

MARYLAND



GOVERNOR'S
COMMISSION
on quality education



The Governor's Commission On Quality Education In Maryland

SEPTEMBER 2005 REPORT



MARYLAND

Office of the Governor

Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr., Governor Michael S. Steele, Lt. Governor

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MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR

Three years ago, I pledged that if I were elected Governor of Maryland, my administration would be known for its extraordinary support of public education. I then envisioned a body of parents, teachers, principals, administrators, and education experts, working closely with Dr. Nancy S. Grasmick, State Superintendent of Schools, and the Maryland State Department of Education, that would carefully examine current education practices and make recommendations that would keep Maryland in the vanguard of states delivering quality public education. Concurrent with supporting more than a \$1 billion increase in public education funding, I pledged to the people of the state that those dollars would be spent wisely to advantage all children through initiatives to attract and retain quality teachers and properly prepare our children for the workforce.



Therefore, on September 27, 2004, I signed an executive order creating the Governor's Commission on Quality Education as a key component of that pledge. The work of the Commission has been completed, and it is my belief that the 30 recommendations contained in the report will serve to renew discussion of key issues crucial to maintaining quality public education well into the next century. Maryland's successes in education achievement have resulted from the hard work of children, parents, teachers, principals, and other stakeholders. I applaud their efforts. As the Governor of Maryland, I will continue working with them to achieve even greater successes. As we face increasing demands of globalization and technological change, Maryland must remain a leader, both in the United States and throughout the world.



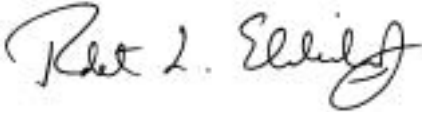
While many important issues emerge from the report, one of the most compelling is the need to focus on improving mathematics, science, and technology education. We must ensure that we are preparing Maryland's children for the post-secondary and workplace challenges of the 21st Century. Accordingly, I am moving ahead immediately to host a statewide Summit on Mathematics, Science, and Technology with all public and private stakeholders. The summit will bring together business and education communities to examine standards in each area, as well as to create measured literacy and mathematics recovery systems for those students falling behind.

Other recommendations address issues of empowering educators and ensuring accountability for results, reexamining financial incentives for educators, streamlining teacher preparation

programs, improving school readiness for all Maryland children, and employing best practices in every school and in every district of the state.

As Governor of Maryland, I offer this report as motivation for rethinking current practices and making logical and necessary changes for improving public education for all children in the state. Record funding is not enough. My firm belief is that wise financial investment in our young people, coupled with vision, commitment, and hard work, will help all of Maryland's citizens prosper in the challenging years ahead.

Finally, for their leadership roles, I especially want to thank Lt. Governor Michael S. Steele for chairing the Commission and Robert J. Kemmery, Jr., for his work as the Commission's Executive Director.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr." in a cursive style.

Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr.
Governor

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

When we look at Maryland education through the eyes of our children, what we see is an interesting and complex learning experience for them and for us. At the center of the Report of the Governor's Commission on Quality Education in Maryland is a vision of public education inspired by the accomplishments of the past but tempered by the knowledge and perspective that education is not a static process. Although we have many fine initiatives in Maryland education, this Administration and Commission firmly believe that we should work harder and strive for higher levels of excellence to improve schools throughout the state.



During the seven public hearings, more than 200 people testified about their perceptions of, experiences with, and suggestions for Maryland's public school systems. These hearings and additional adult focus groups gave a voice to parents, teachers, administrators, business and community leaders, and residents.

I heard the most powerful and moving voices in the classrooms and meeting areas of our schools. After personally visiting schools in every district in Maryland and conducting nearly 40 focus groups with more than 1,000 students, I believe that this report illustrates what the current academic climate really is like and where improvements can be made.

Most of my visits began with a trip to the principal's office and included a tour of the school, classroom observations, a meeting with approximately 25 students from various grade levels, and a session with the school improvement team. Through my conversations, observations, and discussions, I learned what students liked and didn't like about their schools, what would make them better places for learning, and what constitutes an outstanding teacher in the classroom. I learned how teachers felt about their college preparation for the classroom and high stakes testing, how parents viewed their role in their child's education preK-12, and how business and community partners focused resources to facilitate a quality education for students.

My preK-12 journey through Maryland's education system was a unique experience. During some of my school visits, I assumed the role of student or teacher. As a student, I rode the school bus, followed a schedule for a full day of classes, ate lunch in the cafeteria, and engaged students in conversations about their education. As a teacher, I taught classes in middle and high schools, which included planning and team-teaching a lesson in American history.

The Commissioners and I have learned firsthand from the students, teachers, parents, and principals who are at the heart of education in Maryland. Our child-centered approach has helped

to identify quality strategies that support the goal of high academic achievement in our schools. Our ultimate goal is to better prepare all students in Maryland for future success in their post-secondary education and careers.

The students of Maryland have told me that they want the quality of education improved in their schools. I have heard them and seen for myself that the children are right.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael S. Steele". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M".

Lt. Governor Michael S. Steele
Chairman

INTRODUCTION

“Helping our teachers to succeed and enabling our children to learn is an investment in human potential, one that is essential to guaranteeing America’s future.”

Louis V. Gerstner, Jr.

Chairman, The Teaching Commission, and Former Chairman, IBM

One of Maryland’s most important natural resources cannot be found on a map or within the Chesapeake Bay. Rather, this resource exists in our homes, schools, and communities. Our most treasured resource is our children. They will guide the future of our state’s society, economy, and livelihood. Our children will grow to be leaders in government, business, education, science, and technology. The quality of education that we offer will determine whether or not today’s children ultimately become tomorrow’s leaders.

Maryland already possesses some of the most highly acclaimed preK-12 schools, universities, public and private research institutions, medical and health care organizations, and private businesses in the nation and the world. Maryland has been recognized for parental involvement by both the National Parent Teacher Association and U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings. The number of African-American students taking Advanced Placement Exams has increased by 84% since 2001. Maryland’s elementary and middle schools improved reading and mathematics test scores for a second straight year (2004 and 2005), with African-American and Hispanic students closing achievement gaps in some key areas. In 2003, Governor Ehrlich signed Maryland’s first charter school law, providing parents and students with more choices in education; and this fall, 14 new public charter schools are opening their doors for the very first time. Maryland is launching new initiatives to encourage children who are inventors and patent holders to dream big and bring ideas to reality, to think critically, and learn how to be young entrepreneurs. Education leaders also recognize that the competitive global environment means a greater focus on the skill sets of the 21st century, with an emphasis on mathematics, science, technology and foreign languages.

In addition to being a leader in the field of education, Maryland holds prominence in the business community as a leader in the global marketplace. That fact underscores our need for continued investment and improvement in education. Our unique geographic location allows our state to be the crossroads of federal installations, including the National Institutes of Health, NASA’s Goddard Space Flight Center, the National Security Agency, and many federal military installations across the state. Maryland also boasts a diverse and growing corporate community, with strengths in biotechnology, health care, telecommunications, and finance, among other fields. Our world class system of higher education, including the University System of Maryland, Johns Hopkins University, and many other prestigious colleges and universities anchor Maryland as a place to train the world’s best and brightest in a post-secondary environment.

The confluence of these assets has helped to rank Maryland second nationally in federal support for research and development, with over \$7 billion invested. Some 7,000 infotech and communications companies employ about 300,000 in the Baltimore-Washington region. Maryland ranks first among the states in the percentage of professional and technical workers

(24.0%) in the workforce. Maryland has the second highest concentration of doctoral scientists and engineers among the states. Maryland ranks second among the states in the percentage of the population 25 and older with a graduate or professional degree (13.4%). In short, our state is naturally positioned to lead our nation and the world as a laboratory for innovation and unparalleled achievement in preparing our youth to succeed in the 21st century and beyond.

Though public education in Maryland has a strong foundation with documented successes and is moving forward with reform, the Commission recognizes that important work remains to ensure that every child in the state is being prepared for the challenges of the 21st century. Some schools face state reconstitution because they did not meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and fell below *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)* standards for several years in a row. Because the stakes are high for our state and our country in the global marketplace, all schools should be performing successfully.

The Report of The Governor's Commission on Quality Education in Maryland urges action to improve the quality of education that students receive in every school district in the state. The report is the result of countless hours of testimony and presentations from all areas of the education community. During 2004-05, the Commission made 38 school visits, covering every school district in Maryland. Throughout these visits, Lieutenant Governor Michael S. Steele and other Commission members met with more than 1,000 students and 600 adults. Each visit centered on discussion with stakeholders including parents, teachers, principals, business leaders, board members, superintendents, and support staff. In addition, seven public hearings were held throughout the state. More than 250 individuals provided testimony, and all hearings were well attended by a public concerned with quality education. The Commission's four subcommittees held 29 subcommittee meetings, during which they listened to major policy statements from education leaders and consultants. This report reflects the most current research available on teacher/principal accountability and growth, schools and community linkages, school readiness and early childhood programs, and global best practices in education. The Governor's Commission will measure its ultimate success through its mobilization of key stakeholders who will help to bring about changes in policies and practices in Maryland.

The hope is that this report will re-energize the discussion of new ideas, to be followed by focused action to improve education in Maryland. Some recommendations are achievable through executive order, some through a willingness to change traditional ways of thinking, and some through bipartisan legislative action.

The Commission has listened to the students, teachers, parents, school and system leaders, and many other stakeholders who have shared their ideas, concerns, frustrations, observations, and suggestions about education in our state. In fact, some of the most powerful testimony came from students, and comments from students are highlighted throughout this report to remind us that quality education for all children in the state is our primary concern. Some parents delivered passionate testimony about their children taking remedial courses in colleges, after graduating from what are considered quality public high schools. They expressed their frustration with the current quality standards in public schools. Many first and second year teachers expressed concerns about not being properly prepared for the realities of the classroom. Commission members held lengthy discussions with superintendents, principals, veteran teachers, support

staff, and many others who want to strengthen student services that encourage academic achievement.

