

Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education
William Brit Kirwan, Chairman

Witness Sign-up sheet

Date of Hearing: September 28, 2017

Location: LYNX Frederick High School

NAME	ADDRESS & PHONE NUMBER	NAME OF ORGANIZATION (IF APPLICABLE)	WRITTEN TESTIMONY	
			YES	NO
1. Delegate Carol Krimm		District 3A		
2. Traci Tatum		President, PTA Council of Frederick County		
3. Dr. Boyd Michael		Superintendent of Washington Co Public Schools	✓	
4. Theresa Alban		Superintendent Frederick County Public Schools	✓	
5. Liz Barrett		Board of Education of Frederick County	✓	
6. Ryan Antony Nicotra		None given.	✓	
7. Valarie Ross		Advocating private school		

8. Elizabeth Chung		Executive Director Asian American Center of Frederick		
9. Marla Migdal		Decoding Dyslexia MD		
10. John Gretz		self	✓	
11. Ken Oldham		President and CEO, United Way of Frederick County	✓	
12. Lois Hybl		League of Women Voters of Maryland	✓	
13. Jan Gardner		County Executive for Frederick County	✓	
14. Evan West		Self	✓	
15. Neil Becker		Parent and teacher		
16. Councilmember Kirby Delauter		Council Member for Frederick County		
17. Devon B.				
18. James Rossi		Washington County Teachers Association		

19. Jonathan Araujo and Tomas Reyna		resident of Frederick County		
20. Jen Burley		Speaking on behalf of Frederick Classical Charter School		
21. Rachel McCusker		MSEA		
22. Christian Mears		Parent of Students at Frederick Classical Charter School	✓	
23. Virginia Simoneau		Children's Center of Walkersville		
24. Charles Wainwright		Children Enrichment Enterprises		
25. Hannah Garagiola		On behalf of the Maryland State Child Care Association	✓	
26. Kate Groth		Community member		
27. Maria Rodriguez				
28. Kyle Bostian		self		
29. Logan Ojard		THS		

COMMISSION ON INNOVATION AND EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION



September 28, 2017

Public Hearing at LYNX at Frederick High School

Good evening Chairman Kirwan, Commissioners, and guests.

My name is Boyd Michael, and I am honored to serve as the Superintendent of Schools for Washington County Public Schools.

It has been my privilege to work with Washington County Public Schools (WCPS) starting in 1979 when I was employed as a teacher at Clear Spring High School.

Tonight I want to share information with you about our students and our school system.

There are forty-six (46) school facilities that must be maintained to meet the educational needs of our nearly 22,550 students. Approximately, 52% of our students are eligible for free and reduced-price meals and the number of students eligible for this service has increased significantly over the last ten (10) years.

It is disappointing for me to report to you that only 33% of our students who enter kindergarten, enter ready to learn. This is not acceptable and together we can change this. Since I assumed the role of Superintendent in July of this year, I have worked very closely with staff, with the full support of the Washington County Board of Education, to expand prekindergarten opportunities for students and families in Washington County to address this challenge. After assuming the role of Superintendent, immediate action was taken to add resources to support 60 new full-day prekindergarten students. At the same time, 320 students who were attending half-day sessions, are now attending school on a full time basis. Full-day access is now available to 580 four-year olds, and half-day access is available to 205 four-year olds. This is an increase of 35% over the previous school year. By the winter break, it is anticipated that four (4) more full-day programs at high-need schools will be added.

The world as we know it is changing rapidly. Alec Ross in his book *The Industries of the Future* describes a world where robots, technology, artificial intelligence, and innovation will displace a significant percentage of the workforce. For example, two and one half million people in the United States make their living from driving trucks, taxis, or buses, all of which are vulnerable to be displaced by self-driving vehicles. (Ross at page 31) What must we do today as a society to prepare students for what appears to be inevitable?

I am offering the following proposals for the Commission's consideration:

1. Every student should be afforded the opportunity to attend full-day prekindergarten at no cost to parents or guardians.
2. Any student who is not performing at grade level should be provided a customized education plan with dedicated resources so that the student's full potential is realized.

3. Every student should be provided a program of studies that will prepare the student for the challenges and opportunities of the 21st Century in postsecondary education and careers.

Given the cost of these proposals, it will be necessary to implement these initiatives over a period of time. Washington County Public Schools and my office would like to offer our assistance if the Commission recommends that pilot programs be established to explore the most effective and efficient methods to pursue these initiatives.

The Commission has been charged by the General Assembly to recommend how to update the base funding level for all students and to increase the level of funding for students with special needs, English language learners, and students eligible for free and reduced-price meals, all of which are needy populations for WCPS.

The *Final Report of the Study of Adequacy of Funding for Education in Maryland* has identified the investment that is needed to meet the educational needs of students. (Augenblick Palaich and Associates, Executive Summary at page xxvii) The Commission should carefully consider the study team's adequacy recommendations.

As the Commission finalizes its recommendations regarding the framework for funding public education, the framework must ensure for every student, a level of funding that is adequate, equitable, and that takes into account the local wealth of a county.

