

# MARYLAND

The Governor's Commission On Quality Education In Maryland



## Executive Summary

RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. Develop a new compensation system for teachers and principals.

The “uniform salary schedule” for teachers should be phased out for all new teachers and for veteran teachers willing to make the change. Maryland should develop a new “professional educator” compensation system with a statewide framework with minimums and district-specific adaptations. The compensation system should pay teachers according to their subject expertise, their demonstrated effectiveness, and the challenges of staffing particular schools. In addition, Maryland should provide principal compensation packages that are commensurate with their responsibilities and differentiated according to their effectiveness and the difficulty of staffing particular schools. Maryland should make significant changes in current compensation schedules to remain competitive with other states and to achieve a higher quality of education for our children.

### 2. Reform the pension system for teachers and principals.

For new teachers/principals and veteran teachers/principals interested in making the shift, Maryland should supply a competitive and completely portable pension plan, giving educators the option of “taking their retirement with them” if they change states or careers. Attractive teacher/principal pension plans are crucial for Maryland to recruit and retain quality educators and to remain competitive with other states.

### 3. Expand tuition waivers.

To attract more candidates into teaching, including college students considering additional career options, Maryland should resume the practice of waiving university tuition for prospective teachers who agree to teach in challenging schools or subject areas experiencing teacher shortages. By supporting the education costs in the preparation of potential educators, Maryland will be helping to address teacher supply issues.

### 4. Evaluate teacher preparation programs.

Maryland should evaluate the content and efficacy of all four-year teacher preparation programs, too many of which are not adequately preparing teachers for today's classrooms. A focused study of teacher education programs and their effectiveness in providing well-prepared teachers for the classroom should be implemented immediately.

### 5. Use community colleges for teacher training.

With a seamless transition to four-year college/university programs in place, community college programs will help potential teachers avoid the bureaucratic obstacles and credit loss that currently exist. Community colleges also should be authorized to provide post-baccalaureate teacher training for individuals seeking certification in Maryland. In partnership with willing school systems, community colleges should be able to operate alternative certification programs.

### 6. Develop school ratings based on academic performance.

To determine the effectiveness of teachers/principals and the success of their schools, Maryland should emulate other states that have developed school rating systems based primarily on academic performance. All schools in Maryland should be rated consistently using a framework for excellence that moves beyond the measures of No Child Left Behind.

### 7. Strengthen Maryland's Public Charter School Law and State Board of Education regulations.

Charter schools not only have the effect of offering more choices to parents, but also the potential of improved learning outcomes for students. Through law and/or regulations, variables, such as curriculum, scheduling, length of school day/year, and enriched instructional techniques, may be reconfigured more freely in a public charter school environment. Maryland should be a national model for offering these viable public school alternatives.



#### **8. Build a seamless continuum of early childhood education services.**

Children who receive age-appropriate instruction and diagnostic/prescriptive services are better prepared for success when they enter kindergarten. Maryland should build on the knowledge already generated through existing partnerships between public and private pre-school providers, such as Head Start and Family Support Centers. Efforts to improve early childhood education should be implemented seamlessly, not only in the schoolhouse, but also within the community through providers of speech, language, mental health, and other support services. With this continuum in place, all children in Maryland will enter school ready to learn.

#### **9. Create directed and measured literacy and mathematics recovery programs.**

Maryland can help ensure that more students have the skills they need to succeed in secondary school. Students who leave middle school and enter ninth grade with below-grade skills in reading and mathematics are less likely to graduate or to be prepared for college or the workplace. Accelerated literacy and mathematics recovery programs will help provide secondary school students with the skills they need. All students in Maryland should graduate with the literacy and numeracy skills required for success in post-secondary education and the workplace.

#### **10. Hold a statewide Summit on Mathematics, Science, and Technology sponsored by the Office of the Governor.**

This recommendation is the result of concerns expressed in public hearings throughout the state about expectations for high achievement in mathematics, science, and technology. The summit would convene interested stakeholders for a thorough examination of current state standards as they relate to standards in other states and countries. Maryland's economy increasingly depends on a workforce that understands mathematical, scientific, and technological skill sets. Maryland's schools should lead the nation in this area.

