Attending to Learn
The Implications of Raising the Compulsory Age for School Attendance

Final Report of the Task Force to Study Raising the Compulsory Public School Attendance Age to 18
Submitted to the Maryland General Assembly and Governor
December 1, 2007

Attending to Learn: The Implications of Raising the Compulsory Age for School Attendance

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Setting the Stage for the Discussion…

"Most students don't wake up on a single morning and decide to drop out of school. Rather, dropping out is the end of a long-term process of disengagement, as students find school to be disconnected from — even at odds with — the rest of their lives."

—Geoff Garin, President, Peter D. Hart Research Associates

"No problem can be solved by the same level of consciousness that created it."

—Albert Einstein

"More of the same ... will not work.... Intensifying efforts that have repeatedly failed is not a route to success. However, the necessary first step toward success is not very complicated: it lies in simply recognizing that, when it comes to schools, one size cannot possibly fit all. Thus, if a student has demonstrated she's not going to make it in one kind of school, we should let her try another. And it can't reasonably be another that is essentially the same as the one she left. Let her try a different kind of school."

—Mary Anne Raywid, Professor Emeritus, Hofstra University

"Contrary to popular belief, most dropouts demonstrate remarkable persistence and drive to achieve their education goals. In search of a second chance, they find and enter a wide variety of "second chance" programs in pursuit of a high school credential."

—*Making Good on a Promise: What Policymakers Can Do to Support the Educational Persistence of Dropouts*, Double the Numbers: A Jobs for the Future Initiative.

"When parents talk to their children about school, expect them to do well, help them plan for college, and make sure that out-of-school activities are constructive, their children do better in school."

—*A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family and Community Connections on Student Achievement*, National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education.

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Acknowledgements

The Task Force would like to recognize all those who shared their time and expertise. Your contributions were invaluable to our work and instrumental in helping us complete this report. Thank you.

Patricia Alvey, Section Chief, Maryland State Department of Education: GED Exam.

Mark Goldstein, Maryland Department of Planning: Enrollment.

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Stuart Bounds, President, Chesapeake Community College: Alternatives for at-risk students.

Note From the Chair

On behalf of the Task Force to Study Raising the Compulsory Public School Attendance Age to 18, I am pleased to submit this report. It reflects the hard work, experience, and thoughtfulness of the more than 50 people involved in our deliberations over the past year.

Youth are society's greatest resource. Thus, one of society's greatest interests must be to empower youth through education, allowing them to realize their human potential. This imperative is moral, economic, and social and requires leadership at every level.

Schools need to create cultures in which every student is valued, and generate a menu of creative approaches to engage each student. We must engage all students at a very early age, set high expectations for them, and inspire and motivate them to learn. We must strive toward the ideal that every student succeeds, eliminating those barriers to success where we can. Globalization and automation require us to alter traditional thinking and exercise creativity in engaging students. Additionally, Maryland's student demographics have changed dramatically over the past 20 years, underscoring the need for culturally competent and diverse teachers.

While schools can and must play an integral role in shaping the lives of young people, they are not a panacea for the family, social, environmental, and other societal forces that can impact a student's ability to achieve. There are myriad factors this Task Force had neither the time nor specific mandate to address, but are germane in determining whether to raise the compulsory public school attendance age. We urge the Maryland General Assembly and Governor to consider all relevant issues in determining how we can most effectively and efficiently empower Maryland's young people to achieve their potential. There is no greater investment we can make than the investment in children. We urge the State of Maryland to invest the resources required to promote the success of all Maryland students.

It has been a pleasure to serve as Task Force Chair. The Task Force is deeply indebted to Marcia Lathroum, Ann Chafin, and other members of the Maryland State Department of Education who provided invaluable input. The Task Force also appreciates the input provided by the 24 local school systems. I am most thankful for this opportunity to serve Maryland's youth.

Sincerely,
Ranjit S. Dhindsa, President, Maryland Leadership Workshops, Inc.

Message From the State Superintendent of Schools

During the Maryland General Assembly Session 2006, House Bill (HB) 36 was amended to establish a task force that would study raising the age of compulsory attendance from 16 to 18 years of age. The Bill was signed into law by Governor Robert L. Ehrlich on May 16, 2006.