Although the task of making significant improvements will be challenging, all stakeholders understand that the quality of our education system determines the quality of our children's future and the future of Maryland.

This report is designed to achieve lasting, maximum, and measurable results, but it is not offered as an exhaustive study. Rather, the Commission also offers the report as a framework of recommendations for further deliberation and strategic planning. Throughout the preparation of this final draft, the Commission leadership has worked to be substantive, clear, persuasive, and, above all, focused on children.

COMMISSION MEMBERS

Lt. Governor Michael S. Steele is the first African American ever elected to a statewide office in the history of Maryland. Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr. appointed him Chair of the Governor's Commission on Quality Education in Maryland in September 2004.

Adela M. Acosta is Director of Intergovernmental Relations in the Office of the Governor. During the Commission, Ms. Acosta was the principal of Cesar Chavez Elementary School in Hyattsville, MD. Ms. Acosta has also worked as a teacher, assistant principal, education specialist, and education consultant. Ms. Acosta is affiliated with the National Education Association, the Elementary School Principals Association, and the International Council of Reading.

Michael Bender, Ed.D. is the Vice-President of Educational and Legislative Affairs at the Kennedy Krieger Institute. Dr. Bender is also a Professor of Education with a joint appointment in pediatrics from The Johns Hopkins University and School of Medicine. Previously, Dr. Bender was a public school teacher and a Doctoral Fellow of the United States Department of Education.

Victor E. Bernson, Jr. is General Counsel for the White House Office of Administration. Previously, Mr. Bernson worked for the Departments of Defense and Justice and was a Lieutenant Commander in the United States Navy. He is also the father of two children, ages 14 and 12.

William E. Brock is the Chairman Emeritus of Intellectual Development Systems, Inc. Senator Brock represented the State of Tennessee in the United States Senate from 1971-1976. He is on the board of several philanthropic and educational organizations, including The National Center for Educational Accountability, the National Center on Education and the Economy, and the National Teachers Hall of Fame.

Dr. Calvin W. Burnett is Secretary of the Maryland Higher Education Commission. Dr. Burnett is also a member of the Maryland Higher Education Investment Board, the Southern Regional Education Board, the Education Commission of the States, and the State Higher Education Executive Officers.

Jean B. Cryor is a Delegate from District 15 in the Maryland House of Delegates. Delegate Cryor is a member of the Education Subcommittee of the House Ways and Means Committee and also serves on the Commission on Education Finance, Equity and Excellence, as well as the Governor's College Readiness for the Disadvantaged Task Force. Delegate Cryor has three daughters and three grandchildren.

Ulysses Currie is a State Senator from District 25 in the Maryland General Assembly. Senator Currie worked as an educator in Prince George's County for 25 years and is a member of the Association of School-Based Administrators and Supervisors of Prince George's County. He is the father of two sons.

Dr. Eugene M. DeLoatch is the Dean of the Clarence M. Mitchell, Jr. School of Engineering at Morgan State University. Dr. DeLoatch has served as president of the American Society for Engineering Education, a non-profit member association dedicated to improving technology and engineering education.

James C. DiPaula, Jr. is Chief of Staff for Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr. During the Commission, Mr. DiPaula served as Secretary of the Office of Budget and Management and presided over a record funding increase of \$1 billion for education. Mr. DiPaula is also a member of the Governor's Subcabinet for Children, Youth and Families and the Coordinating Council for Juvenile Services Educational Programs.

Dr. Charles I. Ecker is Superintendent of Carroll County Public Schools. The former County Executive of Howard County, Dr. Ecker served as Deputy Superintendent of Schools in Howard County and Assistant Superintendent of Schools in Prince George's County. Dr. Ecker has two children and ten grandchildren.

Dr. Chester E. Finn, Jr. is a Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University. Dr. Finn is also President of the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation. The Senior Editor of *Education Next*, Dr. Finn has authored thirteen books and more than 300 articles throughout his career and is a national education consultant. Dr. Finn has two children and one grandchild.

Dr. Nancy S. Grasmick is the State Superintendent of Schools for the Maryland State Department of Education. Dr. Grasmick has worked as a teacher, administrator, Secretary of Juvenile Services, and Special Secretary for Children, Youth and Families. Dr. Grasmick has served on a number of boards and commissions, including The Consortium for Policy Research in Education Executive Board and the Johns Hopkins University Center for Talented Youth Board.

Dorothy E. Hardin is principal of Pikesville High School in Baltimore County. Ms. Hardin has worked as an English teacher, curriculum writer, and department chair. The past president of the Maryland Association of Secondary School Principals, she has authored numerous articles in education journals and magazines.

James Harkins is the Director of Maryland Environmental Service. During the Commission, Mr. Harkins was the County Executive for Harford County. Mr. Harkins also served as a Member of the House Delegates of Maryland. He is the father of two children.

James Howard Henderson is President of the Greater Baltimore Urban League. Mr. Henderson previously served as the Vice-President for Institutional Advancement at Edward College. Mr. Henderson has worked as a teacher and an assistant principal and served in the United States Air Force.

Robert M. Hutcheson is a County Commissioner for Allegany County. Mr. Hutcheson spent thirty-six years as a teacher, coach, and principal and serves as ex-officio member of the Board of Education. Mr. Hutcheson has four children and seven grandchildren.

Andrew C. Jones, Ed.D. is Vice-Chancellor of Educational Affairs, Dallas County Community College District. During the Commission, Dr. Jones was President of the Community College of Baltimore County, Catonsville. Dr. Jones served as a senior college administrator for more than 25 years. Dr. Jones is a member of the Commission on Life-Long Learning, the American Council of Education, Commission on Global Education, and the American Association of Community Colleges.

Nancy J. King is a Delegate from District 39 in the Maryland House of Delegates. Delegate King is the former President of the Montgomery County Board of Education and is a board member of the Primary Care Coalition of Montgomery County. Delegate King has three daughters and two grandchildren.

Kwang-ja (Sunny) Lee is principal of Clarksburg Elementary School in Montgomery County. Ms. Lee has worked as an acting assistant principal, a parent specialist, a personnel specialist, and an instructional assistant. Ms. Lee has co-chaired and served as a member of the Board of Education Advisory Committee for the Minority Student Education and Co-Chairperson of the Asian American Educators Association.

Adrienne Mayonado is an educator in Frederick County Public Schools. Ms. Mayonado chairs the Special Education Department at Tuscarora High School and oversees nearly 100 students. Ms. Mayonado is affiliated with the National Education Association, the Maryland State Teachers Association, and the Frederick Reading Council.

Aris Melissaratos is Secretary of the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development. Mr. Melissaratos serves on several of the Governor's Cabinet Councils, including Career and Technology Education and Criminal and Juvenile Justice. Mr. Melissaratos also works with the State Planning Committee for Higher Education.

Kenneth C. Montague, Jr. is Secretary of the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services. Mr. Montague is a member of the Governor's Executive Council along with the Subcabinet for Children, Youth and Families. Previously, Mr. Montague was a member of the Maryland House of Delegates. Mr. Montague has two children.

Grace Foxwell Murdock is a mentor teacher for Wicomico County Public Schools. Previously, Ms. Murdock has worked as a facilitator for Schools for Success, an assistant principal, and a classroom teacher. Ms. Murdock is affiliated with the Maryland Council of Teachers of Mathematics, the Salisbury Area Chamber of Commerce/Education Committee, and the Eastern Shore Reading Council.

Paula Noble is the former mayor of the town of Forest Heights, Maryland. Ms. Noble previously worked in commercial real estate and banking. Ms. Noble is an Academy of Excellence in Local Government Fellow and is affiliated with Women in Government Services and the Maryland Municipal League.

Robert M. Pitts is a science teacher at Thomas Stone High School in Waldorf, Maryland. Mr. Pitts has received numerous teaching and coaching awards and is affiliated with the Maryland State Teachers Association and the National Education Association.

Sister Rita Michelle Proctor, OSP is principal of Mother Mary Lange Catholic School in the Archdiocese of Baltimore. Sister Proctor previously taught at St. Frances Academy in Baltimore City. She was also a former assistant principal at Cardinal Shehan School and a former principal at Charles A. Hall Elementary School.

William R. Roberts is the President of Verizon Maryland, Inc. Mr. Roberts is a member of The Kennedy Krieger Institute, The Living Classrooms Foundation, and the Maryland Business Roundtable for Education. The Sellinger School of Business and Management at Loyola College named Mr. Roberts Business Leader of the Year in 2004.

Sandy Schrader represents District 13 in the Maryland State Senate. Senator Schrader previously worked as a teacher and was a member of the Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee. Senator Schrader is also a member of the Women Legislators of Maryland.

Andrew Smarick is the director of the Charter School Leadership Council. Mr. Smarick previously worked as a legislative assistant to Congressman Wayne T. Gilchrest and served as a volunteer on Governor-Elect Ehrlich's transition team as an education advisor.

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 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.

THE GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON QUALITY EDUCATION IN MARYLAND

Full Report

INTRODUCTION

There is much in Maryland education that is admirable and cutting edge. Public hearings, feedback from constituents throughout the state, and consultations with national experts in the field have reinforced this. While in the process of receiving feedback, the Governor's Commission on Quality Education in Maryland also gained supplementary information and suggestions that have been thought provoking and influential in their implications. In response to the needs of Maryland's students, the Commission focused on one main goal in its report: to strengthen the quality and effectiveness of public education in Maryland.

To accomplish that goal, the Commission offers 30 recommendations critical to improved education in Maryland, recommendations that grew out of the extensive dialogue with stakeholders. For example, feedback from teachers and administrators underscored the need to improve current compensation and pension packages and teacher preparation programs. Parents expressed an interest in the flexibility offered through public charter schools, a pathway in education that has much potential for improvement in student learning. In addition, parents emphasized that their children must begin school with the skills and competencies they need to succeed. With a world focus on mathematics, science, and technology, stakeholders and consultants alike communicated a need to spotlight these areas for further study. Maryland would be well served by embracing a statewide summit to address current expectations and standards for our students in those three areas.

