and Leaders must have all the tools needed to be successful with all students in our diverse schools. This includes ensuring that each has in-depth understanding and develops research-based skills in cultural competency, classroom management, child development and different learning styles or abilities.** Specific language for programs and funding to recruit and retain teachers of color should be explicit in your final report.

➤ **We also are encouraged with the development of Career Technology Programs at the secondary and higher education level** that will give more students options to become career ready and develop the skills needed in a well-paying job market, to assist in improving the economy in Maryland and within each Maryland jurisdiction.

➤ **Several MEC organizations with extensive experience” have been most active with Work Group 4 - More Resources for At-risk Students. In general, we agree with the recommendations, including provision of Community Schools, but urge adequate funding for the new Concentrated Poverty weight to:**

- **provide the full, but diverse wrap-around services needed to address poor children, and**
- **provide additional academic staff (not only socio-emotional staff) such as academic coaches, tutors, etc.**

We remind the commission, the state definition for At-Risk students includes Special Needs, Limited English and students in poverty, but within some school districts and communities, children of color are also At-Risk. Therefore, **we urge the commission to include racial equity within all recommendations of the commission.**

We also remind the commission that **state and federal law also defines Gifted & Talented Students, including twice-exceptional, students as an academic student group including reporting requirements. Therefore, we urge the commission to include this group within their policy and funding recommendations, especially if one of the goals is to ensure all students are college and career ready. Gifted & Talented or twice exceptional must have high quality, equitable access to those programs and services that will allow them to maximize their abilities regardless of what other student groups they may belong to, their income or community.**

Lastly, we urge the Kirwan Commission to ensuring that funding is provided for all requirements in Maryland’s COMAR, including the arts, health, physical education, etc.

About the Maryland Education Coalition (MEC)

The Maryland Education Coalition has been dedicated to improving education outcomes for all students in Maryland public schools by promoting equal access to high quality programs and services, adequate and equitable funding for public education, and vigorous systemic accountability for over three decades. Our activities helped stimulate the creation and activities of the Thornton Commission and passage of the Bridge to Excellence in Education Act. Our members have extensive experience as former superintendents, educators, civil rights activists, lawyers, social/family specialists, community advocates, and advisors on public education, family welfare, children of color, low-income, limited English, Special Needs and Gifted & Talented.

MEC believes Public schools are essential for teaching the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for our children to be contributing members in our communities, without discrimination on the basis of race, gender, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, national origin, language, religion, age, physical and academic ability, and sexual orientation.

We also believe public funding must ensure adequate, equitable, and high-quality educational services for all children, including students with disabilities, English language learners, gifted and talented, children of color and those who are economically disadvantaged regardless of their family make up or where they live.

ATTACHMENT 1 - Maryland 2017-18 FARMS and Minority Enrollment, plus At-Risk Student Index

(Developed by Rick Tyler, Maryland Education Coalition to show the relationship between of FARMS, Minority & At-Risk student enrollment at the state and local level to show the high percentage in all categories in some districts that may impact Academic Performance, Education Opportunity and due to the lack of school and community resources, sometimes historically)