The Task Force convened in December 2006 and concluded in December 2007. The work and recommendations of this Task Force could impact current law and have implications for many State and local agencies. Also impacted by the outcome of this work are the children of Maryland, their families, schools, and the State of Maryland.

This is a complicated topic, and this Task Force was charged with studying all aspects of the issue. Maryland prides itself on its diversity. That diversity is also found in the students of Maryland. There are some students, despite myriad interventions, that find it impossible to continue in a comprehensive school setting. Although it is sometimes behavioral, just as often it is a result of family obligations, financial needs, and personal commitments. Engaging some children and young adults in the learning process is a challenge for instructional leaders and teachers. This committee looked at not only engaging 16-year-old students in school, but exposing students at an early age to a positive learning experience.

The Maryland State Department of Education is committed to providing a safe and orderly environment that is conducive to learning and high achievement for all students. The work of this committee is yet another effort to move forward. Although the Task Force has completed its work, we must now take these recommendations to our legislators and collaborate with our elected State and national officials to address the needs of our students who are leaving schools without high school diplomas. We are committed to establishing an educational system that will ensure that all students can graduate.

Sincerely,
Nancy S. Grasmick, Maryland State Superintendent of Schools

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History and Charge

The General Assembly has introduced bills for the last four years that would, if passed, amend §7-301 of the Annotated Code of Maryland by raising the age of compulsory attendance from 16 to 18. Although these bills have not been signed into law, interest in the topic and concerns related to students who drop out of school without a high school diploma have not waned. Therefore, during the 2006 Maryland General Assembly session, House Bill 36 was amended to create a task force that would study this issue from a variety of perspectives.

House Bill 36 succinctly outlined membership and questions to which the Task Force was required to respond. These questions covered a broad perspective of issues surrounding the act of raising the age of compulsory attendance. The Task Force was charged with evaluating the impact of extending the compulsory public school attendance age to 18, and providing the General Assembly and Governor with an impact statement, recommendations, and an action plan for guidelines and resources needed to effectively implement such a change in statute. The overarching charge posed to the Task Force had to do with examining the *impact* of raising the age of compulsory attendance, and what issues would need to be addressed if this change were to occur, rather than making a recommendation on whether to raise the age. It was incumbent among the members of this Task Force to research, brainstorm, evaluate, and reach consensus on myriad topics. Experts in each of the areas to be studied were invited to the Task Force meetings to share existing practices, policies, and data on dropouts, enrollment, existing facilities, staffing, best practices, and alternatives to comprehensive or "traditional" high school. During their last full meeting, the Task Force members crafted recommendations.

The main Task Force oversaw the work of four subcommittees, which were organized around the following categories: laws of other states; best practices in Maryland and strategies to motivate and engage students in school; the practical implications of raising the age of compulsory attendance and resources needed to effect the change; and the impact of changing the age of compulsory attendance on special populations. Additional members who could bring expertise to the subcommittees were invited to join the Task Force. Each subcommittee was asked to focus its work primarily on the statutory provisions of House Bill 36 that pertained to its area of study. Subcommittees met periodically throughout the process, and reported to the full Task Force at each of the four Task Force meetings.

The following are the mandates that the Task Force addressed from House Bill 36:

1. "Gather and review data on relevant best practices related to extended learning opportunities for teens between the ages of 15 and 18, including recommendations put forth under the federal No Child Left Behind legislation (P.L. 107-110);"
2. "Examine the adequacy of facilities, staffing, programming, instructional time, and resources to accommodate raising the compulsory public school attendance age to 18;"
3. "Project the impact on student attendance and achievement outcomes, and assess the fiscal and social benefits to the students and to the State, of raising the compulsory public school attendance age to 18;"
4. "Develop an action plan to implement, provide professional development opportunities, and foster partnerships among governmental agencies, county boards of education, and the business community to support the successful implementation of an initiative to raise the compulsory public school attendance age to 18 throughout the State;"
5. "Examine the implications for raising the compulsory public school attendance age to 18 on standards-based outcomes, students with disabilities, and students with limited English proficiency;" and
6. "Provide any other guidance and make any other recommendations the Task Force deems appropriate."

Although the work of the Task Force is complete, the Maryland State Department of Education realizes its responsibility to continue to work toward engaging all students in the educational process, ensuring that all students achieve and graduate with a Maryland High School Diploma. The Department hopes to continue to work collaboratively with State and federal legislators to promote this end.