#### **11. Increase the pool of qualified candidates by expanding the process of certification for teachers and principals.**

To address the state's supply and quality of teachers, Maryland's "alternative paths" into the classroom need to be simplified, expanded, and widely used with consistency. Furthermore, they should include more "approved providers," such as school districts, community colleges, and partnerships with private organizations and universities. The American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence (ABCTE) illustrates a high-standards, exam-based method for ascertaining teacher subject matter knowledge and providing quality control, both for conventionally prepared and alternative-path teachers. Maryland should embrace this method to help meet federal requirements for "highly qualified teachers." The state's pool of highly qualified public school principals should be expanded by reducing barriers to entry, making more energetic and effective use of "alternative pathways" into the principalship, broadening the concept of who can become a principal and what constitutes school leadership, and overhauling the compensation system for school leaders. Maryland should fully explore programs for alternative certification used successfully in other states.

#### **12. Facilitate innovative programs.**

Teach for America and Troops to Teachers illustrate national programs that should play prominent roles in Maryland's teacher preparation efforts. Maryland should open more pathways, such as the New Teachers Project, currently operating in Baltimore City, and high-quality online courses, such as those offered by the University of Maryland, to customize internships to the varied needs and backgrounds of potential candidates.

#### **13. Provide a support and development system for teachers and principals.**

Maryland should provide more comprehensive supports for teachers in the following areas: advancement (e.g. a "career ladder" approach); portable, inter-county/state credentials and retirement plans; and effective professional development, including in-school mentorship. The Maryland Teacher Professional Development Advisory Council's December 2004 recommendations should be applauded, as should the state's new Teacher Professional Development Standards. These standards and their implementation should be coordinated by 2006. In addition, Maryland needs more effective and comprehensive supports for principals. These include mentorships, as exemplified in programs such as New Leaders for New Schools. Highly effective principals who



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## RECOMMENDATIONS

want to boost their earnings and professional stature while continuing to work in the school environment currently have no opportunity to do so unless they leave their county/city or state or become a part of the “distinguished principal” program. Maryland should develop other mechanisms for a “career ladder” approach to the role of principal.

### **14. Streamline decision-making to advance the profession.**

In the interest of unifying and streamlining its policy-making structure for educator preparation, credentialing, and evaluations, Maryland should terminate the Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board (PSTEB). The Maryland State Board of Education should have the policy-making authority for the aforementioned areas.

### **15. Delegate certification decisions.**

Within a framework of academic standards and results-based accountability, the State Board of Education should delegate certification decisions to interested school systems, which should be eligible for state approval as granters of statewide (and portable) certification. Maryland school systems can provide appropriate environments as real laboratories for testing certification requirements in comparison to actual personnel performance.

### **16. Empower principals.**

Within a framework of academic standards and results-based accountability, Maryland should relegate many personnel deployment and management decisions to individual schools. In general, empower Maryland principals with authority over individual school budgets, personnel, and facilities management commensurate with their responsibility for school results under a statewide set of academic standards and assessments. For instance, a principal should have the ability to contact a repair person to fix a broken window or a leaking pipe. Maryland needs to cut the red tape currently choking the schoolhouse and driving up the cost of simple repairs.

### **17. Enhance parental participation.**

Increase capacity in districts and schools to help integrate parents and communities into preK-12 education. Every school system should designate a staff member dedicated to building parental and community partnerships. School leaders should have the authority to develop and execute such programs. Behind every successful school is a strong network of parents and support groups, such as the PTSA and local Chambers of Commerce.

### **18. Create a clearinghouse of programs and resources.**

Develop a database of community programs that supports preK-12 education to identify and promote services. The database will enable the state and independent organizations to locate redundancies and areas of need. It also will facilitate the matching of programs with students and schools. Effective use of resources available from the private sector will be a valuable supplement to regular budgetary resource allocation.

