

MARYLAND TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION

General Assembly Session Week of Feb 17 (Monday is Presidents' Day)

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To further check out each bill, go to <http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/> and insert the bill number in the search box on top right.

Joint Hearing SB1000, HB1300- in Legislative Services, 4 committees, 2 in each House: Senate Budget & Tax, Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs, House Appropriations, and Ways & Means. The 172-page bill regarding the Kirwan Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education is now called **Blueprint for Maryland's Future – Implementation.**

It cannot be stated often enough that this bill does not address the real needs that could improve student results; instead it mostly expands the Public Schools reach into childhood development between birth and kindergarten. It includes 3 and 4 year old pre-K as well as social programs from infancy also. The Teachers' Unions will benefit from more dues income from increased teacher hires plus higher teacher pay all around and even more bureaucracy.

Also, legislators, mostly from the dominant party, will benefit from increased donations. Note that teachers' unions nationwide donate more money to campaigns than most other groups.

Two changes that are sorely needed, but not addressed: **1) Replacing the Common Core curriculum with real "Back to Basics" schooling, and 2) Serious disciplinary action.** Until these two points are addressed, it makes no sense to expand public school reach at taxpayers' expense.

The curriculum must include more rigorous, meaningful teaching of reading, writing and arithmetic. Phonics, spelling, cursive, times tables, true history, and science.

Discipline is the biggest problem most all teachers will tell you they face. It is complicated by lawsuits, many frivolous. Also, the gradual destruction of the family by government policies that are too often anti-marriage and anti-family. Understanding of a difficult student is one thing, but ignoring actions is not a solution for the classroom or for students who have been egregiously bullied with little or no protection from authorities. Note that it has been pointed out that often boys, especially, will join gangs for a kind of father figure they lack.

Will the Legislature pass Kirwan without funding just as Thornton was passed? Or is it really about the money?

Other:

Among many, many bills, Feb 17-22 seems to be the Education bill week. Other highlights in W&M include:

2/19 HB347- CLASS Act-the Governor's bill to **enable special Innovation Schools** within failing public schools. **HB724-Virtual Learning in Charter Schools.** Modernized forms of teaching, like Virtual Learning was another thing missed by the Kirwan Commission.

2/21- HB743 Universal School Start Act, which would put into law that the school start day is the day after Labor Day. This is a big business bonus for family vacations especially Ocean City and Deep Creek Lake.

Senate B&T has quite a few tax bills on Wed, Feb 19: Go to website above and click on **Meetings**. Same date in **EH&EA are clean environment bills** offering solutions which may be expensive and not the best. **Other tax proposals in W&M: HB765-MD Tax Revision Commission proposed. HB788- allows Itemized Tax Deductions** from MD Income Tax even if the taxpayer did not itemize on the federal return. The Legislature has harmed MD by ignoring this windfall tax increase on many Marylanders since the Federal Income Tax cut because even more taxpayers will leave our state due to its unreasonably high taxes.