Executive Summary

The motivation for virtually all education initiatives—such as House Bill 36 and No Child Left Behind—is to enable children to succeed, maximize their human potential, and lead productive lives. Research tells us that young people in Maryland can achieve these objectives by staying in school, mastering a body of work through grade 12, and earning a Maryland High School Diploma.

FRAMING THE PROBLEM

The high school diploma is a prerequisite for self-sufficiency in America, and yet in the 2005-06 school year alone, 1.2 million students nationally ("Diplomas Count," 2007), and 11,058 in Maryland (Maryland State Department of Education, 2006), left high school before earning one.

"Most students don't wake up on a single morning and decide to drop out of school. Rather, dropping out is the end of a long-term process of disengagement, as students find school to be disconnected from—even at odds with —the rest of their lives."
—Geoff Garin, President, Peter D. Hart Research Associates

These students face a harsh future. Without diplomas, young adults earn lower salaries and face reduced earning potential. It is estimated that American adults without diplomas earn 27 percent less than those with diplomas (Day & Newburger, 2002). High school dropouts are also disproportionately represented in prison. In 2004, dropouts made up 41 percent of the nation's prison inmates (Harlow, 2003). Dropouts can even expect a shorter life span and more instances of heart disease, diabetes, and obesity (Belfield & Levin, 2007).

Beyond individual consequences, the problem of high school dropouts affects everyone. Less education is associated with an increased dependency on public assistance (Heckman, 2000). Further, research indicates that low educational achievement directly correlates to crime committed by juveniles and adults (Bonczar, 2003). It costs Maryland from $8,237 to $11,740 per year to educate a student (Maryland State Department of Education, "The Fact Book," 2006). Consider the costs of incarceration. In FY 2004, the average daily population in a secure detention facility under the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services Administration was 291 children. The average daily cost in FY 2004 for children was $243. The State spends over $70,000 per day for children incarcerated in a secure facility. This does not represent children in alternative placements or programs (Maryland Department of Juvenile Services, 2004).

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

As Geoff Garin, President of Peter D. Hart Research Associates puts it: “Most students don’t wake up on a single morning and decide to drop out of school.” On the contrary, the cycle of habitual truancy begins as early as elementary school. Poverty, dysfunctional families, learning disabilities, emotional issues, environmental issues, substance abuse, lack of parental engagement, language barriers, and low expectations on the part of the student or society—all of these factors and more lead students to abandon their education.

When asked, students who drop out of school tell us that schools did not motivate them to work hard, were not sufficiently demanding, and did not provide necessary academic and personal supports. Other students stated that as they grew older, increased freedom and other distractions drew them away from school. Significant reasons given by students for dropping out included not being sufficiently challenged, and feeling unmotivated, bored, and unsupported. Other, more personal reasons, were also significant: needing a job, becoming a parent, taking care of a sick family member (Bridgeland, DiJulio, & Morison, 2006).

EVERY CHILD NEEDS A CARING ADULT

The family is likely the most important factor in determining a child’s educational success. Children need daily encouragement and validation. But not all parents are engaged or even interested in their children’s education. While parent and family involvement is not within the purview of this Task Force, it is inextricably linked to student success. Therefore, the Task Force must emphasize that successfully reducing the dropout rate hinges upon children having a parent or other responsible adult, which includes a qualified mentor, to support and encourage them. Knowing this, the school community should confirm that each child has at least one responsible adult in his life encouraging him to be successful in school. If that adult cannot be confirmed, then one must be found for him. That adult should stress to the student the importance of schoolwork, and should help the family understand that allowing the child too much access to distractions (television, video games, etc.) will thwart her learning.

When parents talk to their children about school, expect them to do well, help them plan for college, and make sure that out-of-school activities are constructive, their children do better in school.
—A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family and Community Connections on Student Achievement, National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education.

Title I schools currently require a “School-Parent Compact,” which is an effective tool for describing how schools and parents will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement. Compacts, developed jointly between parents and school staff, describe

the responsibilities of both parties as they relate to academic, attendance, and behavioral standards, and serve as a basis for productive, two-way communication. It would be beneficial to expand this practice to every student who does not have an adult in his or her education life.