I must share with the Commission that ten (10) years ago, the education funding model was adjusted to the detriment of the students of Washington County. Prior to this dramatic change in the funding model, all twenty-four (24) local boards of education received the same percentage increase adjustment to their maintenance of effort calculation. This adjustment factor was known as the implicit price deflator.

If this adjustment factor had remained in place, the Washington County Board of Education would have received, over the last ten (10) years, an additional \$177 million in state funding to meet the academic needs of Washington County students. The elimination of this funding was unfair to students and it certainly was not equitable. The new funding formula the Commission recommends must be equitable and should allocate funding so that every student in the State of Maryland is treated fairly.

In closing, not only must we challenge our students academically, we must challenge ourselves to provide the resources to prepare all students for the 21st Century.

I want to thank every member of the Commission for their dedication and time commitment and for the opportunity to speak this evening.



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**Testimony to the
Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education
Public Hearing
Frederick High School, Frederick County, MD
September 28, 2017**

Good evening, Chairman Kirwan and Commission members. My name is Terry Alban. I am the Superintendent of Frederick County Public Schools. I am proud to speak on behalf of Frederick's more than 42,000 students and their families and our 5,000 outstanding FCPS employees.

We are pleased to welcome you to Frederick County and to this incredible new Frederick High School facility. This building represents just how much the people of Frederick County value public education. Our citizens, elected officials, and businesses wanted to bring the very best of 21st century education to the new Frederick High – this facility is a testament to their commitment to our students.

Frederick High School is also home to the innovative LYNX program, a new model for secondary education that centers on creating highly individualized plans for student success that provide maximum student choice and flexibility in setting and meeting academic and career goals. LYNX is truly a 21st century approach to education.

It is most fitting, therefore, that we gather here for this public hearing on the future of education in Maryland.

In reviewing your charge to assess education-financing formulas and determine how Maryland can better prepare students to compete in the global economy, I thought it would help you to know some of the ways Frederick County has changed since the Bridge to Excellence Act of 2002. Our demographics in just two key student groups tell a striking story.

Since 2002, our population of English learners has grown from 800 to 2,600 students – an increase of 225% – more than enough to fill this new building well past its capacity. Similarly, the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals in Frederick County has increased from 13 to 27 percent. This means that more than one of every four Frederick County students – more than 11,000 young people – lives in an economically disadvantaged household.

The significant demographic changes over the past 16 years signify a drastic influx of students who come to us with increasingly complex needs. Just as the Thornton Commission recognized, it is encouraging to see that your "Vision for a World Class School System" currently recognizes the need to differentiate funding to support schools serving disadvantaged students. Creating a formula to provide additional funding for English Learners, special education students, and students living in poverty will be critically important in eliminating achievement gaps.

I applaud the Commission's recommendation to fund wrap-around social services and additional teachers for disadvantaged students. The recommendation affirms that the ways we provide educational services today are vastly different than they were two decades ago. These two

recommendations support funding adequacy, but more importantly, they support funding and educational equity.

Indeed, true educational equity starts with our very youngest learners. According to our 2016 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment scores, only 39% of students come to us with mathematics readiness skills and 52% with language and literacy readiness. Accordingly, I ask you to include pre-kindergarten students in enrollment counts for funding formulas in all schools. The vision to extend quality early childhood education to more students who need it is an evidence-based investment that will significantly and positively impact student achievement. Thank you! We know that investing in early childhood education results in economic and other advantages for Maryland residents.

The policy considerations mentioned in your vision are also compelling. In the interest of time, I will simply note two items. Moving the target for College and Career Readiness to the 10th grade is excellent! Equally excellent is the desire to transform the status of the teaching profession. That transformation is long overdue, as is the need to redefine how teachers are trained. Bravo! However, I believe the funding and implementation for these proposed strategies will be exceedingly complex and warrants additional consideration.

Finally, as this Commission grapples with how to make good on the promise of public education for all of Maryland's students, I urge you to acknowledge and recognize that each of our 24 districts has unique needs, unique challenges, and unique opportunities. Without local vision, local leadership, and local control of our education priorities, we would not be sitting in a state-of-the-art facility that's home to the state's most innovative approach to high school education. Local control fuels creativity, flexibility, and problem-solving.

Your task is daunting. On behalf of the students, teachers, and staff of Frederick County Public Schools, I thank you for your service. As we await your final recommendations, it is important to acknowledge the tremendous scope of your work and your equally tremendous commitment to the future of all of our young people.

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF FREDERICK COUNTY

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Testimony to the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education

Public Hearing Frederick High School, Frederick County, MD September 28, 2017

On behalf of the Board of Education of Frederick County, welcome to our county and to Frederick High School – the oldest high school in our school system and home of the proud Frederick Cadets and the innovative LYNX Program that offers a new model for high school education.

Our Board governs a school system of over 41,000 students and more than 5,500 employees. We appreciate the opportunity to articulate our support for the Commission's charge to ensure adequate funding and recommend improvements to the funding formulas that support our public schools.

