

November 15, 2019

Stephanie D. Robinson

Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dr. William (Brit) Kirwan, Chair
Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education
Room 121, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Dr. Kirwan,

As a former statewide director as well as the founder of a parent education organization (COPACS.org), I am writing to you to inquire about the basic procedures for becoming an independent consultant or contractor in Maryland.

Though I have written to the state department of education and politicians, I have received no explanation whatsoever from anyone on this topic --- including from the CCSSO. I am also interested in learning how parent groups are selected and approved by Maryland as a way to support diversity and inclusion. Again, to date, I have not received any response to this question.

As you know, educational views should not be defined, explained or interpreted by just one group --- or groups chosen by the status quo. U.S. Democracy underscores the importance of a wide range of views that should be discussed to support best practices and lessons learned tied to school effectiveness, especially pertaining to historically underserved students.

Yet, if I ask parents and citizens questions about ESEA/ESSA, I find that most of them have never heard of the ESSA legislation or ESEA, in general or by name --- or even the Kirwan Commission. The question is: if they do not know anything about ESEA/ESSA how can they hold schools accountable for positive student outcomes? As it stands, MD parents only know that their children have scored low on the NAEP, including state tests for years. School educators blame crime and poverty as the only explanations for these problems --- but some states manage to educate their students without focusing on these excuses --- excuses that fail to center on school-based concerns.

To address these concerns, parents and community members need regular information dissemination events or opportunity spaces to support capacity building focusing on research-based practices and lessons learned tied to school effectiveness. Given this fact, I am interested in promoting these information dissemination and knowledge utilization events focusing on the “educational needs” of parents and community stakeholders, first and foremost --- tied to student achievement.

Since no one seems to know anything about independent contractors and the approval process for parent groups in Maryland --- I am writing to you to ask if you can assist me in learning more about these options in Maryland. In other words, I want to support your goals in improving MD public schools.

I can be reached at _____ or by calling _____ .

I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Stephanie D. Robinson