NO SINGLE REMEDY

Studying the impact of changing the age of compulsory attendance from age 16 to age 18 has been the focus of the Task Force. Some states have instituted a compulsory attendance age of 17 or 18, though most have included exceptions to allow principals and superintendents the latitude to continue to remove students who prove disruptive or habitually truant. This Task Force has explored the complexities of raising the compulsory attendance age and ensuring student success. Fundamental to our consideration is recognizing that students who drop out of school are diverse and thus there is no single remedy for the ills that lead them to drop out.

Education is the first step in breaking the cycle of poverty that is exacerbated by the lack of opportunity that dropping out of high school brings. Engaging students in a positive learning environment is critical whether or not students are legally allowed to leave at 16 or 18.

INTERVENTIONS ENGAGE STUDENTS AND KEEP THEM IN SCHOOL

There is a spectrum of interventions that would engage students who leave school prior to graduation. These interventions could include anything from more effectively engaging students within the traditional classroom and school, to offering alternative and creative solutions to educate students outside of the traditional classroom or school. Since there is no standard definition for "alternative programming" in Maryland, the framework on which these interventions can be created is limited only by resources. There are certain factors or characteristics, however, that any program designed to effect change in the at-risk student should include. These are: (1) effective organization and administration (program design that supports low student/adult ratios or alternative education with supports); (2) safe school climate (family atmosphere, cultural sensitivity); (3) student-centered service and instruction delivery (targeted interventions and monitoring); (4) appropriate content/curriculum (combination of academic and work-based learning); and (5) a staff culture of high expectations and commitment to knowing students as individuals. In addition to program needs, it is also important that students feel a sense of support and empowerment (from family, neighborhood, school); positive values/identity (character, sense of purpose); boundaries/expectations (role models, family, positive peer influence); commitment to learning (life-long learning); and social competency and constructive use of time (decision-making skills, conflict resolution, youth programs and activities).

> *"No problem can be solved by the same level of consciousness that created it"*
>
> *—Albert Einstein*

There are currently programs aimed at providing students with skills and assistance to graduate high school or complete a GED program, attain post-secondary education, and develop entry-level job skills. These programs enable students to feel a sense of purpose and connection to their learning environments. Students feel connected in a variety of ways. Connectedness can take the form of an individual relationship with a staff member, participation in an extracurricular activity, a positive peer group, or recognition for academics. Model programs tend to enable students to meaningfully connect their education to the work world and emphasize the importance of relationships. These programs address the diversity of reasons that precipitate students leaving high school early. Because students leave high school early for a wide variety of reasons, we must consider a multi-faceted approach in exploring ways to foster and guarantee student success. All Marylanders benefit when Maryland youth realize their human potential and lead productive lives as members of our community.

THE FISCAL IMPACT OF INCREASED INTERVENTIONS

Although the overall socioeconomic impact of these programs is significant, substantial resources are needed to successfully implement them. Assessing the fiscal impact on the State and local governments seems imperative as families, business leaders, politicians, and educators consider raising the compulsory age of attendance from 16 to 18 years of age.

> *"More of the same ... will not work.... Intensifying efforts that have repeatedly failed is not a route to success. However, the necessary first step toward success is not very complicated: it lies in simply recognizing that, when it comes to schools, one size cannot possibly fit all. Thus, if a student has demonstrated she's not going to make it in one kind of school, we should let her try another. And it can't reasonably be another that is essentially the same as the one she left. Let her try a different kind of school."*
>
> *—Mary Anne Raywid, Professor Emeritus, Hofstra University*

Based on figures from the Maryland State Department of Education, the average number of students dropping out of Maryland's public schools each year is approximately 10,500. For calculation purposes we projected that this number would remain unchanged so that a two-year total would be approximately 21,000 students. Facility analysis was based on an assumption that students would return to a typical classroom with 20–25 students. Based on the present Public School Construction Program facilities capacity formula (25 students per teaching station at 85 percent utilization), we assumed 21.25 students per classroom. The committee took into account each system's present overall high school capacity without regard for the fact that some geographical areas of a local school system might be more heavily impacted by returning students than other neighborhoods. Statewide usage capacity is already at 100 percent with 11 systems above 100 percent. The number of high school students is projected to decline in the state

through 2014, but the total public school enrollment in Maryland in 2015 is trending upward.