We add our voice to those of our Board of Education colleagues across the state in urging you to build on the work of the Thornton Commission and the foundation provided by the Bridge to Excellence Act of 2002, and to use this opportunity to address the substantial funding gap that currently exists, identified by Augenblick, Palaich and Associates (APA). At the end of 2015, APA identified a statewide funding gap of \$1.6 billion between what is currently provided under the Bridge to Excellence Act and what has been identified as statewide adequacy. In other words, currently schools are being funded at 88% of what would be considered adequate under the 2002 Act.

For Frederick County, that has meant an adequacy gap of \$3.2 million, with our schools currently funded at a level of 93% of what would be considered adequate under the 2002 Act.

Over the last several years, our school system has continued to provide a high level of education and instruction in the face of a sea of change in state standards and accompanying assessments. Through these pressures, we have kept up with demands for new, updated or revised curriculum, as well as materials of instruction. We have made a herculean effort to keep pace with new technologies and worked to meet demands for equipment, infrastructure and training. We have made improvements to our already strong teacher evaluation system, and professional development and training opportunities. We continue to build on the foundations of tried and proven strategies and programs, while at the same time enhancing our offerings and innovations.

We have strong partnerships with our business community, non-profit sector, government officials and our higher education entities. We proactively work with each of these entities to improve our students' experience and preparation, and to ensure quality and variety in the opportunities open to them. We have done all of this with no increased state funding beyond those generated by increases to our enrollment, and with no improvement of the state financing system that must keep pace with an ever-changing environment.

-over-

At the same time, the students who walk through our doors in 2017 have increasingly more varied and complex needs than those who came to us in 2002. We are encouraged by the Commission's attention to components beyond K-12 academics, critical to students' education and success. We are particularly supportive of the increases in funding and resources you have been discussing for early childhood and prekindergarten education, our special needs students, and expansion and enhancement of career and technology education. We welcome any changes that would improve the state education financing system that would allow systems to be responsive to challenges while preserving a strong and dependable foundation amount so that we meet the needs of all students.

We are concerned with one area of the Commission's recommendations – governance, particularly as it relates to local decision-making. As you travel to attend these regional public hearings, you will appreciate the diversity that exists around the state. And this diversity exists not just county to county, but within counties. The northern part of our county is different in culture, needs and capacity, than the southern part of our county. While we share the Commission's desire to amplify best practices and strategies, we also know from experience that one size does not fit all. We urge the Commission to preserve the flexibility allowed to schools and school systems to work within the goals and structure of the statewide system, while attending to the specific needs of our communities.

No other entity functions like local school boards, and we are uniquely positioned to marshal local capacity and align local efforts with the larger goals and regulations set forth at the state and federal level.

Our public meetings, our members' attendance at events, and daily discourse and engagement with the community at large, provide citizens the venue for regular, meaningful public dialogue around specific educational goals and expectations for our community's students.

We know our communities' values and goals. We know our schools' strengths, weaknesses, and needs. We are best positioned to identify where, on the path of progress we reside, and to determine how best to move forward to meet the broader vision developed by the State.

And once programs and policies are set in place, school boards are best positioned to effectively communicate and reflect community concerns, feedback and suggestions regarding goals, laws and regulations. Acting as the local voice and advocate on education issues is an important piece of the local governance and civic engagement that school boards provide.

We ask that you preserve the autonomy of local boards of education and governments and allow us to meet the unique needs of our communities, families and students within the larger context of what is best for all of Maryland's children.

Thank you for hosting these regional public hearings and providing this opportunity to share our concerns and perspectives.

Good evening, and thank you for allowing me to join you for this hearing. It is wonderful to see so many familiar faces and friends here tonight. My name is Ryan Nicotra, and I know some of you through my involvement in events in Annapolis like Maryland Arts Day, in which we all come together to celebrate the many ways in which Maryland artists improve our state's quality of life, enhance the hard work being done by all of our teachers, attract new companies to set up shop, and connect our communities while giving each of us a sense of place and belonging.

I know some of you well enough to know that, for so many reasons, you realize that it is in our state's best interest to support the work of artists and arts teachers in every community. We all love that we live in a state home to hundreds of theatres and dance companies: where we can access incredible works of art through our many museums, and where we all come together for concerts and the latest films. And when it comes to children, who among us doesn't love seeing what our young people painted in art class this week- or attending their school concerts, fall plays and spring musicals?

The real work of arts education, and what brings me here from Baltimore City tonight, goes far beyond those fleeting moments of joy and pride. As a nation, we have gathered over fifty years of longitudinal data which confirms that consistent participation in arts classes between grades Pre-K through 12 has been proven to nearly close the achievement gap between students of different socioeconomic statuses.

James Catterall, a researcher from UCLA, found that greater student involvement in the arts led to higher academic performance, increased standardized test scores, more volunteerism and community service, and lower dropout rates: even among students from the poorest neighborhoods. A recent 12-year study found that young people who went a step further and participated in extracurricular arts programming for at least one full year were:

- 4 times more likely to have been recognized for academic achievement
- 4 times more likely to participate in a math and science fair
- 3 times more likely to be elected to class office within their schools
- and 3 times more likely to win an award for school attendance than their peers with low or no arts education.