These recommendations will help keep Maryland and its schools among those regarded as model institutions and will drive our system of education to the next level to be competitive within the global community.

“Good teachers help by not telling answers, but give you clues to get there. Good teachers know you and teach according to how you learn as an individual. They make learning fun and interesting.”

- Student, Elementary School, Baltimore County Public Schools

Recommendation 1: Develop a new compensation system for teachers and principals.

DISCUSSION

Teachers are expected to differentiate instruction to increase the learning of students, and the state should model this concept by differentiating salary scales to increase teacher effectiveness. A differentiated salary scale will attract individuals who will provide the most effective instruction to enhance student learning. Maryland should develop a new “professional educator” compensation system with a statewide framework establishing

minimum salary levels and providing for district-specific adaptations. This system should pay teachers according to their subject expertise, their demonstrated effectiveness (based at least in part on the “academic value” that they add to their students and test scores), and the challenges of staffing particular schools.

Maryland should provide compensation packages for principals that are commensurate with their responsibilities and differentiated according to their effectiveness and the difficulty of staffing particular schools. The effectiveness of a principal should be gauged primarily by student academic achievement, yearly progress on NCLB factors, and program improvements at school.

**“You only get 38% of your salary when you retire. That’s not fair.
You can’t afford to retire.”
– Teacher, Elementary School, Carroll County Public Schools**

Recommendation 2: Reform the pension system for teachers and principals.

DISCUSSION

For new teachers and veteran teachers 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. Today, workforce mobility is a reality that we dare not ignore. To keep the teaching profession attractive and competitive, teachers must have access to sound, portable pensions and portable teaching credentials. Many business and local political leaders understand this challenge and are willing to help. For example, the regional organization, Strengthening the Mid-Atlantic Region for Tomorrow (SMART), has a keen interest in tomorrow’s workforce and is ready to assist teachers in Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. This type of program allows teachers to achieve portable pensions and credentials to foster the recruitment and retention of outstanding educators.¹ The Commission notes that the Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2005 authorizes a legislative committee to study and recommend options to enhance teacher retirement benefits. Additionally, the Department of Budget and Management has authorized a similar study comparing the benefits provided under Maryland state retirement systems to those in other states. The Commission recommends that the Governor expedite these important studies and promptly evaluate options that may help to attract and to retain excellent teachers and principals.

As in the case of teachers, Maryland should create for new principals and interested veteran principals a competitive and fully portable pension system.

Recommendation 3: Expand tuition waivers.

DISCUSSION

To attract more candidates into teaching, as well as college students considering teaching as a career option, we recommend that Maryland resume the practice of waiving university tuition for prospective teachers who agree to teach in challenging schools or subject areas experiencing teacher shortages. A starting point could be one year of free tuition per year completed in the classrooms of such schools. Combined with the new “professional educator” compensation system, Maryland can attract talented career starters and career changers to serve the classrooms in greatest need.

“Maryland colleges and universities need to change their teaching programs. Teachers need to learn how to gear instruction to work with Maryland’s testing standards and methods.”

– Principal, Middle School, Talbot County Public Schools

Recommendation 4: Evaluate teacher preparation programs.

DISCUSSION

One of the most successful teacher preparation programs in Maryland today uses partnerships between universities and school systems to create Professional Development Schools (PDS). There are currently 350+ sites statewide. They offer a laboratory-style environment in which teacher candidates engage in an internship while gaining course work taught by professors and practitioners at the public school site and/or on the university campus. Contrasting with those who have matriculated through the traditional student teaching practicum, educators who have completed PDS training have gained greater success as first-year teachers and have remained for longer periods of time in the profession. Because the PDS approach emphasizes engagement in the classroom and de-emphasizes survey courses, it enables prospective teachers to gain access to the environment in which they will be employed and to benefit from the knowledge of veteran teachers.

With outside expertise and resources, Maryland should undertake a Flexner-type appraisal of all its teacher preparation programs and should rigorously judge their quality and value.² This should lead to the termination of ineffective programs and the growth or replication of effective ones across the entire range of models for teacher preparation and certification. Included among those models should be high-quality distance learning and “virtual” preparation programs. The Governor should appoint an independent task force to study all teacher preparation programs in Maryland and make recommendations by 2007.

All teacher preparation programs, traditional and alternative, university-based and school-based, face-to-face and virtual, should be held accountable for the actual performance of their graduates in Maryland’s public school classrooms. That performance should be gauged above all by teacher success in imparting skills and knowledge to their pupils and the students’ demonstration of learning. Programs without a strong track record of producing highly effective teacher graduates should be terminated. Maryland’s participation in the

“Meritorious New Teacher Candidate” program represents a welcome recognition of this priority.³

Recommendation 5: Use community colleges for teacher training.

DISCUSSION

For potential teachers who already possess a baccalaureate degree in areas of need (e.g. mathematics, science, special education, and some languages), the community college route should be available to gain certification. Prospective teachers who do not live near a four-year college need a more convenient location to gain their credits for certification. Moreover, the life circumstances of the career changer often involve finding an economically feasible way to gain certification quickly. If the state wants to attract and include more minority and/or male career changers, this is an important modification that will reap benefits for Maryland’s children. Community colleges have immense potential to handle teacher preparation for career changers, who not only find their locations and environments appealing, but also who welcome practitioner-based instruction. Similar arrangements are already in place in the community colleges of Florida and several other states.⁴

To ensure that academic standards are robust and that the transition from lower- to upper-division course credits is seamless, we recommend a statewide partnership among two-and-four year institutions, interested school systems, and MSDE. Too often, Maryland community college credits “don’t count” at four-year schools, while community colleges are barred from offering “upper division” courses. This creates an untenable situation, one that ill serves the preK-12 system. Teachers who have experienced course work on the community college level frequently applaud its practical approach. We envision partnerships with local school systems to accept community college credits for those who have already attained degrees with majors in the areas of greatest need and who are willing to teach in challenging schools. Maryland should make the regulatory or statutory accommodations to address the teacher shortage. This would follow successful precedents in other states such as North Carolina.⁵ The Governor should involve MSDE and the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) jointly to make this change by 2007 and appoint an independent task force to help accomplish that result.

Embracing community colleges as part of a coherent, statewide program to prepare teachers will diminish barriers to employment in the classroom. Because of their geographic convenience and the economic appeal of their more affordable coursework, community colleges offer a dynamic career pathway for students at the baccalaureate and post-baccalaureate levels. Community colleges also provide an efficient pathway for minority and/or male teacher candidates who are starting degree programs or changing careers.

Community colleges and four-year colleges/universities in Maryland must agree to allow a complete transfer of credits on designated education and major courses, as several other states have done. There are also precedents in other fields in Maryland, such as the preparation of physicians’ assistants.⁶ Although there is an agreement in place today, it has not been implemented successfully or consistently statewide. Maryland’s children should not be victimized by turf wars about credit validation.

Florida’s community colleges have transcended their blue-collar roots. In that state, many “traditional” (post-secondary) students enroll in a variety of two-year programs leading to advanced degrees and enjoy unfettered transfers to four-year institutions, including out-of-state universities. Today in Maryland, community colleges are still considered less prestigious than four-year schools, making them less desirable to some students and their families. Unfortunately, the costs and locations of four-year institutions deter many students of high ability and potential whose socio-economic situation or family obligations may not allow them to pay existing tuition rates, commute a long distance to the university, or pay dormitory fees. This exacerbates the existing teacher shortages, especially in rural/remote areas of the state, and acts to discourage males and minority students interested in post-secondary education. By starting their coursework at a community college level, these individuals could have access to a degree that will prepare them as classroom teachers in an accessible and welcoming environment. Once these students are admitted into four-year institutions, there should be automatic transfer of credits at the program level, rather than a department-by-department and course-by-course transfer.

Recommendation 6: Develop school ratings based on academic performance.

DISCUSSION

While the federally required measure of adequate yearly progress (AYP) must be the starting place for such a school-specific rating system, it cannot be the whole story. AYP should be seen as a ground floor upon which to build. We recommend a rigorous, multi-faceted school-scoring rubric that underscores instructional leadership by teachers and principals—which AYP does not—and highlights critical academic areas, including improved reading scores in elementary school, algebra scores in middle school, and SAT and AP test scores in high school. Schools with high academic achievement should be recognized, perhaps as “Governor’s Schools of Excellence.” The Governor and State Superintendent should appoint a task force to design and implement a statewide school rating and rewards program that recognizes principal and teacher performance directly linked to student academic success.

Recommendation 7: Strengthen Maryland’s Public Charter School Law and State Board of Education regulations.

DISCUSSION

During the General Assembly’s 2003 Legislative Session, the Legislature passed, and on May 22, 2003, Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr. signed, the Maryland Public Charter School Act. The State Board of Education has begun the process of passing by-laws for the Act’s administration. With the enactment of a public charter school law, Maryland has joined a growing number of states that allow the development and operation of public charter schools to help introduce alternative means within the public school system to provide innovative learning opportunities and creative education approaches.

Maryland’s law defines a “public charter school” as a public school that is nonsectarian, is chosen by parents for their children, and is open to all students on a space-available basis. A public charter school can be either a newly created school or the conversion of an already operating public school. A public charter school operates with the approval of a local board of education in accordance with a written Charter Agreement, executed between the local board of education and the administrative entity operating the public charter school. Just as any other public school, a public charter school is subject to federal, state, and local laws prohibiting discrimination and must comply with all applicable health and safety laws.