To calculate the staffing needs, we used the statewide average of one instructor for every 19 students. Recognizing that "new construction" often takes years to come to fruition, the subcommittee decided to provide both the cost to provide newly constructed classroom space and the cost to provide portable classrooms to expand facility capacity in the short term. New construction costs and portable classroom costs are based on current Public School Construction Program budget estimates. New construction was calculated at $247 per square foot. The purchase and installation of portable classrooms is estimated at $80,000 per unit. The more likely approach of purchasing portable classrooms to accommodate the additional 21,000 students totals approximately $46 million. Additional space is required in 15 of the 24 school systems.

The total additional costs for providing educational and related services to the additional students exceed $200 million per year. (See the "State Summary of Additional Costs" table below.) This figure varies in the projected impact on local jurisdictions, from a low of $385,000 in Talbot County to a high of $60 million in Baltimore City. (For specific district information, see tables 1–6 in the report of Subcommittee Three: Practical Implications and Resources.)

The State Summary of Additional Costs table is based on data currently collected by the Maryland State Department of Education. The State Summary of Additional Costs table does not include certain other potential costs, including costs associated with: alternative education programs for students ages 17 or 18; alternative education programs associated with early interventions at much younger ages; professional development; or costs associated with enforcing daily attendance and monitoring truancy of students.

STATE SUMMARY OF ADDITIONAL COSTS	
Additional Pupils (17 and 18 year olds)	*21,044*
Additional Instructional Staff	*1,108*
Additional Classrooms Needed	*571*
Cost for Additional Pupils (rounded, annual)	*$200,015,000*
Cost for Additional Portable Classrooms	*$45,660,000*

Numbers are rounded, one time.

STAFFING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

An action plan to implement a change in the age of compulsory attendance must address both the critical shortage of highly qualified teachers in Maryland—17.8 percent of classes in core academic subjects are presently *not* taught by highly qualified teachers, as defined by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001—and the need for professional development opportunities to train teachers to more effectively engage students at risk of dropping out of school (Maryland

Report Card, 2007). This is particularly important given the potential additional strain on the existing teacher shortage that may be precipitated by military base realignment. Additionally, the move toward all-day kindergarten will likely further deplete the availability of highly qualified teachers in Maryland. The challenge is underscored by the fact that Maryland institutions of higher education cannot meet Maryland's current demand for highly qualified teachers. While the above figures include the total number of teachers needed to fill the positions created by the additional students, assuming the current teacher-student ratio remains the same, it does not include costs associated with professional development needs.

Educators must use diverse and, in some cases, nontraditional pedagogical methods to engage potential dropouts. Moreover, educators must identify and engage these students at ages much younger than 16 with creative and nontraditional strategies to enable these students to become successful. We must create professional development opportunities to train teachers to more effectively engage the increasingly diverse students which are withdrawing from the traditional high school.

CHRONICALLY DISRUPTIVE STUDENTS

One subset of students that leaves school early is those who are chronically disruptive and leave either by choice or by invitation. The potential benefits to students who would otherwise drop out of Maryland public schools by requiring them to attend beyond the age of 16 must be weighed against the potential detriment to their peers in cases of highly disruptive students. However, with appropriate professional development training, perhaps some of these chronically disruptive students could be better managed within the traditional classroom setting. Appropriate alternative programming could be the remedy for those who can't be managed within the regular classroom setting.

GED IS AN EXISTING ALTERNATIVE ROUTE TO A DIPLOMA

The General Educational Development (GED) Program offers students an alternative route to earning a high school diploma. In FY 2007, 5,720 GEDs were awarded in Maryland (Maryland State Department of Education, 2007). Although students who are awarded a high school diploma through the GED Tests are eligible to attend community colleges, those students are not considered high school completers under No Child Left Behind. A recipient who earns a High School

"Contrary to popular belief, most dropouts demonstrate remarkable persistence and drive to achieve their education goals. In search of a second chance, they find and enter a wide variety of "second chance" programs in pursuit of a high school credential."
—Making Good on a Promise: What Policymakers Can Do to Support the Educational Persistence of Dropouts, Double the Numbers, a Jobs for the Future Initiative.

Diploma by Assessment is nevertheless deemed a high school dropout. As a result, this viable alternative is not counted as a positive educational outcome for local school systems.