LEA Name	Total Enrollment *	FARMS Pct **	FARMS Cnt **	Black/ African American *		Hispanic *		Minority Index ****	At-Risk Student Index *** (The SEED School is not included)		Local Wealth Per Pupil ****			
				Number	%	Number	%		Statewide		Statewide			
STATE	893,689	42.8	382,726	301,542	33.7	155,346	17.4	51.1	Statewide		64.4%	Statewide		1.8%
Allegany	8,629	59.6	4912	284	3.3	122	1.4	4.7	1. Baltimore City	110.4%	24.	Talbot	-3.0%	
Anne Arundel	82,777	33.0	27349	17,296	20.9	12,276	14.8	35.7	2. Prince George's	92.7%	23.	Charles	-0.1%	
Baltimore City	80,591	61.0	49135	63,976	79.4	8,362	10.4	89.8	3. Somerset	92.1%	22.	Allegany	0.0%	
Baltimore County	113,282	47.1	53342	44,297	39.1	10,979	9.7	48.8	4. Dorchester	80.3%	21.	Caroline	0.1%	
Calvert	15,908	22.0	3497	2,044	12.8	933	5.9	18.7	5. Wicomico	76.7%	20.	Garrett	0.2%	
Caroline	5,787	54.5	3154	839	14.5	795	13.7	28.2	6. Allegany	72.3%	19.	Baltimore	0.6%	
Carroll	25,290	20.8	5262	983	3.9	1,619	6.4	10.3	7. Kent	70.2%	18.	Howard	0.9%	
Cecil	15,364	46.1	7084	1,417	9.2	1,050	6.8	16.1	8. Caroline	69.5%	17.	Kent	1.0%	
Charles	26,891	36.9	9930	14,884	55.3	2,233	8.3	63.7	9. Baltimore	63.7%	16.	Montgomery	1.0%	
Dorchester	4,767	68.4	3263	1,898	39.8	393	8.2	48.1	10. Talbot	62.8%	15.	Dorchester	1.1%	
Frederick	42,140	27.3	11496	5,112	12.1	6,958	16.5	28.6	11. Montgomery	61.9%	14.	Washington	1.3%	
Garrett	3,811	47.9	1827	10	0.3	50	1.3	1.6	12. Washington	59.7%	13.	Worcester	1.3%	
Harford	37,780	31.6	11935	7,203	19.1	2,704	7.2	26.2	13. Worcester	56.8%	12.	St. Mary's	1.6%	
Howard	56,784	21.8	12393	13,411	23.6	6,086	10.7	34.3	14. Garrett	55.5%	11.	Harford	2.0%	
Kent	1,993	53.7	1070	457	22.9	169	8.5	31.4	15. Cecil	55.2%	10.	Anne Arundel	2.0%	
Montgomery	161,546	36.3	58586	34,615	21.4	49,704	30.8	52.2	16. Charles	49.8%	9.	Frederick	2.0%	
Prince George's	132,322	63.1	83475	76,881	58.1	43,860	33.1	91.2	17. Anne Arundel	48.2%	8.	Carroll	2.2%	
Queen Anne's	7,778	26.9	2096	454	5.8	605	7.8	13.6	18. Harford	44.8%	7.	Wicomico	2.2%	
SEED	400	20.2	81	379	94.8	15	3.8	98.5	19. St. Mary's	43.8%	6.	Calvert	2.4%	
Saint Mary's	18,053	33.2	6001	3,314	18.4	1,280	7.1	25.4	20. Frederick	43.3%	5.	Queen Anne's	2.5%	
Somerset	2,918	65.4	1907	1,313	45.0	277	9.5	54.5	21. Queen Anne's	39.4%	4.	Somerset	2.9%	
Talbot	4,646	45.6	2118	753	16.2	830	17.9	34.1	22. Howard	36.7%	3.	Prince George's	3.1%	
Washington	22,595	48.6	10980	2,979	13.2	2,083	9.2	22.4	23. Carroll	32.1%	2.	Cecil	3.4%	
Wicomico	14,953	59.5	8894	5,478	36.6	1,476	9.9	46.5	24. Calvert	30.0%	1.	Baltimore City	4.7%	
Worcester	6,684	44.0	2939	1,265	18.9	487	7.3	26.2						

➤ **Bold/above Average**

➤ **LEAs with above average FARMS & Minority Index**

➤ **Maryland defines At-Risk for Funding purposes as those students identified as Special Needs, ELL or FARMS**

* [Enrollment in Maryland Public Schools by Race/Ethnicity: September 30, 2017](#), page 1 - MSDE

** [2017 Students Receiving Special Services Data](#) – MSDE, Maryland Report Card 2017 - Data Downloads

*** [Overview of Education Funding in Maryland, January 23, 2018, page 17](#) – DLS, At-Risk Index-Compensatory, Limited English & Special Ed enrollment

**** [Percentage of Total Enrollment of African-American & Hispanic Students](#) (Developed by Rick Tyler using [Maryland Report Card](#) - Data Downloads)

***** [Overview of Education Funding in Maryland](#), Definition, page 3 – Data, page 17