
PARENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

October 22, 2019
Group Notes

ATTENDEES:

Board of Education

- Virginia R. McGraw, Chair
- Michael Lukas, Member

School system staff included: Kimberly A. Hill, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools; Amy Hollstein, Deputy Superintendent; Marvin Jones, Jr., Executive Director of Schools; Jason Stoddard, Director of Safety and Security, Melissa Miesowitz, Instructional Program Support Specialist, and Angel Willett, Executive Assistant

Community Partner: Linda McLaughlin, EACC President

Twenty-nine parents represented twenty-six schools, two Board Members, six staff members, and one community guest attended the first Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting for the 2019-2020 school year

WELCOME AND GREETINGS

Deputy Superintendent, Amy Hollstein opened the meeting by thanking parents and other guests for attending. Ms. Hollstein introduced Board Chair Ms. McGraw and Board Member Mr. Lukas.

Continuing with introductions, Ms. Hollstein asked parents to share a few words about themselves. Ms. Hollstein spoke about the role of the committee and the meeting agenda.

The Parent Advisory Committee meetings are a conduit to school system information and programs to keep representatives informed in order to share information and clarify misinformation at school meetings and in the community. The meeting gives parents an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback on a variety of topics.

Superintendent Hill welcomed guests and thanked them for being the liaison for their schools. Dr. Hill reminded the group that there is a lot of misinformation that is posted and re-posted on social media. She hopes parents will help to clarify misinformation, and when they do not know what the truth is, they will ask a school system supervisor.

EACC President, Linda McLaughlin, spoke about the Kirwan Commission and the Coalition for the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. Meeting handouts begin on page 7.

AGENDA

Moving forward with the agenda, Ms. Hollstein talked about building relationships and how educators must learn to love their kids before they can teach them, the importance of the committee's input and how their feedback is critical to the school system. Ms. Hollstein provided an overview of the meeting agenda, including the four hot topics and breakout sessions.

OPENING ACTIVITY – 4 CORNERS

Working in small breakout groups parents discussed various topics. The four groups reconvened for a parental perspective share-out.

CORNER 1. FRESH START ACADEMY

Executive Director of Schools Marvin Jones, Jr., guided the small group conversation by providing concise and clear information. The concept, rationale, goal, and components of the Fresh Start Academy were all discussed in detail, along with other logistical functions of the program. The general gist of Fresh Start is to provide an alternative option for children in kindergarten through second grade who repeatedly display extreme disruptive behaviors. These behaviors, such as destruction of classrooms, running away from the classroom and causing physical harm to others, create barriers to learning for all students. As such, and only after a school has exhausted other available and appropriate interventions, applicable students may then be considered for this alternative option.

Upon the successful completion of an appropriate referral, having met all the required (data collection) criteria, and official offer accepted by parents, students' initial placement in the program is for 20-days with an assessment of progress every 30-days thereafter, and placement extended accordingly (with parent agreement) when students do not achieve the point level progress expected. Fresh Start will offer a setting that is data-driven, highly structured, and safe for kindergarten through second grade students who fit the criteria warranting the offer of this placement alternative.

While students attend the Fresh Start Academy, they will receive appropriate academic instruction (reading, math and specials) and intensive behavioral and counseling support on a daily basis. The program also promotes a significant emphasis on the development of socio-emotional skills including emotional self-control, recognizing perspective taking, problem solving, and sustained and controlled attention. Staff from the home school will also visit Fresh Start to keep a connection with their students and to learn techniques and strategies for reintegration to the home school.

The program location will be in a newly renovated building on the campus of the Robert D. Stethem Educational Center, which has been specifically designed for elementary age students, but also includes ample staff with specialized training to accommodate the varying needs of accepted students. Additionally, students will be transported to and from Fresh Start directly from their homes, and receive breakfast and lunch at school, just as they would at their home school.

