

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 1300 and Senate Bill 1000
The Blueprint for Maryland's Future**

**Senate Budget and Tax, Education and Health and Environmental Affairs Committees
House Appropriations and Ways and Means Committees**

February 17, 2020

In 2018, Maryland celebrated the life of Talbot County-born abolitionist and father of the civil rights movement, Frederick Douglass. It was Douglass who said, "It's easier to build strong children than to repair broken men [and women]." And yet we are here today, one-hundred and fifty years later, asking all of you, our government leaders, to pass and fund the Kirwan Commission Recommendations, which afford all students early childhood education, college and career readiness pathways, high-quality and diverse teachers, and more resources to ensure success.

I strongly support House Bill 1300 and Senate Bill 1000, the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, proposing to transform Maryland's early childhood, primary, and secondary education system to the levels of high-performing systems around the world.

As the CEO of a former Fortune 500 business and publicly traded company: this is common-sense legislation that will spur economic development and innovation—look no farther than Massachusetts.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau and [Sage Policy Group](#), "When the movement to reform public education in Massachusetts took hold, Maryland and Massachusetts were home to economies that were roughly equivalent, in terms of performance. For instance, in 1993, Massachusetts boasted the 5th highest per capita personal income of any state and Maryland ranked 6th. At that time, annual per capita personal income in Massachusetts was less than \$250 greater than in Maryland. By 2018, this gap had widened to more than \$8,300. Rather than sink the Massachusetts economy, educational reform has been associated with a Massachusetts miracle, one that has been associated with a massive boom in innovation in and around Boston and the rejuvenation of New England's largest city."

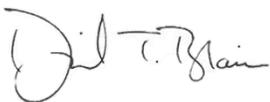
Indeed, projections indicate Maryland would [pay off Kirwan by FY34](#), at which point we would begin to earn a return on our investment. How can any legislator of our Maryland communities say no to our own Maryland miracle?

Leaders emerge in moments like this. We have a coalition of administrators, educators, parents, guardians, and students—*leaders*. Our coalition is as diverse as the great State of Maryland, and we are here to ask all of you to do the right thing and provide equitable, quality education for students across Maryland.

We have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to be an example of equity in action. Four of our cities are ranked as [the most diverse cities](#) in the United States. In today's political climate, this gives us an inimitable opportunity to be a model for the rest of the country. This is not a matter of whether we can afford to implement these recommendations. *We can't* afford not to, because the truth is, we will be paying for this one way or another.

If we don't make an investment in pre-K, increase teacher salaries, and follow through on other Kirwan Recommendations, we'll be paying for things like prisons and welfare programs. I know where I stand on this. I hope you will all join our coalition and issue a favorable report for House Bill 1300 and Senate Bill 1000.

Thoughtfully,



David T. Blair
Chairman, Accountable Health Solutions