Charter school laws that are weak constrict operations, impose administrative burdens, and stifle creativity. Weak charter laws require schools to rely heavily on existing education rules and offices. These laws often deter, rather than encourage, applicants and charter operations. Charters in weak law states are normally managed by school districts, which creates tension. Charter school authorizers, founders, principals, and other experts suggested that several parts of Maryland’s charter school law should be changed. The review of charter school administrative experiences in other states verifies the fact that the most important ingredient to success is the attitude and cooperative spirit that exists between the chartering authority and the applicant operators of the school. If Maryland is to move forward and expand the supply of public school choices in the state, its charter school law and/or State Board policy should be amended to reflect the following changes.⁷

- Allow multiple chartering authorities. States with strong charter school laws permit a number of entities to authorize public charter schools. Current reports show that the strongest charter school laws are found in Arizona, Delaware, Michigan, Minnesota, and Washington, D.C. Each of these states and the District of Columbia allows multiple authorizers, such as local school boards, state boards of education, state chartering boards, non-profit organizations, and public, post-secondary institutions or private colleges. Creating multiple authorizers helps ease the burden of putting the entire authorization duty on the local school district.
- Allow a public charter school to operate with increased autonomy. Maryland should provide autonomy from most or all state and district education laws, regulations, and policies. For example, a public charter school should have the flexibility to create a school calendar or change the length of the school day. Currently, the Maryland Charter School Law requires that public charter schools submit a waiver request to the State Board of Education for each state law or regulation that it wishes to have waived. However, under the Maryland Charter School Law, a waiver may not be granted from provisions of law or regulation relating to the following:
 - (1) Audit requirements
 - (2) The measurement of student academic achievement, including all assessments required for other public schools and other assessments mutually agreed upon by the public chartering authority and the school
 - (3) The health, safety, or civil rights of a student or an employee of the public charter school.

- Provide facility funding to public charter schools. The lack of access to appropriate facilities and sufficient financing has been widely documented as the largest hurdle facing public charter school operators. This has resulted in facilities that are not comparable to those of traditional schools. These schools must rely on limited public, capital funds and their operating revenues for facility expenditures. A number of other states have implemented creative facility financing options for public charter schools. Currently, the United States Department of Education (USDE) manages a public charter school facility program called the State Charter School Facilities Incentive Grants Program. This program assists public charter schools with facilities costs by providing federal funds on a competitive basis. To be eligible for this program, Maryland must specify in its charter school law that it provides a per-pupil allotment to public charter schools for facility funding.

Maryland should continue to strengthen its public charter school law by establishing clarity in several areas, including commensurate funding, waiving state laws and regulations, and issues regarding certification of public charter school teachers. It also should continue to provide technical assistance to the local school systems to ensure a complete understanding of the public charter school law. All stakeholders should continue to work collaboratively on this new and innovative approach to education.

Recommendation 8: Create a seamless continuum of early childhood education services.

DISCUSSION

Further consolidation of early childhood education programs should take place to promote a strong, comprehensive infrastructure and to support the early child care and development of children. All of Maryland’s children need to enter school ready to learn. This Commission considered and supported the legislative proposal known as *First Steps to School Success* [HB 932 and SB 759]. On May 26, 2005, Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr. signed into law the resulting legislation [HB 932]. In addition, Maryland should continue to promote and enhance collaboration of state agencies, private and public service providers, parents, advocates, businesses, and other stakeholders through the Subcabinet’s Early Care and Education Subcommittee and the Maryland Leadership in Action Program (LAP). The Early Care and Education Subcommittee of the Subcabinet for Children, Youth, and Families addresses a full range of care, education, and support for children from birth through age six. This includes child care, local Infants and Toddlers Programs, Early Head Start/Head Start, Family Support Centers, home visiting, early literacy, and health and mental health services. LAP is a leadership development program that was created with three partners: the Annie E. Casey Foundation; the Subcabinet for Children, Youth, and Families; and the Council for Excellence in Government. The purposes of LAP are to accelerate the rate at which children enter school ready to learn and to increase the leadership capacity of the participants who are accountable for that result. This recommendation is based on the School Readiness Goals for Maryland that were developed through *Maryland’s 5-Year Action Plan to Promote School Readiness*, a consensus document that serves as the state’s blueprint for improving school readiness for every Maryland kindergartener. Components of the infrastructure include quality standards for programs, for teachers, and for learning, as well as a continuum of support services to nurture our youngest children and their families.

Maryland also needs to ensure that collaboration efforts reflect Maryland’s changing demographics. For example, the state should address the issue of increasing numbers of children for whom English is not the primary language. Maryland also should provide earlier identification of children with special needs.

Recommendation 9: Create directed and measured literacy and mathematics recovery programs.

DISCUSSION

We can serve children well if we ensure that they are able to perform at grade level in literacy and mathematics. Daily value-added measurements will give the faculty adequate information about the need for additional intervention to assure that result. Educators should ensure that every student gets beyond the basic literacy and mathematics skills of the early elementary grades to the more challenging and more rewarding literacy and mathematics skills of the secondary school years. Inevitably, this will require teaching many of those students new literacy skills and numeracy strategies to be successful in higher level courses.

**More teachers, particularly in mathematics and science, would make this school a better place to learn. Some teachers are teaching out of their content area of expertise.”
– Student, High School, Garrett County Public Schools**

Recommendation 10: Hold a statewide Summit for Mathematics, Science, and Technology, sponsored by the Office of the Governor.

DISCUSSION

During the Commission’s public hearings throughout the state, many speakers addressed the importance of world-class standards in the areas of mathematics, science, and technology. Science and mathematics are the universal language of technology as they drive technology and our standard of living. The shrinking pool of young people—especially women and minorities—with this knowledge will be felt in 15-20 years. In 2004, the National Science Board (NSB) reported that in engineering specifically, universities in Asian countries now produce eight times as many bachelor’s degrees as the United States. These areas have major implications for our national security and quality of life. The Governor should convene a statewide summit on mathematics, science, and technology to bring together Maryland leaders from education, business, and public policy.

The summit participants will:

- Identify key issues facing science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education within the state;⁸
- Draft a preliminary action plan for dealing with these issues, both now and in the future;
- Recommend specific strategies to help guide the enhancement and implementation of the action plan and to pay sustained attention to STEM issues over time.

“I have a concern about the alternative certification system in Maryland. When I decided to change careers and become a teacher, I felt the system was too cumbersome and created needless obstacles.”

– Teacher, Washington County Public Schools

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

DISCUSSION

Maryland has “alternative certification” options, primarily the “Resident Teacher Certification”(RTC). While the RTC is available in a number of school districts throughout the state, its potential has not been fully realized. According to the National Center for Alternative Certification, during the 2000-2004 school years, Maryland conferred an average of just 66 certificates annually upon “alternative route” teachers. By comparison, during those same years, New Jersey was averaging 2,278 new “alternative certificates,” Massachusetts 3,233, and Colorado 530.⁹ To address the state’s supply and quality needs, Maryland’s “alternative paths” into the classroom need to be simplified, expanded, and widely used with consistency. There should be “approved providers” to include school districts, community colleges, and partnerships with private organizations and universities. This would attract subject specialists who could teach in understaffed fields and able, well-educated individuals who could spend a period of their lives in teaching before or after careers in other fields. The State Board of Education should make this an urgent priority.

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.¹⁰ Accordingly, the State Board of Education should embrace this method; it can help Maryland meet federal requirements for “highly qualified teachers.”

While ensuring that every school has expert instructional leadership in place, Maryland should begin to view the principal’s premier role as that of Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of a complex, multi-million dollar institution, and should seek individuals with the background and skills suited to performing in that role effectively. This includes empowering school systems to select highly qualified leaders who do not necessarily have public school teaching backgrounds and waiving state certification requirements to facilitate such selections. Individuals who take alternative paths to the principalship should have proven track records in other fields or institutions (e.g. higher education, business, the military) that would translate into the qualities needed to lead a school.

In addition to maximizing its relationship with the “New Leaders for New Schools”¹¹ program and others like it, Maryland should identify and recruit promising school leaders, especially minorities. Such programs should prepare them for their responsibilities through internships and mentorships, rather than university-based training programs that rely primarily on course work. Some current principal training programs fail to prepare school leaders adequately for the reality of the job. As discussed in the Columbia University/Teachers College 2005 study, *Educating School Leaders*,¹² there is widespread

“curricular disarray” and the lack of a “coherent and rigorous program” for potential leaders on the school and system level nationwide. This conclusion was underscored by the American Enterprise Institute’s Frederick M. Hess and Andrew P. Kelly, who found that such preparation programs pay minimal attention to school accountability or to the uses of data and research in managing school improvement.¹³

Instructional leadership is key to student performance and school success. Whether an aspiring school leader moves through a traditional education pathway from classroom teacher to assistant principal or travels nontraditionally from the battlefield or board room to the principal’s office, that person must be ready to lead a school team that focuses on effective classroom instruction.

Action and reality-based experience, not theory, history, and speculation, will prepare potential leaders to analyze data for school improvement, work with emotionally disturbed students, achieve AYP under *NCLB*, and increase reading levels or SAT scores. The use of mentorships and internships in which the potential principal works and learns the intricacies of instruction and improvement at a school site is preferable to the over-emphasis on bookwork and time on campus. The Columbia Teachers College study noted above also supplies a number of excellent suggestions for redesigning the preparation of school leaders.¹⁴ The Boston School Leadership Institute offers another model that prepares future principals, inducts new principals, and supports mentor principals via “career ladders” for aspiring leaders and others who want to move forward in the principalship.¹⁵

NCLB has sharply boosted the accountability of public schools, resulting in a significant change in traditional leadership expectations for schools. Maryland should recognize that schools typically need “leadership teams” with various talents and skills, rather than a single, omni-competent principal. The principal who is expected to be the instructional leader, the public relations coordinator, the disciplinarian, the leader of all programs, and so on, is stretched in too many directions. As one solution for this fragmentation, some schools have included a business manager on staff. More flexibility statewide should be implemented to recognize the distinctive needs of schools and the strengths of individuals. If a nontraditional principal with a business background were hired, for example, perhaps it would be best to have that individual hire a dean of instruction to help deliver the message that instruction is job one for all teachers. This focus on instruction with positive outcomes supported by data should be considered an absolute — with no exceptions.