THOUGHTS ON SPECIAL POPULATIONS

Students with disabilities receive special education and related services designed specifically to meet their unique needs. These services and specialized instruction are provided to the student at no cost to the parents. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004) is the federal law mandating that all children with disabilities between the ages of 3 and 21 are entitled to a free appropriate public education, sometimes referred to as FAPE. Additionally, the Annonated Code of Maryland, §7-701, mandates that all individuals 5 years or older and under 21 shall be admitted, free of charge, to the public schools of Maryland.

Another special student population is that of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students. These students have a primary or home language other than English, and have been assessed as having no ability, or limited ability, to understand, speak, read, or write English. LEP students are also entitled to a public education between the ages of 3 and 21 (COMAR 13A.01.04.02 (11)). Some research and data indicate, however, that being entitled to FAPE until age 21 does not necessarily result in a higher rate of school completion for these special populations.

To meet the needs of these diverse subgroups of students, appropriate educational program options, services, and supports are necessary. As the discussion of raising the compulsory attendance age continues, policymakers and educators must be sure to consider the unique needs and concerns of these students.

NEXT STEPS

This Task Force urges consideration of this report in concert with the work of other groups that have been convened to address ways for students to achieve, including Maryland's Parent Advisory Council, the Task Force on the Education of Maryland's African-American Males, and the Task Force on Universal Preschool Education. The research and recommendations of these other groups, coupled with this Task Force's work: (1) elucidate the complexities impacting student success; and (2) underscore the importance of identification and early intervention with students who are at risk for dropping out or otherwise failing to realize their academic potential and potential to become successful community members. Additionally, creating partnerships with local business leaders and workforce development organizations will enable local school systems to create and tailor educational programming to meet the workforce needs of their local communities. Further, this will engage the business community in education.

We must identify students at risk for dropping out at very early ages; create and make accessible sustained interventions to prevent them from dropping out; encourage and provide alternative routes to success for those students who ultimately drop out notwithstanding all

efforts; provide professional development; and allocate the resources, both financial and otherwise, to ensure that all Maryland students maximize their educational potential.

Recommendations

The Task Force believes that Maryland must do more to engage children and keep them in school. However, the Task Force agrees that in isolation, a change in the compulsory attendance age will not reduce the dropout rate. The reality is a policy change can require students to attend school, but it can't make them learn. Whether the students benefit from being in school depends largely upon the programs and support they receive there. Accordingly, the Task Force supports the implementation of these recommendations, and the engagement of students at an earlier age, in order to address the needs of children at risk of dropping out of school. In the context of strengthened, expanded supports for the students who would be affected, students who would otherwise drop out, would, of their own volition, choose to remain in school and earn a diploma. Thereby, addressing the issue of legally mandating students to remain in school would become unnecessary.

Recommendation One

Establish a statewide initiative that will:

a) Be flexible while maintaining a consistent approach to meeting the needs of 16- to -18 year old dropouts and potential dropouts, regardless of where they live or attended school;

b) Expand the data collection work on existing dropout-prevention and re-entry programs that has been done, and design and implement a program to analyze the effectiveness of these dropout-prevention programs;

c) Establish pilot model programs based on proven or promising approaches, and evaluate their success prior to statewide implementation. (Consideration should be given to geographic location, size, and diversity of school systems.);

d) Provide an infrastructure (people, organization, time of day, location, resources, community and family involvement), and identify reallocation of funding and new funding that guarantee effective interagency services and assure increased numbers of students will stay in school and graduate; and,

e) Examine articulation and funding agreements and formulas among agencies and institutions to determine which of these enhance students' opportunities and which serve as barriers.

Rationale

If the compulsory attendance age is raised, Maryland will immediately need to put in place a system of supports and services for students who under the previous requirement would have dropped out, and for those young adults who have already dropped out but will be required to return to school. A statewide framework must be built to accommodate these students; this multi-faceted recommendation can serve as the blueprint.

Before Maryland puts dropout prevention and intervention programs and practices in place, devoting staff, resources, and time, we must know that these programs and practices will be effective.

Task Force research on current practices and programs included collecting data from school systems on existing programs. Members analyzed the evidence shared by districts, and examined the findings of national longitudinal dropout studies. This process revealed weaknesses in data collected on programs across the state. Task Force findings in this area included the following:

- There is a significant discrepancy among districts in what is identified as an alternative education or dropout-prevention program.
- The data evaluating these programs are inconsistent.
- It is difficult, if not impossible, to compare the costs per student of these programs.