To put it more simply: if we provide ample opportunities for our young people to take part in the arts in their schools, we can begin to level the playing field for those who have had the odds stacked against them. Arts classrooms are small powerhouses in every school, and support learning and student achievement in other core subjects such as math, science, literature, and history.

Taken a step further, we also know that arts education prepares students for the jobs of the future which demand creative problem-solving. In a recent global survey including 1,500 CEOs, IBM found that creativity is considered to be the most important leadership trait for the industries of tomorrow, more than rigor, management discipline, integrity, or

even vision: the report's authors note that "successfully navigating an increasingly complex world will require creativity".

The authors of a recent report by Ernest & Young note that "we assume 50% of our revenue in 5 years' time must come from sources that do not exist today", and that "the ability to manage, organize, cultivate and nurture creative thinking is directly linked to growth and achievement".

However, we know that too many people are not graduating from our schools prepared to enter the twenty-first century workforce. The Conference Board's research report, *Ready to Innovate*, concurs that our nation's ability to innovate is key to economic recovery and global competitiveness. 97% of business leaders and 99% of school leaders rate creativity as increasingly important in US workplaces, and 72% of American employers say that creativity is of primary concern when they're hiring. Though the demand for creative employees in every sector is clear, 85% of employers told The Conference Board that they can't find the creative applicants they seek.

Even still, I feel a sense of guilt in having to qualify the extraordinary power of arts education by the ways in which it prepares students for the future workforce. I want everyone within the sound of my voice to know that by nature, the arts bring dignity to the human spirit. Artists create safe spaces and brave spaces for each of us to discover who we are and who we can become. Through rigor, the arts build grit and resilience to get us through the tough times we will all face in the future. Artists also challenge each of us to see one another honestly, with compassion, and without fear. Artists are hard at work throughout Maryland to build communities in our fragmented and sometimes frightening world. Each work of art helps us to remember who we are, and dreams of what we might become. Most importantly, the arts call our young people forward to lead, to question, to reform, and to honor this nation through their service and creativity.

This Commission has the power to shape the public education system for the better, and it is my hope that you will think about how you can support a greater equity in access to quality in sequential, and standards-based arts education for all students in the state of Maryland. I hope that you will join my friends from the Arts Education in Maryland Schools Alliance in support of a funding formula which provides base funds for instruction pursuant to the Code of Maryland Regulations, which includes funding for the arts to provide qualified arts teachers and materials to all students in every school in grades Pre-K through 12. Working in concert with teachers, students, families, and communities, this Commission has the capacity to put Maryland on track to be a national leader in providing the creative education that our state, our country, and our world requires more and more each day. Thank you so much for your time.

Presentation to the Maryland Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education

by John J. Gretz on September 28, 2017

I would like to thank Dr. Kirwan and all of the members of the Maryland Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education for the time and dedication you are bringing to the Hearings being held throughout the State of Maryland.

Element # 2 states that "A world-class teaching profession supports a world-class instructional system where every student has access to highly effective teachers and is expected to succeed." That is an extremely broad goal allowing many stakeholders the opportunity to offer sage advice on the appropriate pathways for educational systems to traverse.

Tonight, I would like to briefly focus on the **3 R's** that serve as guiding principles for educational systems to consider when determining policies and procedures that impact highly effective teachers.

Specifically, the **3 R principals** are : **Recruit**
Retain
Re-train

RECRUIT : The beginning salary and other benefits offered by a school district must be high enough to attract the best teachers based on their performances in teacher preparation programs or in their educational work experience if they are potentially transferring from another school system.

Retain : Experienced teachers must be provided with appropriate compensation and other positive staff development opportunities that are professionally inspiring and rewarding. One element of that goal is to ensure that the salary and benefits offered throughout the career ladder are competitive with other school districts. My wife and I live in Frederick County (Urbana). She teaches in the Montgomery County Public School System and commutes to Rockville every day. Why ? Because the salary difference between Montgomery and Frederick school systems is **\$ 42,000** per year ! Yes, she must deal with traffic but she earns **\$ 42,000 more** each year and the benefits package is better. And it does **not** stop with each year's

salary difference – her retirement income will be far higher throughout the remainder of her life.

Just on the one street where we reside in Urbana, there are 3 experienced teachers doing the same thing every day for the same reasons. There are many other teachers who live in Frederick County but commute to work in the Montgomery County Public School System.

Teachers provided with these enhanced salaries and benefits are highly likely to remain in that same school system for their entire careers.

Experienced teachers also feel appreciated and rewarded when professional growth opportunities are readily available. Serving as a Mentor Teacher provides the positive feelings of helping newer teachers to develop the skills necessary to become highly effective teachers. It inspires them to regularly implement innovative teaching strategies into their classrooms and to share those learning experiences with other teachers.

Teaching is one of the most important “helping professions” and educators feel rewarded when they are regularly provided with many opportunities to assist other professionals

Numerous educational research studies have shown that the quality and strength of Teacher Mentoring Programs are a major determinant of how successful school systems are in their ability to Retain their teachers.

