



everychild.onevoice.®

5 Central Avenue  
Glen Burnie, MD 21061  
Phone: (410) 760-6221  
(800) 707-7972  
Fax: (410) 760-6344  
www.mdpta.org  
info@mdpta.org

**Written Testimony for the Record to the  
Maryland House of Delegates  
Ways and Means Committee  
Education – Public Schools – Instruction in Print and Cursive Handwriting (HB 725)**

**February 13, 2020**

**SUPPORT**

Maryland PTA is the state's oldest and largest child advocacy organization that serves as a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families, schools and communities and a strong advocate for public education. We represent thousands of volunteer members in 900 public schools and we are devoted to the educational success of children and family engagement in Maryland. For 105 years, our mission has been to make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.

Maryland PTA submits this testimony in support of House Bill 725 ("HB 725"), requiring each county board of education to require each public elementary school to provide instruction in print by the end of the third grade and cursive handwriting to students by the end of the fifth grade. Learning to write in cursive, printing, and typing on a keyboard contribute to brain development in students. Maryland PTA supports teaching cursive writing for elementary school students and typing on a keyboard for middle and high school students.

According to a study conducted by the University of Washington, learning to print, write in cursive and type on a keyboard all contribute to brain development in students. Particularly, however, the instruction in cursive seems to produce the greatest neurological effects. When students write in cursive, the process stimulates brain synapses and the synchronicity between both sides of the brain. Professor William Klemm, a senior professor of neuroscience at Texas A&M University, states, "Handwriting (cursive writing) dynamically engages widespread areas of both cerebral hemispheres." This quote was taken from an article where he references brain scans taken during handwriting that show activation of extensive regions of the brain involved in thinking, language, and working memory.

Cursive writing engages the right and the left hemispheres of the brain and therefore, supports idea generation, reading comprehension, brain development and improved memory. Writing in cursive allows quick and efficient note taking. Cursive writing is more efficient than printing and students lacking this skill are in a disadvantageous position. Cursive writing is a skill every student should have; it allows the student not only to utilize a faster way of writing and does not require the use of equipment.

As pointed out in *Psychology Today*, cursive handwriting can provide benefits similar to learning to play musical instruments. It helps to train the brain to integrate various forms of information at once, including visual and tactile inputs, while applying fine motor skills. It has also shown to help with

spelling. In order to spell accurately, students must be able to recall the letters and place them in the proper sequence. When using cursive, a student is helped with sequencing because all of the letters in the word appear together as a unit instead of as individual letters. The unified action of writing the cursive word helps to cement the word in the student's memory for future recall.

Cursive handwriting was removed from public school instruction primarily due to implementation of Common Core under the misguided belief that technology instruction could replace the need for cursive writing. The misfortune of the decision is now revealing itself in the nation's literacy rate. Children lacking cursive writing skills experience difficulty reading cursive and no longer have the skill to take notes quickly or write swiftly. Writing in cursive also helps many students write more fluidly and creatively while taking notes. It can even help improve spelling.

Many parents and educators have begun to recognize the disadvantages of the misguided decision to eliminate cursive writing from elementary school curriculum. Accordingly, for reasons stated above, Maryland PTA supports HB 725, and recommends a favorable report.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "E. Battle".

Dr. Edna Harvin Battle  
President