The Principal Leadership Development Program places “distinguished principals” in low-performing schools. Although turnaround specialists currently are working in low performing schools throughout the state, their impact on student and school performance data is unknown at this time. Virginia has a similar program, now involving a partnership with Microsoft, called the “School Turnaround Specialist Program.”¹⁶

Recommendation 12: Facilitate innovative programs.

DISCUSSION

Teach for America and Troops to Teachers¹⁷ illustrate national programs that facilitate transitions and should play prominent roles in Maryland. The state already participates in a million dollar Troops to Teachers grant to attract qualified specialists in areas such as mathematics and science, especially on the high school level. Teach for America, currently operating in Baltimore but worthy of widespread use in Maryland, exemplifies the flexible, customized internship opportunities that characterize good, alternative programs. 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. Flexible teaching internships can be established through summer school, evening school, or a tutorial program, and can be organized by a school system, college/university, or nonprofit organization. The State Superintendent should create more pathways and internship options statewide.

“Additional opportunities need to be available for principals to use their expertise and earn increased pay while serving in their community schools.”
– Principal, High School, Baltimore County Public Schools

Recommendation 13: Provide a support and development system for teachers and principals.

DISCUSSION

Maryland should provide more comprehensive supports to retain quality teachers. Such supports include advancement (e.g. a “career ladder” approach); portability of intercounty/state credentials, and retirement plans; and effective professional development, including in-school mentorship. Teachers who want to stay in the classroom need opportunities for career advancement comparable to those in the business sector. An excellent model for Maryland to embrace is the Milken Foundation’s Teacher Advancement Program.¹⁸ Effective teachers should have the opportunity for advancement and compensation when their students’ test scores improve or they lead a complex program for school improvement (e.g. AVID, Smaller Learning Communities).¹⁹ Teachers requiring greater support should have the availability of in-school mentoring by master teachers with a proven track record of strong student achievement. Also, they may need reduced class loads or removal of extra duties to enable them to focus on improved instruction. High-quality professional development is crucial for teacher success, yet much of what passes for “professional development” in Maryland is an expensive and ineffectual use of time. It does not materially strengthen teacher knowledge or skills, school effectiveness, or pupil performance. Professional development programs need a comprehensive overhaul. Many teachers expressed the need for professional development that would give them the skills to use data effectively to improve daily instruction and the strategies to help inclusion students meet with academic success. Demonstrated value should determine how dollars are spent. 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.

One valuable support for principals would be a “system mentor” to help new principals transition successfully to their new environment and educate them about best instructional and other school management practices recognized nationally and internationally. New principals and experienced principals who desire professional development, especially in instructional leadership, should be able to access programs in and out of state to upgrade or enhance their skills. There should be monetary support to encourage these endeavors. Today, systems nominate principals to attend in-state professional development, but there are limited provisions for monetary support to encourage participation in out-of-state programs, such as Harvard’s Summer Institutes for Principals.

While remaining successful leaders in their own schools, principals could boost their compensation through increased salary or a stipend by mentoring other principals in low performing schools or “turning around” troubled schools in need of reconstitution. If the state and *NCLB* are holding principals responsible for student performance and school improvement, they also should be able to receive additional rewards for strengthening these important elements. This “career ladder” approach to the principalship would encourage school leaders to remain in their communities and allow the state to better serve children’s needs. Because leadership is vital for school success, Maryland should create incentives for effective principals.

Recommendation 14: Streamline decision-making to advance the profession.

DISCUSSION

Maryland’s Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board (PSTED) has not been an effective vehicle for advancing the teaching profession and meeting the needs of children. Too often it has focused on the concerns of adult interest groups and has moved slowly on needed reform efforts to serve Maryland’s children, standing in the way of vital education changes. PSTED should be re-established as an advisory board, and its membership should be comprised of a broad spectrum of stakeholders focused on preparing, credentialing, and evaluating high performing education professionals and not on monitoring status quo interests within the education system. As an advisory group to state policymakers, its purpose should be redefined to include an action-oriented focus on children and how best to meet their education needs. Short of such reform, PSTED should be abolished.

Recommendation 15: Delegate certification decisions.

DISCUSSION

Maryland should decentralize and diversify access to certification without compromising standards. In so doing, Maryland will empower its school systems to tailor their teacher recruitment, selection, and placement efforts more precisely to their specific personnel needs. Districts are also apt to place greater emphasis on practical classroom skills, mentorships, and other hands-on preparation strategies, rather than the “methods courses” favored in campus-based, teacher preparation.

“Deferred maintenance is a serious issue.”
– Principal, High School, Prince George’s County Public Schools

Recommendation 16: Empower principals.

DISCUSSION

The district should decide eligibility for employment, reasonable compensation ranges, and basic human resource protections, such as non-discrimination and due process. Individual principals of high-performing schools should decide who works in their schools, what their assignments are, and whether they should be retained. Because not every current principal is ready to exercise such authority, the State Board of Education should develop criteria for districts to employ in determining which schools, and which principals, are prepared for that degree of autonomy. Those criteria should be based primarily on the statewide performance and accountability measures.

Presently, district school systems, not principals, exercise authority over school budgets. Principals, in turn, are often told that they must allocate portions of their budgets for items the system deems appropriate, rather than the personnel, textbooks, or technology that their schools need most. If principals are to be accountable for results, then they and their leadership teams should be free to use their judgment in determining how best to meet student needs. They should have the right to utilize the school budget to improve pupil performance and school operations. Because of the restrictions of central office policy, however, today’s principals typically are not able to contract a plumber to fix leaky pipes or a repair service to fix a broken window. This leads to a cycle of disrepair and deteriorating facilities. School districts should delegate reasonable control and flexibility over budgets to individual principals to ensure that funds are spent efficiently and targeted strategically.

“The teachers here are caring. They give me a voice in my son’s education.”
– Parent, Elementary School, Baltimore City Public Schools

Recommendation 17: Enhance parental participation.

DISCUSSION

Many barriers keep families and a wide array of interested community leaders from participating fully in public education. Parents and community leaders have the desire and ability to improve our children’s academic achievement and the functioning of schools and school systems. However, some unnecessary obstructions stand in the way of their full participation.

These barriers come in many forms. For example, some parents who did not have positive school experiences as students may now be hesitant to get involved in the work of their child’s school. Some parents, because of a wide range of other demands, lack the time or scheduling flexibility to participate in school activities. Some school personnel find

parental and community involvement meddlesome and seek to inhibit it. Some systems have developed practices that may unintentionally obstruct promising partnerships.

School districts should create a staff position dedicated to building parental and community partnerships. School leaders should be encouraged to develop and execute such programs. The district-level staff person would be responsible for reaching out to parents, community leaders, and organizations; and increasing system and school receptiveness to greater outside participation. In conjunction with fully empowered principals, the parental and community partnership director would make better use of the broad and deep expertise of families and other leaders. We recommend that the state and districts strongly encourage the following steps for building parent and community partnerships:

- Develop courses and workshops for parents, teachers, and administrators on how to create strong, meaningful relationships between families and schools in order to improve student learning
- Support academic enrichment programs sponsored and administered by community-based organizations and other nonprofits
- Develop and support full wrap-around social services, such as before and after school programs, health services, mentoring, adult education, and family counseling
- Create college awareness and preparation programs directed toward economically disadvantaged students and their parents.

In addition, we recommend that government agencies and private employers provide parents and guardians with incentives such as eight hours of annual leave to attend and participate in school-related functions that support their child's education. Often parents whose children and schools could most benefit from greater family participation may not have the scheduling flexibility to take time off to become more involved in school activities. Greater flexibility from employers, whether in the form of paid or unpaid leave, flex time, or some other arrangement, would facilitate improved parental involvement.

Maryland should proclaim a day each year as Parents' Day. The Governor, through executive order, could establish "Bring a Parent to School Day" to encourage all parents to commit themselves to responsible, nurturing parenting and to build strong and healthy communities.

Finally, the Commission applauds MSDE for supporting the preliminary initiatives and recommendations of the Maryland Parent Advisory Council (M-PAC), including the possible appointment by the Governor of a parent member to the State Board of Education. Maryland should establish benchmarks for effectiveness and progress of parent involvement that would be reported on the annual local and state "report card." Close collaboration between MSDE and M-PAC will help to establish Maryland as a national model for parent and community involvement that contributes to the academic success of all Maryland students. Detailed information on the vision, principles, and recommendations of M-PAC is available through the MSDE website.

**“Business partners should support their public schools by providing students and teachers opportunities to connect classroom learning with the world of work.”
– Business Leader, Garrett County Public Schools**

Recommendation 18: Create a clearinghouse of programs and resources.

DISCUSSION

Countless programs designed to advance preK-12 education are offered by community-based organizations, colleges, universities, nonprofits, businesses, and other groups. However, since these programs are typically aligned with the interests and missions of the diverse and independent groups that sponsor them, their content and target audiences differ. Consequently, they tend to be uncoordinated. It is impossible to know for certain what is being offered and to whom, which areas (in both content and geography) are being neglected, and which programs have proven effective. While individually these programs may be of great value, improved coordination would increase their impact on students and systems. Given that schools and systems are now being held accountable for their results, the ability to identify successful programs that address challenges will benefit the public, policymakers, and the groups that sponsor them. Successful programs can be replicated, while others can be adjusted or discontinued.

**“I believe education can happen anywhere: at home, church, or in the community. I believe the community has a responsibility to get involved in helping our youth become productive citizens.”
– Community Leader, Charles County Public Schools**

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

DISCUSSION

Maryland should establish initiatives, such as those in Maine (Compact for Higher Education, Connect Aspirations, and College Goal Sunday) and Ohio (The Governor’s Access Initiative).²⁰ The Maine Compact for Higher Education (Compact) is a joint initiative of the Maine Development Foundation and the Maine Community Foundation. Compact resulted from a blue ribbon commission that sought to increase post-secondary education attainment. Considering today’s global competitiveness, Compact believes that college is a right, not a privilege. Compact members developed strategies to help students prepare for college, to help students finance post-secondary programs, and to help students remain in the institution until program completion. One strategy immediately implemented was the “College for ME” campaign to change how Maine’s residents value higher education. The campaign includes television and radio spots and public service announcements by prominent business leaders who discuss the importance and advantages of higher education.