Better data collection is essential to confirming programs' success before statewide implementation. It is also essential for reasons of accountability. Although there are programs that address at-risk students, there have been limited studies done on the effectiveness of these programs. This lack of robust data has inhibited the Task Force from making more specific recommendations regarding the designs of ideal dropout-prevention and re-entry programs. Scant data has also constrained this Task Force's analysis of the need for alternative programming, the additional years to educate students, and the associated costs. Before moving forward with costly initiatives, it is imperative that evidence-based decisions be made that support both the need for change, as well as the justification for funding.

A review of promising practices in other states indicated a significant expense (around $200 million dollars per year) to simply raise the compulsory age requirement to 18 under the present school environment and current instructional delivery systems. The additional expenses associated with truly alternative programs—over and above the school systems' commitment to the typical child served—should be based on research that has taken place in Maryland, with Maryland children, ideally in multiple settings. The analysis of these pilot programs would then

inform further discussion of the fiscal support needed for an alternative program to meet the needs of Maryland's students, teachers, businesses, and families.

Recommendation Two

Support and promote the awarding of a High School Diploma by Assessment as a valid credential, and work with the federal government to remove any disincentives for recognizing a high school diploma earned by passing the national GED Tests.

Rationale

The traditional route to the diploma must remain the preferred pathway. However, Maryland must acknowledge that the traditional, four-year high school experience is an unrealistic expectation for some children. Alternatives, including the awarding of a High School Diploma by Assessment through the GED Tests, must be provided, supported, and promoted. Maryland must support and promote alternative pathways for those students for whom it is appropriate. Certainly, these pathways should not be promoted to every child at risk of dropping out.

INCREASE ACCESS TO GED INSTRUCTION AND TESTING

GED instructional programs should be more effectively publicized and more widely available. Schools should be encouraged to distribute accurate information about local GED instructional programs, including the cost of testing, both to students who have already dropped out of school and to students at risk of dropping out. Students also need to know that a High School Diploma by Assessment is a valid credential to enter Maryland community colleges. They also need to know that without a college degree their future income potential is limited compared to that of a college graduate. One opportunity for providing this information is the exit interview that COMAR requires of all students who withdraw from Maryland public schools. In order to implement this recommendation, instructional programs and testing services would need to be expanded. For example, demand for GED instruction exceeds current capacity.

IMPLEMENT THE "GED OPTION" PROGRAM

Maryland students wishing to attempt the GED Tests must first drop out of school to conform to the American Council on Education (ACE) requirement. ACE does offer an alternative for targeted students who remain in school. The GED Option program targets students who are able to complete high school requirements, but who, for a variety of circumstances, are behind in the credits needed to graduate with their class. With the GED Option, the student remains enrolled and attends high school for at least 15 hours of instruction per week. This

instruction includes not only GED preparation, but also workforce development skills and/or career and technology education. As the GED Tests are a valid method of earning a diploma, Maryland should consider implementing the GED Option program, which has been adopted in 11 states, including New York and Virginia. To implement a similar GED Option in Maryland, the State Board of Education would need to amend COMAR to recognize the GED Option program as an approved pathway leading to a Maryland high school diploma.

REMOVE DISINCENTIVES

The GED Tests are a valid route to the diploma and should be promoted as such, regardless of how the federal government categorizes GED Tests under No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Currently, NCLB requires Maryland to count its graduates with a High School Diploma by Assessment as dropouts. As a result, these students negatively affect the school, school system, and state graduation rates, which are used in the determination of Adequate Yearly Progress. There is much at stake here for schools and school systems. Those not making Adequate Yearly Progress are subject to a series of escalating consequences that include corrective actions and complete restructuring of the school or school system. It is easy to see why a school or school system might not promote the GED program as positively or as often as it should. This is a damaging disincentive to meeting students' needs, and it must be eliminated. This Task Force urges the Maryland Congressional delegation to work with the Congress and the President to amend No Child Left Behind to allow students who earn a GED to be counted as high school graduates. Implementing this recommendation would increase Maryland's high school graduates by five percent (based on FY 2006 data).