Re-Train : School systems must invest heavily in staff development programs that regularly provide teachers with the expertise to successfully navigate the challenges created by our rapidly-advancing, technology-driven, 21st century society. Students, and the school system as a whole, will benefit greatly from the enhanced skills that are provided to teachers. Students of today learn through different modalities than we did 20, 30, or 40 years ago. Whether we, and other citizens of Maryland, like it or not, times have changed. The State of Maryland through its local school districts must allocate a significantly increased level of funding to strongly support educational programs identified herein as the 3 R principles of Recruit, Retain, and Re-Train.



United Way
of Frederick County

Testimony to the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education

Public Hearing
Frederick High School, Frederick County, MD
September 28, 2017

United Way of Frederick County sincerely appreciates the opportunity to give voice to meaningful improvements to Maryland public schools.

As a partner with the Frederick County Public School system, we support the Board of Education's request to improve the substantial funding gap between what is currently provided under the Bridge of Excellence Act of 2002 and what has been identified as statewide adequacy, as well as to ensure improvements to the funding formulas that support our public schools.

In addition to the statements presented by the Board of Education on improvements to public education funding in Maryland, we want to highlight the significance of the ALICE Report for Maryland in justifying satisfactory funding for our children in public schools (<https://www.unitedwayfrederick.org/ALICE>).

ALICE (which stands for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) shines a spotlight on the large population of residents who are employed, yet have little or no savings. ALICE is comprised of people who lie in the gap between earning more than the Federal Poverty Level yet unable to adequately cover basic needs such as housing, child care, food, health care, and transportation. The ALICE Report identifies the different costs of living across Maryland counties, thus recognizing the higher costs of living in communities such as Frederick County. It proves the importance of localized data, which provides us meaningful information on any community's unique needs.

The Federal Poverty Level suggests that only 10% of Maryland households face financial hardship. However, the ALICE Report tells a very different story. In fact, it demonstrates that 35% of, more than one out of every three, households in Maryland are in need.

Frederick County Public Schools are currently being funded at 93% of what would be considered adequate under the Bridge of Excellence Act of 2002. Thus, satisfactory funding has not been fulfilled since 2002. ALICE is a clear justification for fully funding the state formula for supporting public education for each county in the State of Maryland.

The ALICE Report provides hyper-localized data. We ask the Commission to consider utilizing ALICE in the concentration of poverty factor for determining the state funding formula to allow ALICE-dense communities to receive the support that they need.

As the ALICE report demonstrates in detail, each community is very different from the next. We ask that you preserve the autonomy of local boards of education and governments. Allow them to meet the unique needs of our communities, families, and students within the larger context of what is best for all of Maryland's children.

Thank you for hosting this public hearing and providing the opportunity to share our testimony.

Ken Oldham
President & CEO

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AT-A-GLANCE: MARYLAND

2014 Point-in-Time Data

Population: 5,976,407 | Number of Counties: 24 | Number of Households: 2,166,102
 Median Household Income (state average): \$73,971 (national average: \$53,657)
 Unemployment Rate (state average): 7.2% (national average: 7.2%)
 Gini Coefficient (zero = equality; one = inequality): 0.45 (national average: 0.48)

How many households are struggling?

ALICE, an acronym for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed, are households that earn more than the U.S. poverty level, but less than the basic cost of living for the state (the ALICE Threshold, or AT). Combined, the number of poverty and ALICE households (35 percent) equals the total Maryland population struggling to afford basic needs.



Income Assessment for Maryland

The total annual income of poverty-level and ALICE households in Maryland in 2014 was \$17.1 billion, which includes wages and Social Security. This is only 45 percent of the amount needed just to reach the ALICE Threshold of \$38.2 billion statewide. Government and nonprofit assistance made up an additional 40 percent, or \$15.2 billion, but that still leaves an Unfilled Gap of 15 percent, or \$5.9 billion.

ALICE Threshold	–	Income and Assistance	=	Unfilled Gap
\$38.2 billion	–	\$32.3 billion	=	\$5.9 billion

What does it cost to afford the basic necessities?

This bare-minimum Household Survival Budget does not allow for any savings, leaving a household vulnerable to unexpected expenses. Affording only a very modest living in each community, this budget is still significantly more than the U.S. poverty level of \$11,670 for a single adult and \$23,850 for a family of four.

Monthly Costs – Maryland Average – 2014			
	SINGLE ADULT	2 ADULTS, 1 INFANT, 1 PRESCHOOLER	PERCENT CHANGE, 2007–2014
Housing	\$807	\$1,123	25%
Child Care	\$-	\$1,214	19%
Food	\$202	\$612	20%
Transportation	\$364	\$722	27%
Health Care	\$138	\$552	58%
Miscellaneous	\$179	\$464	26%
Taxes	\$274	\$415	31%
Monthly Total	\$1,964	\$5,102	26%
ANNUAL TOTAL	\$23,568	\$61,224	26%
Hourly Wage	\$11.78	\$30.61	26%

Note: Percent increases are an average of the increases in each category for a single-adult and a four-person family.
 Source: See Appendix C

AT-A-GLANCE: MARYLAND



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS[®] OF MARYLAND, INC.