The Connect Aspirations to a Plan Initiative was established in 2003 by the MELMAC Education Foundation to increase college enrollment from 55% to the national average of 68%. MELMAC awarded 28 grants to high schools and community-based organizations in

2003 to service 32 Maine high schools (25% of Maine’s student population). Grantees provide a range of services to students and parents, including academic advising and support, college advising and assistance in completing applications, and financial aid and advising. To address the gap between those who were accepted to college and those who actually enrolled, MELMAC staff conducted summer interviews with students and offered additional support.

College Goal Sunday is a unique idea, an annual event held on the Sunday closest to the Super Bowl, where students and parents receive free assistance to apply for federal financial aid. The program, held at 14 locations throughout the state, is staffed by Maine college and university financial advisors. Prior to the College Goal Sunday, the program is widely publicized, and students and parents also can call an 800 number for advice. Funding for all three Maine initiatives is made possible through businesses and foundations.

Ohio’s Governor’s Access Initiative is staffed by the Ohio College Access Network (OCAN) and is funded by the state. The primary goal is to increase the number of Ohio students attending college by 10,000 over the next five years. OCAN also is supported by the Ohio Business Roundtable and has a number of non-profit and government partner organizations that aid in helping to meet state enrollment and retention goals. OCAN provides planning and start-up grants to develop college access programs. Ohio appropriated \$2,000,000 in 2002 to begin the initiative, and grants are awarded in the amount of \$5,000 for planning and \$30,000 for implementation. Preliminary results are very promising, both with respect to increased college enrollments and retention rates.²¹

Maryland should study the Maine and Ohio models. A statewide awareness initiative focused on the social and economic benefits of college would open more opportunities for all students, but particularly for low-income and minority students. This would help raise high school achievement levels when students understand what they need to do to prepare for post-secondary education and work toward that goal.

**“Good teachers offer their assistance before and after school.”
– Student, Middle School, Montgomery County Public Schools**

Recommendation 20: Analyze the content and efficiency of the standard school day and year in Maryland.

DISCUSSION

We encourage public schools, particularly those serving disadvantaged children, to examine the amount of instructional time in a typical school day. Both teachers and principals expressed their concerns about the number of incursions into instructional time across the school year. They cited the cumulative impact of start-up routines (daily and annual), special programs and events, holiday slow-downs, test preparation periods, and a steep decline in academic work during the last six weeks of the school year.²²

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

DISCUSSION

Maryland should develop a statewide reporting program to assess the effectiveness of early child care and education services for all four-year olds.²³ Assessments should include measures of program effectiveness and results for all early child care and education services. By analyzing state and local trend data and utilizing evaluative information, Maryland will be able to determine the effectiveness of public and private pre-school programs, to identify effective instructional models, and to disseminate that information statewide.

One strategy that will ensure the integrity of this recommendation is the continued annual reporting of the school readiness information for the result area, “Children Entering School Ready to Learn.” An integral accountability component of the early childhood delivery system is maintaining and expanding the program of accreditation for early childhood programs and the credentialing of child care workers through MSDE.

Maryland should promote “highly qualified” preparation in terms of pre-service and professional development for early childhood educators. MSDE needs to improve coordination and cooperation among early childhood education and post-secondary education and state-approved training institutions involved in the pre-service and professional development of early child care practitioners. In addition, MSDE should improve the qualifications of child care staff through the Child Care Credentialing System.²⁴ State standards should be developed specific to the skill sets and areas of knowledge needed to be an effective pre-kindergarten teacher. Along with developing specific standards, the state should support the expansion of Professional Development Schools (PDS) in early childhood education programs. Provisionally certified pre-kindergarten teachers should be encouraged to become fully certified with an emphasis on the use of diagnostic and prescriptive instruction.²⁵

Finally, all pre-school preparation programs throughout Maryland should be aligned with Maryland’s Voluntary State Curriculum (VSC) to promote school readiness. The VSC contains Maryland’s content standards in reading and mathematics for grades preK-8.

Recommendation 22: Continue to transform the current system of early child care education to best address Maryland’s youngest students.

DISCUSSION

MSDE should establish formal Memorandums of Understanding with Head Start and public and non-public schools and systems. Furthermore, MSDE should consider similar agreements among other child care programs to define the roles and responsibilities of planned collaboration and coordinated services for young children and families.²⁶

**“My parent classes at this pre-school are helping me to get my child ready for kindergarten. My three-year old and I are both taking classes here.”
– Parent, Pre-School, Caroline County Public Schools**

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

DISCUSSION

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.

For example, “Countdown to Kindergarten”(CTK) is a public/private partnership that is conducting a statewide public awareness campaign about early learning and school readiness for children up to five. CTK is reaching out to parents, the general public, and regional media with a dual message about the importance of early learning and the use of everyday activities as learning opportunities. The CTK website provides “Tips for Turning Everyday Activities into Learning Activities” in 17 languages. The website also contains other valuable information on parenting and support resources and a list of research-focused resources.²⁷

Recommendation 24: Utilize the best practices framework.

DISCUSSION

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. As suggested in *Do What Works*, implementation requires that the proposed data system contain the “Nine Essential Elements of Statewide Collection Systems.”²⁸

- A unique statewide personal identification number for each student
- Enrollment data for each student
- State test data for each student
- Data on untested students
- Course completion information for each student
- SAT, ACT, and Advanced Placement results for each student
- Graduation and dropout data for all students
- Audit process to ensure the accuracy of state data
- Capacity to link preK-12 and higher education data at the student level

This proposed data-driven foundation will facilitate systemic reform by clearly portraying how best practices at the district, school, and classroom levels intersect and support each other in high-performing school systems. The state can then facilitate the sharing of those proven practices with those whose performance demonstrates a need for further assistance.

This system should enable educators at all levels to track performance of students over time. Educators and parents need clear longitudinal data on each learner's performance, not just a quick snap-shot from one test. It is important to know whether or not students have increased their mastery of a subject, whether the school is meeting state standards, and what programs and practices are proving effective at raising achievement levels.

In addition, this system will allow tracking the performance of every school over time. State and district educational leaders must have access to a continuous flow of information on relative and absolute progress in the schools for which they are responsible. It is important to stress that short-term evaluations are not adequate indicators of continuous improvement. Evidence of continuous improvement requires longitudinal data. For example, as Maryland evaluates a school to assure valid measurement, only students enrolled in a school for three or more years would count as "continuously enrolled."

The data system also will allow Maryland to analyze school performance by grouping sites according to similar demographic profiles and by identifying high performing schools in each group. This information on student performance at individual schools in each grade and each subject can be compared with other schools across the state whose students performed at a higher level while having similar characteristics, such as an equally disadvantaged student population. The state and district leadership can then analyze those proven practices that led to higher performance and ensure their dissemination to similarly challenged schools.

The data system will identify performance gaps that exist in schools. A website allowing self-evaluation of virtually identical schools will allow educators and parents to see the practices which are working in the higher performing schools. They can then adopt those practices to achieve higher levels of student achievement within their own school.

The National Center for Educational Responsibility, operating with the name Just for the Kids, has adopted a similar data analysis approach. Some samples of states that already use this approach are New Jersey, Texas, and Washington. Several other states are in the process of implementing this approach, and Maryland should do the same. Just for the Kids, in conjunction with Standard & Poor's School Evaluation services, has produced a website that provides online data tools to aid all fifty states in fulfilling the data reporting and analysis requirements of *NCLB* at no cost to the states. The website is funded by the Broad Foundation and the USDE.

The Best Practices Framework was created by Just for the Kids as a tool that is able to distill areas of instructional practice common to high-performing school systems around the nation. As of July 2004, the following states are associated with this template: Arkansas, California, Colorado, Illinois, New Jersey, Tennessee, Texas, and Washington. This framework allows educators to study the best practices of high-performing schools and districts in a particular state and to conduct a cross-state comparison of practices. It also facilitates systemic reform by clearly portraying how best practices at the district, school, and classroom levels intersect and support each other in high-performing school systems. Systems also can locate high-performing schools and districts that are similar to themselves and identify practices those schools and districts are using.²⁹

The Best Practices Framework has five organizing themes:

- Curriculum and Academic Goals—“What is Taught and Learned”
- Staff Selection, Leadership, and Capacity Building—“Selecting and Developing Leaders and Teachers”
- Instructional Programs, Practices, and Arrangements—“The Right Stuff”—“Time and Tools”
- Monitoring: Compilation, Analysis, and Use of Data—“Knowing the Learners and the Numbers”
- Recognition, Intervention, and Adjustment—“Ensuring All Children Learn”

In addition to organizing themes, the three levels of every school system—district, school, and classroom—provide a second organizational dimension to the Best Practices Framework:

- Within each of the five themes, each school level plays a particular role in high performing school systems
- Different levels of the school system must be involved to varying degrees to reach maximum effectiveness in the specific theme area

The assignment of specific practices to a specific school level may be as important as the practices themselves (i.e. *who* is as important as *what*).

Recommendation 25: Focus on value-added measurement.

DISCUSSION

Maryland should respect the variety of challenges schools must address when serving very different communities. Maryland also should recognize and respect the variety of challenges teachers address. Some teachers work with children who are fully prepared to learn. Other teachers teach children who are largely unprepared. The importance of a value-added measurement requires careful analysis of how best to employ it within the parameters established by *NCLB*. We know the critical need for precise, continuing data to establish progress in meeting the absolute standards the law and we demand.

We also believe value-added measurements can contribute substantially to the true goals of *NCLB*, especially as schools seek to meet the mandates of AYP. Specifically, both relative and absolute gains in achievement must be consistently documented if we are to provide the immediate support required by students, teachers, and schools facing challenges. Knowing the imperative of a constructive and cooperative alliance between Maryland and federal education authorities, we urge MSDE to present the case for value-added measurements to the United States Department of Education.