As students begin to experience success and approach the end of their assigned placement at Fresh Start, individual transition plans are developed before they return to their home school. Thereafter, the transition coordinator will ensure children receive continued support at their home school by providing training to school administrators, teachers and staff on how to continue the successful

supports for the children, gained during their Fresh Start experience. For more information, parents can visit the CCBOE website: <https://www.ccboe.com/index.php/fresh-start-academy-qj>

Parental perspective share-out:

- Program is for students in kindergarten thru second grade who show extreme disruptive behaviors
- The program is not focused on students with IEPs, 504s, etc.
- Fresh Start provides a one-on-one environment for students
- Students will learn strategies to help them transition back to their regular school
- Students will develop behaviors to help them be successful in the classroom and to build positive relationships with their peers and teachers
- The program is key to giving kids other opportunities and is a better option
- Early intervention is crucial
- Misinformation has caused controversy
- Fresh Start gives our youngest kids a chance
- The program is going to be a model for behavior intervention
- Parent/guardian grants final approval (or denial) admittance into the program
- Trust this program
- The Fresh Start Academy team consists of professionals in the areas of behavior intervention, clinical psychology and mental health, regular and dually-certified educators and instructional support
- The committee's charge, as PAC members, is to share the good news - the correct news; to be a positive voice and shift the narrative

CORNER 2. MENTAL HEALTH

In a roundtable with Amy Hollstein, Deputy Superintendent, parents discussed the mental health initiatives that CCPS is currently implementing as well as ideas for the future. One of the major initiatives is a countywide book study. Administrators and teachers are collaborating to read "Fostering Resilient Learners" authored by Kristin Souers and Pete Hall. In the book, the authors explore the urgent and growing issue of childhood trauma and its profound effect on learning and teaching. Through the book study, educators are learning how to create trauma informed classrooms and exploring how ACES is affecting our children. Each participant on the Parent Advisory Committee received a book and part of the next meeting will be focused on information in the book. In addition, the representatives discussed restorative practices, the need for more psychologists, and the impact of building relationships with students. The group also discussed the need for Social Workers in our schools and some parents felt that they have seen a decline in student behavior directly related to expectations.

Parental perspective share-out:

- Trauma is individualized
- Staff training is ongoing
- We all talk about trauma, but we don't see what our kids face when they are not in school
- Change the language – Instead of saying, "What is wrong with you!" consider asking, "What is happening with you?"
- Teachers have trauma, too
- What are the triggers - shift the power struggle
- Start evidence based treatment at the elementary level
- Restorative practices

- Suspension does not work; try to repair the harm that has been done
- Kids who need the most love show it in the most undeserving ways

CORNER 3. SAFETY DRILLS

Jason Stoddard, Director of School Safety and Security, led a discussion centered on the realities of school safety and how simple solutions are not as simple as some may think. Active shooter events and their statistical rarity was a foundational discussion point. Once the facts were established, the group discussed critical and crisis events schools deal with on a daily basis. This led them into the new Standard Response Protocols (SRP). The remainder of time they discussed the importance of the Standard Response Protocols, how CCPS has implemented the program, and what training the students, staff, and the community receive. Each PAC participant received a SRP card and brochure overviewing the Office of School Safety and Security.

Parental perspective share-out:

- Staff and high school students received Standard Response Protocol/Crisis hotline identification cards
- Updated SRP posters are displayed on all campuses
- Active shooter incidents are decreasing across the country; the increased coverage of these events create an opposite impression
- Charles County Public Schools is the first school system in Maryland to adopt the Standard Response Protocols
- Campuses are being renovated to address open space concerns
- Guided vestibules in schools continue to be constructed
- For more information, go to <https://iloveguys.org/>

CORNER 4. GRADING

Led by Melissa Miesowitz, Instructional Program Support Specialist, the work group covered what the system has done to address grading in 2019, consisting of an updated Superintendent Rule to include teachers returning graded work to students within two weeks of collecting it, solidified unified grading policy at the district level, and grade weights now being pushed out to teachers' gradebooks at the district level.

Charles County Public Schools created a new position (Instructional Program Support Specialist) to monitor gradebook activity and grade changes, train teachers and administrators, and support building level admin with grading.

Most courses at all levels are weighted 50% product / 50% process and teachers must have a minimum of 5 product/5 process grades per quarter.

