



Maryland Education Coalition



Ellie Mitchell & Rick Tyler, Jr. – Co-Chairs

Web site - www.marylandeducationcoalition.org *** Email - md.education.coalition@gmail.com

January 17, 2024

BILL: HB 50 - Commission on History, Culture, and Civics in Education

COMMITTEE: House Ways and Means

POSITION: Favorable W/amendments

The Maryland Education Coalition (MEC) was originally founded over 40 years ago and is made up of over twenty statewide organizations and individual advocates with extensive experience. (see below). We advocate for adequate funding, equitable policies, and transparent accountability for the estimated 900,000 diverse students* in Maryland's public schools, regardless of their academic, cultural, economic, geographic, racial, or other demographic status.

MEC believes that all education funding and public policy decisions must apply universally accepted equity principles of fairness that are culturally unbiased, using equality principles that reduce achievement, learning and opportunity gaps among all student groups by Special Population, Race or Ethnicity. We also oppose discrimination against staff, students, parents/guardians or visitors by age, culture, economic status, educational background, ethnicity, gender, geographic location, language, marital status, mental ability, national origin, parental status, physical ability, political philosophy, race, religion, sexual orientation, or work experience.

MEC wants to ensure all students have access to high quality History, Culture, and Civics Education. Therefore, **we are supportive of House Bill 890 with amendments** that will define the Commission leadership and ensure meaningful stakeholder participation in the decision-making process of issues pertaining to those who are historically marginalized or discriminated against, misunderstood, or denied high quality, equitable access to education and student services.

We offer the following amendments:

1. **The Commission shall be led by a qualified representative from the Education Department** appointed by the State Superintendent in consultation with the Governor or the Department Director of Social Studies
2. The following organizations with extensive experience, and expertise representing some student groups listed in this bill shall each have a member.
 - **NAACP-MSA**, representing the Advancement of Colored People,
 - **CASA**, representing working-class Black, Latino/a/e, Afro-descendent, Indigenous, & Immigrant communities,
 - **The Education Advocacy Coalition for Students with Disabilities (EAC)**,
 - **ACLU-Maryland** representing Civil Rights
3. **Add to Section H,1, I - "Indigenous People"**

We do not object to the inclusion of the other groups mentioned or those designated to make appointments but believe if the General Assembly wants to provide the Commission the best opportunity to produce a high quality product, it must be led by a highly qualified educator with a background in History, Culture, and Civics and a broad diversity of organization representatives should be given an opportunity to participate and contribute to the process and outcomes.

Therefore, we support HB 890 with the amendments above and urge the Bill Sponsor-Delegate Acevero, the Ways & Means Committee, and General Assembly to vote favorably with the listed amendments.

***2023 Special Populations** - FARMS-458,355; English Learner-109,605; Students with Disabilities-111,105

***2023 RACE** - Black/African American-291,416; White-293,067; Hispanic/Latino of Any Race-195,406; Two or More Races-46,423

ACLU-MD, Arts Education in Maryland Schools, Arts Every Day, Attendance Works, CASA, Children's Behavioral Health Coalition, Decoding Dyslexia of MD, Disability Rights Maryland, League of Women Voters of MD, Let Them See Clearly, Right to Read Maryland, Maryland Coalition for Community Schools, Maryland Alliance for Racial Equity in Education, Maryland Coalition for Gifted & Talented Ed, Maryland Down Syndrome Advocacy Coalition, Maryland Out of School Time Network, MSC-NAACP, Maryland School Psychologists' Association, Parent Advocacy Consortium, Public Justice Center, School Social Workers of MD, Strong Schools Maryland, Kalam Hettleman, David Hombeck, Rick Tyler, Jr., Shanetta Martin, Sharon Rubinstein