Testimony to the Maryland Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education

SUBJECT: Education Funding Priorities

POSITION: Support for Adequate and Equitable Funding with Appropriate Weights for Special Populations and Pre-K for Three and Four-Year-Olds in Communities with the Greatest Need

BY: Elaine Apter and Richard Willson, Co-Presidents

DATE: September 28, 2017

Since 1972, the League of Women Voters of Maryland (LWVMD) has had positions supporting "a foundation program based on a weighted per pupil formula supported by general state revenues at a level high enough to eliminate inequities". In 1982 LWVMD filed an amicus curiae brief in the Maryland Court of Appeals on behalf of the plaintiffs in *Somerset v. Hornbeck*, incorporating LWVMD's education financing positions. We have supported the recommendations of many education funding commissions.

Now that the Thornton Formula needs updating, we come before you in support of the APA consultants' recommendations that the base per pupil foundation amount needs to increase to prepare students for the higher state standards Maryland requires today and international standards being considered by the Commission.

The weights for special populations must remain high to support the additional resources and services needed to educate these students and reflect real costs in Maryland schools.

The method of determining a county's wealth must reflect its ability to raise funds to support education. Methods that give a higher weight to income rather than property values would be an improvement over current formulas.

In discussing education with other League members from several counties, we have heard many concerns about the high levels of poverty among public school children. These problems are magnified in schools with especially high concentrations of poverty.

Because of our concern with children's services and preventive programs for Children at Risk, we have supported Community School legislation. We recommend that the funding formula provide appropriate weights to support the wrap-around services that help families and keep children in school and eager and able to learn. The weight will need to be higher in schools with the highest concentrations of poverty.

The national League of Women Voters believes that early intervention and prevention measures are effective in helping children reach their full potential. The League supports policies and programs at all levels of the community and government that promote the well-being, encourage the full development and ensure the safety of all children. An important measure is early childhood education.

Thus, LWVMD agrees with APA that weighted funding in the formula should be provided for full-day prekindergarten for four-year-olds. Other Kirwan Commission presenters have stressed the importance of early education before age 4. We support priority for full-day programs for three and four-year olds targeted to communities with the highest needs. Ideally, universal availability of full-day prekindergarten could be phased in with costs on a sliding scale based on income.

The League of Women Voters urges you to be bold in recommending funding formulas necessary to support effective programs that prepare our children to be college and career ready for the 21st century.



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Jan H. Gardner
County Executive

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE *Raymond V. Barnes, Jr., Acting Chief Administrative Officer*

Testimony to the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education

Public Hearing Frederick High School, Frederick County MD September 28, 2107

Good evening. I'm Frederick County Executive, Jan Gardner, and I welcome you to the newly rebuilt and modernized Frederick High School, the oldest serving high school in Frederick County. In Frederick County, we are proud of our schools and we value public education. We know that our county's economic vitality and future prosperity is dependent on the investment we make in our students and their education – not just today but well into the future.

In 2004, the Thornton Commission funding formula established a level of educational adequacy. Although it was never fully funded, the basic formula served Maryland well and we made progress with the Thornton funds and accountability standards. But, it is time to update that formula.

The most important challenge we collectively face is the growing population of students in poverty. When Thornton was enacted in 2004, about 12% of the students in Frederick County Public Schools qualified for free and reduced meals (FARM). Today, the number of FARM students in Frederick County has more than doubled to nearly 28%; more than 1 in 4 students is experiencing poverty. Education must continue to be the path of opportunity for all our students. We must rise to the challenge and keep the promise of public education. Ensuring educational opportunity for these students will not only lift them and their families and make sure these students become productive citizens, educating our future workforce ensures our long-term economic prosperity as a state and nation. This is our singular major challenge.

That is why, as County Executive of the 8th largest county in the state by population and the county with the largest land mass, I have made education funding a priority of my administration, funding over \$25 million above the Maintenance of Effort calculation since taking office in 2014. Under my administration we are funding the required local share of education costs and more.

However, local funding alone is not enough to make significant advancements in education without an increased commitment by the state in this age of technology and innovation. Our schools need adequate funding to ensure all Maryland students succeed. We need to provide pre-kindergarten and early childhood education programs, dual enrollment, career and technology education, for student groups struggling to meet basic standards, and to help address the gap that poverty creates. These critical components of a 21st century educational program are inadequately funded according to the current formula. Maryland must meet the commitment proposed by the Thornton Commission, and then go beyond the adequacy established in 2004, to ensure that our schools once again top national and international rankings in 2017 and beyond.