### **19. Challenge business, education, parent, community, and faith-based organizations to support statewide initiatives that improve college awareness.**

College awareness programs inform students and their families about the need to obtain a college education, to prepare for college, to apply for enrollment, and to apply for financial aid. These programs can boost high school achievement by giving students the information, encouragement, and assistance they need for post-secondary education. They also can help change the culture of expectations in high school to one in which all students will decide to participate in some form of post-secondary education. All of Maryland's students need to understand the correlation between educational attainment levels and potential salary scales.

### **20. Analyze the content and efficiency of the standard school day and year in Maryland.**

Maryland should establish a task force to analyze the content and efficiency of the standard school day and to study the feasibility of lengthening the school day and/or school year for students who are failing to meet



academic achievement standards. Maryland schools should focus both on the quality and quantity of instructional time to insure maximum learning. Spending time wisely is equal to spending dollars wisely.

**21. Create increased accountability in the early childhood education delivery system.**

Maryland should develop a statewide reporting program to assess the effectiveness of early child care and education services for all four-year olds. Quality, educative child care should be uniformly available from providers throughout the state.

**22. Continue to transform the current system of early child care education to best address Maryland's youngest students.**

Maryland should continue to promote and enhance collaboration of state agencies, private and public service providers, parents, advocates, businesses, and other stakeholders to provide a consistently high level of education and services for pre-school students. To achieve this goal, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) should continue establishing formal Memorandums of Understanding with Head Start and public and non-public schools and systems.

**23. Increase the public awareness of the importance of and need for early childhood education as the foundation for school success.**

Maryland should conduct more extensive and coordinated outreach—with the help of local school systems, county agencies, local libraries, local non-profit organizations and foundations, business communities, and civic organizations—to stress the importance of high quality early childhood education for all children and to promote school readiness among parents of young children.

**24. Utilize the best practices framework.**

All school districts should collect and utilize accurate and consistent data to compare individual schools with higher performing schools serving similar or more disadvantaged student populations. MSDE should adopt the Best Practices Framework created by the National Center on Educational Accountability as a template for reform of Maryland preK-12 education. Data that follows students throughout their preK-12 education will help educators at all levels make the best decisions for a child's learning.

**25. Focus on value-added measurement.**

MSDE should provide school districts with appropriate tools to enable a consistent, value-added measurement of each student, class, school, and district to assess achievement in comparison to annual benchmarks and targets. A value-added measurement translates as documented growth in knowledge and skills development as students are routinely assessed.

**26. Establish a Quality Process Improvement (QPI) approach.**

School districts should implement a quality process improvement approach that uses lessons from business, such as strategic planning, benchmarking, and a focus on continuous improvement. The belief is that a product will improve if the process used to make the product improves.

**27. Re-envision each school as a professional learning community.**

All school systems should develop professional learning communities in which all stakeholders are an integral part of student success. In Maryland all stakeholders in the education of children should learn from each other and continuously reinvest and grow that knowledge to raise the bar of quality instruction.

**28. Adopt the high school transition approach.**

All Maryland school districts should implement a high school transition approach that creates stronger connections between and among high school and post-secondary education and training in order to improve student achievement. Curricula in Maryland's high schools and post-secondary institutions should have a transparent coherence for both students and teachers.



**29. Expand the implementation of the school business manager model.**

Wherever appropriate, schools and school districts should create the position of School Business Manager to allow principals to focus primarily on instruction and student achievement.

**30. Make high quality Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs widely available and create pathways to industry certification.**

MSDE should ensure that every CTE Pathway Program offers students a challenging academic curriculum that prepares them for success in post-secondary education and careers. CTE programs in Maryland should lead to credentials (certification of specific skills and knowledge) that have value in the marketplace.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

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For more information, go to [www.gov.state.md.us](http://www.gov.state.md.us).



Office of the Governor

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