- Product - tests, quizzes, reports, final writing pieces, essays, performances, labs, projects, research papers
- Process - warm-ups, short written responses, class practice activities, math problem solving, drafts, research steps, homework (secondary)
- Exceptions to 50%/50% are at the secondary level - AP courses 60%/40%, Comp and Rhetoric 80%/20%, PE courses 50% product/40% process/10% participation
- Homework cannot be used toward the academic grade in elementary school

CLOSING

Questions * Responses * Comments * Reminders

In closing, parents were asked to provide feedback on the meeting format, recommend future meeting topics, or share comments for the cause.

To maintain authenticity of the committee's feedback, comments reflect the writer's language with minimal editing.

Responses included:

- Great and very informative meeting! I don't know if we needed to break up into groups. It may have been more efficient to just talk about all four topics as a group. Thank you for all you do for our kids!
- Great meeting! Very informative. Can we have a brief summary emailed to us with minutes or notes to refer back to? We would like to share this information with parents. I think it would be a good idea if you provided us with a fact sheet to share.
- Thank you, CCPS, for the opportunity for parents to help advise and relay positive messages. However, PAC needs to fully understand CCPS initiatives to communicate to the community. Questions do not equate to negative perspectives.
- The breakout format is nice to cover more information.
- Very Informative. Thank you!
 - Grade – ABCDEF Program
 - Academic Merit
 - Special Needs
- I love this new forum. I learned new information first hand. Question/Suggestion – how can you control how many students are allowed in the schools (capacity levels)?
- Keep the format. Great job.
 - Topic: Uniforms
 - Why can't we do it
 - Topic: Education
 - Can you bring back spelling, not just phonetically spelled
- Include IAs in book studies!!
- I would like to have more feedback and instruction on what we could do to make more of an impact with the information provided.
- Topics:
 - Mental Health – IEP & 504 Plan
 - Overcrowding of Middle School
 - CTE programs starting with middle school
 - Second language – ES/beginning of MS
- I found this meeting to be informative and thought provoking!
- I truly appreciate CCPS initiative to address trauma informed care throughout the schools. Our most vulnerable population (children) need love, care and encouragement. Job well done!
- Format was excellent. Exceeded my expectations. Go CCPS!! Humbly proud of our county and schools.

Please read the book, “Fostering Resilient Learners” in preparation for the January meeting. Representatives who did not receive the study book should request a copy by emailing to awillett@ccboe.com.



Meetings for school year 2019-20:

- Mid-year meeting: Tuesday, January 28, 2020 (read the book, “Fostering Resilient Learners”)
- Spring-end of year meeting: Thursday, April 30, 2020

If the primary school representative cannot attend a PAC meeting, the representative, principal or principal’s designee should coordinate with the alternate. Meeting reminder notices are sent by email to the primary representative for each school. Alternate reps and parents are welcome to attend.

The meeting dates for the current school year are included in the parent handbook/calendar.

Our vision for Charles County Public Schools is to create the best environment where all students experience academic success, develop personal responsibility, and achieve career readiness for the 21st century.

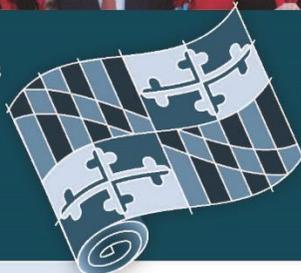
The mission of Charles County Public Schools is to provide an opportunity for all school-aged children to receive an academically challenging, quality education that builds character, equips for leadership, and prepares for life, in an environment that is safe and conducive to learning.

The Charles County public school system does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age or disability in its programs, activities or employment practices. For inquiries, please contact Kathy Kiessler, Title IX/ADA/Section 504 Coordinator (students) or Nikial M. Majors, Title IX/ADA/Section 504 Coordinator (employees/adults), at Charles County Public Schools, Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, P.O. Box 2770, La Plata, MD 20646; 301-932-6610/301-870-3814. For special accommodations call 301-934-7230 or TDD 1-800-735-2258 two weeks prior to the event.



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STUDENTS AND
EDUCATORS DESERVE.

JOIN THE BLUEPRINT
COMMUNITY FORUM
NEAR YOU.



Coalition for the

BLUEPRINT
for Maryland's
FUTURE



What's next?