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Therefore, I ask the Commission on Education and Innovation to consider the following as you make your recommendations:

- Please address the funding gap that was identified by the APA study. A significant state investment in Maryland schools is needed, and will require about a \$1.6 billion investment in state funding alone, if we are to adequately fund education into the next decade and beyond.
- The foundation formula must be updated to include increased funding for pre-kindergarten, technology, state mandated assessments, and to address poverty and the needs of varying student populations.
- In addition, other aspects of an adequate public education that are often not part of the maintenance of effort calculation, such as school nurses, school resource officers, and transportation should be considered as part of the state foundation formula. Funding for these programs should be added and not supplant existing funding.
- I urge the Commission to retain the Geographic Cost of Education Index (GCEI) and to fund it as part of the foundation formula. GCEI funding must be maintained.
- Please ensure that the Commission's recommendations will not add to the burden of unfunded mandates. For example, we must improve access to quality early childhood education programs, but mandating a one-size-fits-all pre-K program without providing funding for the capital investment needed to support such a mandate would harm schools.
- Frederick County does not support the use of competitive grants for state funding. All students across Maryland deserve to have access to a free, adequate public education program, regardless of ZIP code. Frederick County does not support local jurisdictions competing for state educational funding. This approach does not deliver equal opportunity.
- Local control is paramount. Please provide flexibility to schools, school systems, and local jurisdictions to meet the goals and regulations of the larger Maryland system. Maryland is a diverse state. There are vast differences between counties and within counties. There cannot be a one-size-fits-all approach for education.

Thank you for your consideration and for providing an opportunity for the public to participate in this process. I appreciate the Commission's selection of Frederick High School for this meeting. There is no better place to host a Commission charged with determining the future funding levels for Maryland's schools than this newly built 21st Century educational facility. Frederick High exemplifies the type of educational facility and the innovative programming that we want for every student in Maryland.

I am confident that this Commission's work will lay the foundation to attain that goal.

Testimony of Evan E. West to the Kirwan Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education

September 28, 2017

**Frederick High School
650 Carroll Parkway
Frederick, Maryland 21701**

Chairman Kirwan and Commissioners:

I appreciate this opportunity to provide testimony to this very important body and ask that this document be included with whatever archive the Commission uses to keep record of the public opinion provided to it. I sincerely appreciate the time, effort and hard-work you are dedicating to what is a vital undertaking.

As the father of a student enrolled in Allegany County Public Schools, a former Maryland public school English Teacher and advocate for public education, I hope to provide multiple perspectives and suggestions for your work.

First, as a parent, my chief concern is that your work focuses on providing recommendations that improve outcomes for students- not just for my child, but for all students in Maryland public schools. Your research has already revealed that public schools in Maryland are vastly underfunded. While the challenges that underfunding create are unique by jurisdiction, all jurisdictions have been adversely affected by it.

Where I live, in Allegany County, the impact of underfunding, both at the state and local level has led to the elimination of more than 200 educator positions over the course of the past five years. That means, in spite of declining enrollment, most of our schools are dealing with class sizes that are beyond state recommended level. The school my child attends, Washington Middle School, the average class size is ** students. The educators there are second to none, but they are consistently told that they are going to “have to do more with less” as they watch position after position that would reduce class size go unfilled due to lack of funding.

When I taught, one of the most daunting tasks I faced was an enormous class for which I may or may not have had all the materials of instruction I needed and where I was asked to stretch myself to reach more students than I had the time, space or materials for. It is heartbreaking as an educator to know that a variable beyond your control, like class size and materials, might negatively affect your students. As much as an educator tries to compensate for those variables, there is only so much you can do with less and less every year. These were problems when I left the classroom in 2010 and they have only gotten worse since.

As a former educator and advocate for public education, I must say that I find it alarming that the Commission is considering as part of its Career Lattice recommendations that educator compensation be tied to performance. Merit pay is neither new nor innovative and has been proven time after time to make no difference in student achievement. My personal experience has been that merit and incentive pay leads to demotivation, division and poor morale. Educating students must be a cooperative undertaking and merit pay or pay for performance undermines that effort.

A much sounder approach to attracting and retaining educators is to increase base pay to a level that is comparable to other professions with similar educational requirements and reducing the stress that external factors such as workload, class size and poorly thought out accountability regimes create.

With respect to Education Support Professionals, we ought to start by simply seeking to provide them with a wage they can afford to live on. ESP do some of the most critical work in our schools and are often the last to be given credit, first on the line when it comes to staff reductions and last when it comes to increasing base pay. As a parent, I want every educator that works with my child to be compensated as a professional whether they be a teacher, a secretary, instructional assistant, counselor, principal, supervisor, or building service worker.

As a graduate of Frostburg State University, I feel compelled to add that seeking to improve teacher education programs is laudable, but I would stress that the data you use to inform those decisions be comprehensive and take into account what the impact of eliminating programs would mean for the university or college in question and what the impact would be on the communities those programs serve. In small communities like ours, eliminating the teacher education programs would be devastating. The value that those programs add to our public schools cannot be measured.

In summary, I want for my child what most parents want when it comes to public education. I want highly respected, well compensated educators working with my child. I want to see an end to retraction and dwindling resources that hurt not only our schools, but our communities. I want a system that doesn't feel like it is forced to make decisions that will require educators to do more with less, because an educator's working conditions are my child's learning conditions.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony.

Testimony of **Christian Mears**
Parent of Students at Frederick Classical Charter School

Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education
Public Hearing, September 28, 2017

I would like to thank the Chairman and Members of the Commission for the opportunity to share my concerns and thoughts regarding the manner in which we address education here in Maryland. Having reviewed much of the posted documentation and recorded video of your past sessions, I understand the scale and complexity of the tasks you are struggling with.