Recommendation 26: Establish a Quality Process Improvement approach (QPI).

DISCUSSION

A “continuous improvement system” is grounded in the belief that if one improves the processes that create a product, then the product itself will improve. If educational processes are improved, then one product—student achievement—will improve. The primary focus is on improving teaching and learning. To that end, Maryland should establish a QPI approach so that planning, informational systems, resource allocation, maintenance, human resources, and transportation can benefit from continuous improvement.

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

DISCUSSION

Effective schools become true professional learning communities by advancing both teacher professional development and classroom performance. Teachers have high expectations for every student, expectations which are largely realized in outcomes. A constant flow of information on each learner allows the faculty to determine on a daily basis when and how best to provide appropriate additional support for the student facing learning challenges. Every Maryland school system and every Maryland school should become a professional learning community, where knowledge, experience, mutual development of goals, and implementation of best practices are evident.

Recommendation 28: Adopt the high school transition approach.

DISCUSSION

To create a smooth transition from high school to post-secondary education, significant efforts in two policy and practice areas are crucial. First, a logical continuum of academic standards and assessments spanning all levels of the education system—elementary, secondary, and post-secondary—must be put in place to help students more easily move from one level to the next. Second, stronger connections between the preK-12 and post-secondary systems must be made in the areas of curriculum, assessment, data collection, financial aid, and other areas to increase students’ readiness for, and participation in, post-secondary education.

Creating these connections is particularly important for economically disadvantaged and minority students. To have an effective education system for all students, Maryland should ensure that all students have multiple pathways to higher education. To paraphrase U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings, a quality education helps all students fulfill their potential. It lets them give back to their communities and our country—and our country needs those skills very much.

“Parents seem to like having me at school. They usually go straight to me for certain issues, leaving the principal to do her job as an instructional leader. My background is not in education. I come from a business-customer service environment.”
– Business Manager, Middle School, Talbot County Public Schools

Recommendation 29: Expand the implementation of the school business manager model.

DISCUSSION

Maryland principals should be focused primarily on their role as chief instructional officers of their schools. Wherever necessary and feasible, schools should hire a business manager, a role separate from that of the assistant principal, who would be responsible for transportation, facilities, cafeteria supervision, and similar functions.³⁰

“We need more classes that deal with real life experiences.”
– Student, High School, Montgomery County Public Schools

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

DISCUSSION

Maryland should study the developing models of pathways to industry certification that exist in Massachusetts and Virginia.³¹ In both states, the purpose of the certification process is to improve student achievement, evaluate program effectiveness, and provide students with an industry-recognized credential. Training programs consist of courses taken at vocational or technical high schools, internships, or a combination of both. Both states see advantages to be gained when they establish frameworks for validation of knowledge and skills in specific areas, such as construction, business and administrative services, and information technology.

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Wade, Robin, et al. *Building a Foundation for Success by Getting Every Child Ready for School.* Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board (Challenge to Lead Series), 2005.

Valuable Websites

Achieve, Inc. www.achieve.org

Education Commission of the States www.ecs.org

Educational Facilities Financing Center www.lisc.org/whatwedo/programs/effc

Educational Testing Service www.ets.org/research/pic

John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development, Rutgers University
www.heldrich.rutgers.edu

Maryland State Department of Education www.marylandpublicschools.org/msde

Massachusetts Department of Education (The Massachusetts Education Reform Act)
www.doe.mass.edu/edreform/edreformreport/erprogrpt597-html

Montgomery County Public Schools, *Our Call to Action* (Audit of Successful Reform Efforts) www.mcps.k12.md.us/info/CTBS2003/earlysuccess.shtm

National Association of Secondary School Principals nassp@principals.org

National Governors Association www.nga.org

National Partnership for Teaching in At-Risk Schools NPTARS@learningpt.org

San Diego City, Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy (Reform Based on Research Model) www.ctpweb.org

Southern Regional Education Board www.sreb.org

The Teaching Commission www.theteachingcommission.org

Thomas B. Fordham Foundation www.edexcellence.net

APPENDIX A – Executive Order 01.01.2004.52

WHEREAS, The State of Maryland is committed to a historic funding increase to our public schools, including a total state aid for primary and secondary education of \$3.6 billion in fiscal year 2005. This is a \$326 million increase for K-12 education and is the largest increase in Maryland's history. Further, the Bridge to Excellence Act calls for substantial increases in the levels of State formula aid to local school systems annually until fiscal year 2008;

WHEREAS, The No Child Left Behind Act inspires all Americans to pursue innovative approaches in public education to ensure that our children have the tools to be successful learners and citizens;

WHEREAS, Maryland has made great strides in recent years to improve the quality of public education in our State, including improved accountability measures and increased test scores of our children;

WHEREAS, Maryland has the responsibility to its citizens to assess the quality of K-12 education and to propose appropriate initiatives that will result in continued high academic achievement for all students;

WHEREAS, The State should help Maryland public schools in addressing severe teacher shortages, in developing a targeted statewide teacher recruitment and retention strategy, and in continuing to raise academic or content standards for teachers;

WHEREAS, Principals are an essential part of every school's success, and the State needs to examine ways to enhance the professional development provided to aspiring, new, and veteran principals;

WHEREAS, An essential goal of public schools should be to involve parents in the education of their children by facilitating family participation in school activities;

WHEREAS, For Maryland to have an internationally competitive work force, the public schools must identify and implement models that prepare all students for successful entry into postsecondary education and/or careers; and

WHEREAS, To improve academic achievement for all students, Maryland must advance initiatives in school readiness through early childhood programs.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ROBERT L. EHRLICH, JR., GOVERNOR OF THE STATE MARYLAND, BY VIRTUE OF THE AUTHORITY VESTED IN ME BY THE CONSTITUTION AND THE LAWS OF MARYLAND, HEREBY PROCLAIM THE FOLLOWING EXECUTIVE ORDER, EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY.

- A. Established. There is a Governor's Commission on Quality Education in Maryland.
- B. Purpose. The Commission shall examine the critical issues of teacher/principal accountability and growth, school and community linkages, global best practices in education, school readiness, and early childhood programs as they impact the goal of high academic achievement for all students in Maryland. The Commission shall make recommendations to the Governor for specific and measurable actions. These action areas include teacher quality, principal preparation, special education, community involvement, business partnerships, school choice, curriculum models, school readiness for children, literacy, and preparation for postsecondary education and careers.
- C. Membership.
1. The Commission shall be composed of the following members:
 - a. The Lieutenant Governor of the State of Maryland, who shall serve as Chairperson;
 - b. The State Superintendent of Schools or a designee;
 - c. The Secretary of Juvenile Services or a designee;
 - d. The Secretary of Business and Economic Development or a designee;
 - e. The Secretary of Budget and Management or a designee;
 - f. The Secretary of Higher Education or a designee;
 - g. Two members of the Senate of Maryland, one member appointed by the President of the Senate, and one member appointed by the Minority Leader of the Senate;
 - h. Two members of the House of Delegates, one member appointed by the Speaker of the House, and one member appointed by the Minority Leader of the House; and
 - i. Up to twenty-one members of the Commission appointed by the Governor to serve at his pleasure. These members may include representatives of local government, public and private schools, students, parents, teachers, the business community, education advocacy groups, and other individuals and organizations with relevant interest or expertise.
 2. To the extent possible, the Commission shall represent the major geographic areas of the State
 3. Members appointed by the Governor may not receive compensation for their services, but may be reimbursed for reasonable expenses incurred in the performance of duties, in accordance with the Standard State Travel Regulations, and as provided in the State budget.
- D. Duties. The Commission shall have the following duties:
1. Examine and make specific recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of teachers and principals;
 2. Examine and make specific recommendations to link schools with their communities;

3. Examine and make specific recommendations to incorporate best practices that will effectively prepare students for postsecondary education and career success; and
 4. Examine and make specific recommendations to improve school readiness and early childhood programs.
- E. Staffing. The Lieutenant Governor's Office, the State Department of Education, and the Governor's Policy Office shall provide primary staff support to the Commission. The Commission may seek additional staff support from other State agencies, federal agencies, or organizations with expertise in education.
- F. Procedures.
1. A majority of members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of any business before the Commission.
 2. The Commission will hold hearings throughout the State to receive public testimony on Maryland's K-12 education system.
 3. The Commission, with the concurrence of the Chairperson, may utilize subject matter experts and resources to assist the Commission in the performance of its duties.
- G. Report. The Commission shall submit a final report to the Governor on or before September 1, 2005, at which time the Commission established by this Executive Order shall be terminated.

GIVEN Under My Hand and the Great Seal of the State of Maryland, in the City of Annapolis, this 27th Day of September, 2004.



Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr.
Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr.
Governor

Attest:

R. Karl Aumann
R. Karl Aumann
Secretary of State

APPENDIX B – Commission Meetings

STEELE COMMISSION MEETINGS

- September 27, 2004
- December 6, 2004
- March 14, 2005
- June 13, 2005

Personnel Accountability and Growth Meetings

- September 27, 2004
- October 18, 2004
- November 15, 2004
- January 3, 2005
- February 14, 2005
- April 11, 2005
- May 2, 2005

School and Community Linkages Meetings

- September 27, 2004
- October 12, 2004
- November 1, 2004
- January 10, 2005
- February 7, 2005
- April 4, 2005
- May 9, 2005
- May 24, 2005

Best Practices in Education Meetings

- September 27, 2004
- October 19, 2004
- November 15, 2004
- January 31, 2005
- February 14, 2005
- April 25, 2005
- May 16, 2005

School Readiness and Early Childhood Education Meetings

- September 27, 2004
- October 25, 2004
- November 22, 2004
- January 31, 2005
- February 28, 2005
- April 25, 2005
- June 6, 2005

APPENDIX C – School Visits and Focus Groups

Northeast Middle School (Baltimore City) – October 12, 2004
Northern High School (Garrett County) – October 21, 2004
West Side Elementary School (Allegany County) – October 22, 2004
Easton Middle School (Talbot County) – November 5, 2004
Buckingham Elementary School (Worcester County) – November 18, 2004
Somerset Intermediate School (Somerset County) – November 19, 2004
Albert Einstein High School (Montgomery County) – November 23, 2004
Kent Island High School (Queen Anne’s County) – December 3, 2004
Federalsburg Elementary School (Caroline County) – December 7, 2004
Judy Center (Caroline County) – December 7, 2004
Dulaney High School (Baltimore County) – December 14, 2004
Thomas Stone High School (Charles County) – December 21, 2004
Manchester Elementary School (Carroll County) – January 4, 2005
Center for Applied Technology North (Anne Arundel County) – January 10, 2005
Harford Technical High School (Harford County) – January 26, 2005
Kent County High School (Kent County) – January 28, 2005
Cecilton Elementary School (Cecil County) – January 28, 2005
River Hill High School (Howard County) – February 7, 2005
Furman L. Templeton High School (Baltimore City) – February 9, 2005
Largo High School (Prince George’s County) – February 15, 2005
Annapolis Area Christian School (Anne Arundel County) – February 17, 2005
Marlton Elementary School (Prince George’s County) – February 23, 2005
Maryland School District Superintendents – March 3, 2005
Walbrook High School (Baltimore City) – March 4, 2005
Carver Vo-Tech High School (Baltimore City) – March 4, 2005
Maryland Student School Board Members – March 11, 2005
Maryland School Board Presidents – March 11, 2005
Tuscarora High School (Frederick County) – March 14, 2005
Washington County Technical High School (Washington County) – March 15, 2005

Parkside High School (Wicomico County) – March 16, 2005
Nicolas Orem Middle School (Prince George’s County) – March 17, 2005
Mace’s Lane Middle School (Dorchester County) – March 21, 2005
Potomac Home School Site (Montgomery County) – March 24, 2005
Seven Locks Elementary School (Montgomery County) – March 24, 2005
Bais Yaakov School (Baltimore County) – April 7, 2005
SEED School (Washington, D.C.) – April 15, 2005
Mill Creek Middle School (Calvert County) – April 18, 2005
Esperanza Middle School (St. Mary’s County) – April 18, 2005
Briggs Chaney Middle School (Montgomery County) – April 19, 2005
Dundalk Middle School (Baltimore County) – April 22, 2005
Baltimore Highlands Elementary School (Baltimore County) – April 28, 2005

APPENDIX D – Public Hearings

May 12, 2005

Montgomery College
Globe Hall Auditorium
20200 Observation Drive
Germantown, MD 20876
7:00 – 9:00pm

May 17, 2005

Cambridge-South Dorchester
High School
School Auditorium
2475 Cambridge Bypass
Cambridge, MD 21613
7:00 – 9:00pm

May 18, 2005

Thomas Stone High School
School Auditorium
3785 Leonardtown Road
Waldorf, MD 20603
7:00 – 9:00pm

May 19, 2005

Hagerstown Community College
Kepler Theater Building
11400 Robinwood Drive
Hagerstown, MD 21742
7:00 – 9:00pm

May 24, 2005

Baltimore City Community College
The Fine Arts Theater
The Liberty Campus
2901 Liberty Heights Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21215
7:00 – 9:00pm

May 25, 2005

C. Milton Wright High School
School Auditorium
1301 N. Fountain Green Road
Bel Air, MD 21015
7:00 – 9:00pm

May 26, 2005

Largo High School
Multipurpose Room
505 Largo Road
Upper Marlboro, MD 20774
7:00 – 9:00pm

Acknowledgments

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Endnotes

¹ SMART

www.smartstates.com

² Abraham Flexner, Kappa Delta Pi—Educational Honor Society
<http://www.kdp.org/about/laureates/laureates/abrahamflexner.php>

³ “Meritorious New Teacher Candidate” Program, Mid-Atlantic Regional Teachers Project,
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
<http://www.marpt.org>

⁴ Florida Community Colleges
http://www.fldcu.org/teach_for_florida/
http://www.fldcu.org/teach_for_florida/abstracts.pdf

⁵ North Carolina Community College System, Examples of Baccalaureate Completion Programs
for Teacher Preparation
http://www.ncccs.cc.nc.us/News_Releases/BaccalaureateTeachingPrograms.htm

⁶ Physicians’ Assistant Program at CCBC Essex, The Community College of Baltimore County
<http://www.ccbcmd.edu/past/essex>

⁷ SB 75—Public Charter School Act of 2003
<http://www.governor.maryland.gov/billsignings/2003/052203.html>
Charter School Laws Across the States: Ranking and Scorecard 8th Edition, “Strong Laws
Produce Better Results”
http://www.edreform.com/_upload/charter_school_laws.pdf

⁸ See letter from Maryland Partnership for Teaching and Learning K-16 to The Honorable Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr., dated March 31, 2005, proposing a Maryland State Summit on Mathematics, Science, and Technology; “Recommendations for a ‘World Class’ K-8 Math Curriculum for Maryland Students” from the Parents’ Coalition of Montgomery County; and “The Expectations Gap: A 50-State Review of High School Graduation Requirements” prepared by Achieve, Inc., a bi-partisan, non-profit organization created by the nation’s governors and business leaders that helps states raise academic standards, improve assessments, and strengthen accountability. Additional useful sources are Achieve, Inc.’s *Analysis of the Voluntary State Curriculum (VSC) in Science: Grades Pre-K-8* (2005) and MSDE’s *Where Do We Stand in 2005? A Progress Report on Technology Resources in Maryland Schools* (March 2005).

⁹ National Center for Alternative Certification
www.teach-now.org/index.asp

¹⁰ ABCTE
www.abcte.org

¹¹ New Leaders for New Schools
www.nlms.org

¹² Teachers College, Columbia University
www.tc.columbia.edu

¹³ Hess, Frederick M. and Andrew P. Kelly, “Learning to Lead? What Gets Taught in Principal Preparation Programs”
http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/pepg/PDF/Papers/Hess_Kelly_Learning_to_Lead_PEPG05.02.pdf

¹⁴ Levine, Arthur, “Educating School Leaders” (See especially pp. 50-70.)
<http://www.edschools.org/pdf/Final313.pdf>

¹⁵ Boston Principal Fellows, Boston School Leadership Institute
<http://www.bostonsli.org>

¹⁶ Virginia School Turnaround Specialist Program, Executive Overview
www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Instruction/OCP/vstsp.html

¹⁷ Teach for America and Troops for Teachers
www.whitehouse.gov/firstlady/initiatives/education/troopsforteachers.html
www.whitehouse.gov/firstlady/initiatives/education/teachforamerica.html

¹⁸ Milken Foundation
<http://www.mff.org/tap/tap.taf>
Teacher Advancement Program Foundation
www.tapschools.org

¹⁹ Id.

²⁰ MELMAC Education Foundation
<http://www.melmacfoundation.org>

²¹ Ohio College Access Network
<http://www.ohiocan.org>

²² See Jodie Roth, et al., “What Happens During the School Day?: Time Diaries from a National Sample of Elementary School Leaders”
<http://www.terecord.org/Content.asp?ContentID=11018>
and *Education at a Glance, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development’s Education at a Glance 2003 Report*, published by The Brookings Institution in 2004.

²³ Maryland enjoys a national reputation for its design and use of the Work Sampling System, a component of the Maryland Model of School Readiness (MMSR). The Work Sampling System is the measure of readiness for all children entering kindergarten and is the basis for the annual report on school readiness. For the 2004-05 school year, the statewide cohort of entering

kindergarteners improved its overall school readiness skills as it has each year since the baseline year of 2001. The percentage of incoming kindergarteners considered by their teachers as “fully ready” went from 55 percent last year to 58 percent this year -- up nine (9) percent from the first data collection of 2001-02. Despite the growth seen, 42 percent of Maryland children still enter kindergarten not ready to learn and lack basic cognitive, social, and communications skills necessary to progress in school.

²⁴ The Maryland Child Care Credential is a voluntary program that recognizes child care providers for exceeding the requirements of state licensing and registration regulations. Child care center staff and registered family childcare providers are eligible to participate. Program goals are to promote a well-qualified workforce, advance the status and increase the compensation of those working in child care settings, recognize for-credit and non-credit career preparation, and to build a structure for professional growth through professional competencies.

²⁵ “Professional Development Schools in Maryland,” Presentation to the Maryland Higher Education Commission, February 16, 2005; “Professional Development Schools in Maryland,” Maryland State Department of Education, November 2004.

²⁶ For a sample MOU, see <http://www.mdk12.org/instruction/ensure/readiness/pdfs/MSDEHeadstart%20Final%20Draft%20MOU2-04.pdf>

²⁷ Countdown to Kindergarten
www.countdowntokindergarten.org

²⁸ “Nine Essential Elements of Statewide Collection Systems,” *Do What Works*, Tom Luce and Lee Thompson, pp. 40-41.

²⁹ Just for the Kids is a national initiative by the National Center for Educational Accountability (NCEA) founded in 2001 to “create an information system for public use that clearly and accurately compares where schools and districts are with what is possible, research and systemically organize proven education practices demonstrated in varied circumstances, and translate data and research findings into improvement tools and strategies for educators to implement.” Specifically see the NCEA report on how Maryland is meeting expectations based on data summaries and other reports for the 2003-2004 school year.
www.just4kids.org

³⁰ For a full discussion of the business manager, see Recommendation 7 from *Achievement Matters Most—The Final Report of the Visionary Panel for Better Schools*, January 2002, p. 12.
<http://www.ctredpol.org/pubs/visionarypanel/visionarypanel/2002.pdf>

³¹ National Governor’s Association (NGA), *Redesigning the American High School, Getting It Done: Ten Steps to a State Action Agenda*, Recommendation 10, pp. 41-42.
<http://www.nga.org/ngatemplate/1,2441,7895,00.html>