Fall 2019

A workgroup on school funding supporting the work of the Kirwan Commission meets to develop recommendations on revising the state's school funding formula.

Late Fall 2019

Full Kirwan Commission meets to consider the subgroup's funding recommendations so they can be sent on to the General Assembly and Gov. Hogan.

January–April 2020

2020 General Assembly

Legislators are expected to pass a new school funding formula phasing in billions of dollars of new funding over the next decade to support the policy recommendations of the Kirwan Commission. They are also expected to identify funding sources for the new formula to ensure that it is sustainable, adequate, and equitable.

GETTING THE BLUEPRINT RIGHT— USING OUR POWER AND INFLUENCE

\$1.1 Billion in New Funding for Staffing, Expanding Student Programs and Supports, and Salaries

Our big win in the 2019 General Assembly funded the first three years of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, adding \$1.1 billion in new funding for improved salaries, staffing, and student programs. Now it's time to update the state funding formula to fully implement the Blueprint over the next decade, keep ramping up resources, and make sure that every school in the state is adequately and equitably funded.

Winning at the state level—and taking maximum advantage of the student-centered recommendations of the 3-year Kirwan Commission—will open up the door to more raises, more staffing, and more programs that make a difference for students at the local level.

We must be successful in Annapolis—and then our job will be to make sure that money is spent on the right things so the implementation of the Blueprint is done right for each local school system and its students and educators.

WHAT THE BLUEPRINT MEANS FOR STUDENTS AND EDUCATORS

Passage of the Blueprint means \$1.1 billion for our schools over the next three years. But that's just a start. We need a 10-year funding commitment that is long term and sustainable so our students get the academic and social supports they need. Here's what we want:

- Teachers salaries increase by 4.5% (on average) this school year
- Expanded Pre-K
- Increased Special Education Staffing
- Increased Mental Health Staffing
- 200+ Community Schools



WHAT IS THE KIRWAN COMMISSION?

Named after its chair, former University System of Maryland Chancellor Brit Kirwan, the Commission's 25 members are working to rewrite Maryland's school funding formula. They are scheduled to deliver recommendations to the General Assembly in December.

Since legislators passed the Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act (also known as the Thornton Plan) in 2002, Maryland has provided historic levels of school funding. But the plan was never meant to accommodate current levels of child poverty. The percentage of Maryland public school students living in poverty has more than doubled since 1990—from 22% to 45%—putting our statewide student population on the verge of becoming majority low-income. When you consider those increased needs together with the higher standards and new programs implemented over the last five years alone, our current levels of education spending fall short for too many students.

How much funding are we talking about?

The Kirwan Commission received a report from national school funding experts recommending an increase of \$2.9 billion statewide (\$1.9 billion in state funding and \$1 billion in county funding). That's about \$2 million per school. According to their analysis—based on conversations with Maryland educators and recent academic research—that's how much more spending is necessary for schools to meet the needs of every child.

How and why are schools so underfunded?

The Thornton Commission developed a plan that in the early 2000s was considered a national model for equitable school funding—and it was remarkably successful. Following its implementation, Maryland schools placed first in Education Week's state rankings from 2009-2013, first in the College Board's Advanced Placement performance rankings from 2007-2016, and second in fourth-grade reading improvement and fourth in fourth-grade math improvement on NAEP from 2003 to 2013.

But just like every other state in the country, Maryland had to make some serious budget compromises in the aftermath of the Great Recession. While Maryland did better than most states in avoiding massive education cuts, the state froze, then capped, the amount of funding increases allowed for a number of years—which had a compounding effect in the Thornton Plan. Under Thornton, each year's increase, due to inflation and enrollment growth, is based on the previous year's allocation. The aggregate effect of this has ballooned the underfunding of our schools to nearly \$3 billion.

What are some of the ideas being discussed on the commission?

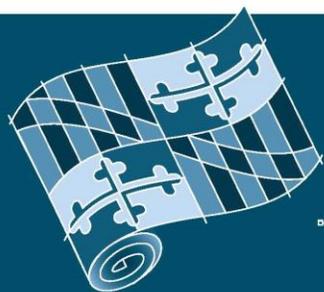
Members of the Kirwan Commission want to make recommendations on both how much additional funding there should be and how they should make this new investment.