My purpose here today is to express the viewpoint of a parent with two young children attending a public charter school here in Frederick, Maryland. For the sake of clarity, I would point out that as of recently my wife and I both chair committees at Frederick Classical Charter School as volunteers, but my current testimony is from the perspective of a parent and a taxpaying citizen of Maryland. As someone whose personal K-12 experience involved 8 different public and private schools across Maryland and Delaware, I also have considerable exposure to various conditions and learning environments.

The draft NCEE Recommendations and Commission Consensus that is provided through this commission's website is a noble effort and I do hope that something good comes of it. There are a few key points that I would like to raise:

Innovation and Choice: I believe there is little doubt that truly effective education requires innovation and freedom to explore new approaches. My wife and I chose to place our children first in a Montessori program for pre-K, then in a traditional public elementary school while awaiting a spot through the open lottery for the charter school of our choice. While the Montessori and traditional public schools offered a wonderful experience, we were most excited by the rigorous program of a Classical Curriculum. It more closely aligned with our views on education while maintaining a spectrum of racial and ethnic diversity afforded through the open lottery system. No one curriculum, approach, or school is the correct fit for everyone, and it is through the freedom to choose among schools who are encouraged and supported to innovate that we all benefit.

Funding: As a hard-working taxpayer, there is little that infuriates me more than to slog through my tax return every year and then hear from groups or government officials that more money will solve one issue or another, and especially education. I would like to see the current costs our tax dollars are going towards be accounted for and transparent, not buried and hidden within vague categories. The per-pupil funding approach "should" be a reasonable policy towards that end, but that needs to be consistent across the spectrum of schools whether traditional or charter public institutions. Also, the misguided notion that public charter schools somehow "take money" away from traditional schools is utter nonsense; charter school families are taxpayers too and the funding should go to their place of education.

Teacher Accountability: I think we all have recollections of certain teachers in our school years that stand out from the rest. Someone you perhaps really connected with, introduced you to a passion for a specific subject, or that made learning so enjoyable you considered the teaching profession for yourself. We likely also recall the ones who were not so good, whether through fear, detachment, or simply not proficient in teaching skills. How many of the latter group are held accountable in our schools? Precious few. We need to enact a more rigorous performance review and remediation process for our educators; one that retains the best and removes the underperforming. This would also counterbalance the salary increases as we encourage excellence. However, this will not be possible under current conditions with collective bargaining agreements designed to hamper such measures.

As this commission reaches the final stages of reviews and recommendations, I ask that you do not become so lost in the minutia of numbers and data points that you miss the big picture. Marylanders want to know that our money is being spent wisely and effectively, that our children are being educated in a safe environment with highly-qualified teachers, and the freedom to choose schools as parents who know our children better than anyone else

Thank you for your consideration.



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Maryland State Child Care Association (MSCCA) leading our Coalition of Partners and Associations are uniting to propose support for all families and children in accessing affordable, quality programs for children from birth to 5 years old.

MSCCA and the Child Care Coalition consisting of our united partners at SEIU, Maryland State Family Child Care Association, Maryland After School Association and Maryland Early Childhood Professionals (MECP) and Maryland Catholic Conference are collectively in support of universal access for all families and children to early childhood programs.

We believe the best practices to make that access available equally for families, children and programs offering pre-K include:

1. A mixed, diverse, sustainable delivery system is crucial to achieving universal access, not compulsory. (public nor private programs would have enough space to accomplish independently).
2. A 50% minimum percentage of diverse delivery throughout the state (As recommended in the Universal Access to Pre-K Work Group Report).
3. A sliding scale payment system: Funding for this type of initiative needs to be on sliding scale which is most cost effective and equitable way to implement. A sliding scale model should promote parent "buy in" and also preserve choice and flexibility for parents to access the type of program they need/want including; center based, family child care program, religious program, Montessori program, etc. (As recommended in the Universal Access to Pre-K Work Group Report)
4. A realistic funding model per pupil that encompasses all aspects of quality and allows for equality and a level playing field for both public and private sectors to provide pre-K (salaries, benefits, resources)
5. An accountability system: EXCELS or MSDE Non-Public Nursery school approval certificate or state or national accreditation. Maryland EXCELS should align standards for all four-year-old programs in both private and public setting with realistic modifications that include assessing the classrooms applying for grant, workforce development plan, capacity building, diversity.
6. A fair system for authority/governance, oversight and funding distribution by MSDE at state level. (consider the options of MSDE expanding the current competitive pre-k expansion grant with necessary funding for quality changes, modifications for networks and workforce development, or a new grant system developed with stakeholders) Private and public programs awarded the same per pupil dollars as long as both meet all same eligibility requirements. Collectively, our stakeholders stipulate the right to hire and recruit our own qualified teachers to implement pre-k, as long as they meet the requirements set forth and as is the current practice for pre-k expansion grants, MSDE approved non public nursery schools and accredited programs. The process should be fair and mutually benefit public entities and private enterprises.
7. We believe more efforts and investments should be focused on refundable tax credits, as well as increases in care subsidies that will address affordability and accessibility to quality programs for children birth through pre-k in Maryland.