

## Funding Priorities and Next Steps

In a series of day-long meetings in December 2018, the Commission finalized its policy recommendations and their estimated total cost. With these decisions completed, the work to determine the distribution of the costs/additional funding between the State and local jurisdictions can now begin. However, the amount of time necessary to make informed and thoughtful decisions about complex formulas means it cannot be completed in time for action in the 2019 legislative session. As the Presiding Officers of the General Assembly indicated in correspondence to the Commission dated December 18, 2018, even if the Commission had included funding formula recommendations in this report, it would be very difficult for the legislature to address both the Commission's major policy recommendations and the distribution of their costs between the State and local jurisdictions during the 2019 session. As a result, the Presiding Officers have asked that the Commission be extended to December 1, 2019, in order for it to make recommendations on fully developed funding formulas and distribution of costs.

While work remains for the Commission in 2019, the bulk of the Commission's work has been completed and includes a set of far reaching policy and total funding recommendations. The Commission believes firmly that, if its recommendations are implemented faithfully, the State will have an education system comparable to the best systems in the world.

There is much that can be accomplished in the 2019 session despite the continuation of the Commission's work. During the session, the Commission recommends that the Governor and General Assembly adopt a policy blueprint that outlines the key policy areas, recommendations, and goals proposed by the Commission. The Commission has identified total costs of \$480 million for fiscal 2020 and \$1.5 billion for fiscal 2021 to implement the recommendations. As a down payment on implementing the Commission's recommendations, the Commission recommends \$325 million in State funding for identified priorities in fiscal 2020. As shown in Exhibit X, the priorities include additional funding for full-day pre-Kindergarten for four-year-olds; first-year funding for the new concentration of poverty school grants and transitional supplemental instruction support to help students in the early grades who have fallen behind to get back on track; the State share of a 3% increase in teacher salaries to begin to raise salaries to levels comparable to benchmark states (Massachusetts and New Jersey); and additional special education funding as part of a three-year "placeholder" plan to increase special education funding until the required study is completed.

The Commission also recommends that \$750 million additional funding above what is otherwise required by statutory formulas should be required to be included in the fiscal 2021 State budget as a placeholder to implement the Commission's recommendations in fiscal 2021. This will ensure that the State funding will be available to fund the State's share of the categorical programs and funding formulas that will be finalized by the Commission in fall 2019. These funds could be set aside for fiscal 2021 in the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education Fund that was created in 2018, with the use and distribution of the funds to be determined in the 2020 session.

Insert exhibit