The Commission released a number of promising preliminary recommendations, including: increasing teacher pay by about 30%; building in more planning time for teachers; hiring more school counselors, nurses, and behavioral specialists; and substantially expanding pre-kindergarten and career technical education. MSEA has been educating Commission members and legislators about the importance of including recommendations that positively impact staffing and wages for education support professionals.

The Commission is also discussing a career ladder, which could provide opportunities for educators to increase their pay and leadership role without diminishing their ability to work closely with students every day. Many details remain to be filled in, and public education advocates will fight for a transparent, inclusive, and locally-controlled process.

These conversations present a rare opportunity to accomplish large-scale improvements to working conditions for educators and learning opportunities for our students.

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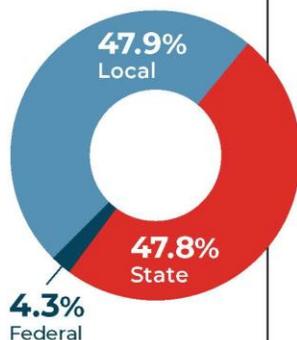


Coalition for the

BLUEPRINT for Maryland's FUTURE



Where the Money Comes From



How Do We Fund Public Schools in Maryland?

Maryland's public schools are funded by federal grants, the state government, and the local county government. Here's how the funding breakdown looked for fiscal year 2018.

Federal \$ Comes from grants to both the state and local systems, focused on special categories of students, such as special education and special needs students.

State \$ Comes via the state's general fund and is allocated annually in the state budget proposed by the governor and approved by the General Assembly. The general fund is comprised of revenue from the income tax, corporate income tax, retail, tobacco, and alcohol sales taxes, and lottery funds. *Thanks to the Fix the Fund campaign, a ballot measure passed in 2018 increases state aid by \$500 million a year in dedicated casino revenues.*

Local \$ The county contributes almost half the total funding for its schools, on average. State law dictates a county's minimum responsibility, which the county fulfills through property taxes and other local taxes.

Maryland School Funding Laws Are Driven by Adequacy

In the case of *Hornbeck v Somerset County Board of Education*, Maryland's highest court ruled that "the legislature is commanded to establish a system, effective in all school districts, as will provide the State's youth with a basic public school education."

The court further ruled that the State has a responsibility to make efforts "to minimize the impact of undeniable and inevitable demographic and environmental disadvantages on any given child."

This ruling set the stage for the Commission on Education Finance, Equity, and Excellence (the Thornton Commission), which met from 1999 to 2002 to determine how the state could provide an equitable public education to every student.

This was the last time Maryland's public school funding was studied and the formula revised until the work of the Kirwan Commission.



“An adequate education measured by contemporary educational standards.”

— HORNBECK V
SOMERSET
COUNTY BOARD OF
EDUCATION

The Thornton Commission’s study led to the Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act of 2002. It was the first effort by the state to link resources with student needs and differences in local wealth—to fund schools both adequately and equitably.

While the infusion of new funding led to substantial gains in student achievement, staffing levels, and educator pay, the formula has become badly in need of updating. The percentage of students coming from backgrounds of poverty, receiving special education services, and English language learners have all increased markedly, as have the number of mandates upon schools. It’s added up to \$2.9 billion in annual underfunding of our schools, according to an independent analysis overseen by the State Department of Education.

The Thornton Commission’s study led to the Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act of 2002. It was the first effort by the state to link resources with student needs and differences in local wealth—to fund schools both adequately and equitably.

This underfunding has resulted in an increasing student to teacher ratio, meaning larger class sizes and less individualized instruction. Maryland now ranks near the bottom of all states for funding poor districts and affluent district evenly, with federal education data showing that Maryland’s poorest school districts receive 5% less state and local education funding than Maryland’s wealthiest districts.

The 2020 General Assembly will create a new formula to support the 2019 Blueprint for Maryland’s Future, providing funding for more staff, more special ed resources, more school programs for students, expanded community schools, pre-kindergarten, career technical education opportunities, increased educator pay, and more.

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