CHOOSE DIPLOMA PATHS INDIVIDUALLY

Identifying the GED Tests as the most appropriate path for a student to earn a diploma must be done with careful consideration for each student. However, the GED Tests are not appropriate or attainable for every child. Some students, including some English Language Learners and some students with special needs, would not be successful on the GED Tests. Together, parents, school personnel, and the student must review the student's skills, needs, and future goals against all of the diploma routes and choose the best one for the student.

Recommendation Three

Create multiple pathways to the Maryland High School Diploma for students with disabilities and English Language Learners. These diploma pathways should include these options: work study beginning in grade 9; a five-year high school program; and instruction at times outside of the traditional school schedule.

Rationale

Raising the compulsory attendance age alone will not produce more high school graduates. Indeed, whether the compulsory attendance age is raised or not, other actions and new alternatives to help students complete a path to graduation are needed. Particularly in need of alternatives to traditional high school programs are students with disabilities and students with little or no English language skills, referred to as English Language Learners.

Flexible, alternative routes to the Maryland High School Diploma will provide these students additional opportunities to be successful. Allowing five-year high school programs, for example, will allow more time for remediation for students having difficulty passing the High School Assessments. The additional time may also be used to meet the requirements for a Maryland High School Diploma. Another consideration in creating these diploma pathways is the age of English Language Learners at the time of enrollment. For example, an English Language Learner may enroll in high school at age 17 speaking no English. To be successful, some students may need to be enrolled for a period of time past age 18.

An alternative route to the Maryland High School Diploma that offers instruction outside of the traditional school schedule is also essential. It is not unusual for some families to place obligations (e.g., working to support the family or supervising siblings) on students that make it difficult for the students to fully participate in school. A flexible schedule with opportunities for learning in the evening, on the weekend, or during the summer would allow these students to attend school while still fulfilling their familial responsibilities.

Based on student feedback on a Maryland school district survey (Cecil County Public Schools, 2007), a five-year high school program could address the special needs of students at risk by providing:

- Additional help in academic subjects;
- Work-study opportunities that can be built into student schedules beginning at an earlier age; and,
- Additional time to meet graduation requirements, including the High School Assessments.

Alternate formats and creative solutions for instruction may enable students to complete their education. For example, school schedules may use part-time day classes; combine part-time day classes with night school; and/or include work study and technical post-secondary education.

Recommendation Four

The State Board of Education must adopt a definition of alternative education that addresses different modes of instruction and appropriate strategies for current dropouts and for children and young adults at risk of dropping out.

Rationale

Unlike several other states, Maryland has no formal definition of alternative education. This omission must be addressed promptly. Adopting a formal definition in state regulations is necessary: to ensure that alternative education programs deliver instruction that meets content standards; to offer appropriate, targeted courses that enable students to reintegrate into a comprehensive school when ready; to address individual learning styles of students; and generally to meet standards for education as set forth by the Maryland State Board of Education. The Task Force must emphasize that flexible schedules should be considered for these programs to meet the needs of students with personal obligations such as job responsibilities and other family obligations.

A review of the literature and current practices for alternative education programs across the nation revealed common types of program locations and common elements of quality practice and programming, summarized below.

Alternative Education Program Locations

- Separate room or teacher within a comprehensive high school where additional services are provided
- School within a comprehensive high school
- Separate facility

(Source: State of Wisconsin, Department of Public Instruction)

Elements of Quality Practice and Programming

- Low student/teacher ratio
- Accredited
- Authority to grant credentials (High School Diplomas or GED)

- Credit recovery (allowing students the opportunity to make up credits that were lost due to failure)
- Certified teachers
- Flexible scheduling
- Strong relationships with the district office and other high schools
- Private funding and/or public-private partnerships

(Source: State of Wisconsin, Department of Public Instruction)

To support students, alternative education models need to offer a range of services and instruction, including anger management; small group instruction; some individualized instruction; computerized, self-paced instruction; guidance services; and study skills. Strong, consistent and persistent support services are critical to students' success.

In crafting a regulatory definition for alternative programs, the State Board of Education should consider the aforementioned program locations, elements of quality practice and programming, and range of services and instruction. Also important to the process is encouraging and considering the input of stakeholders, such as local school systems, higher education, community organizations, experts in alternative programs, parents, and students.

During the process of developing the alternative program definition, the State Board of Education and/or Maryland State Department of Education should also work to change perceptions of alternative programs. Too often, alternative education programs carry a reputation in their respective communities as programs for "bad kids." This view must be changed as an alternative program infrastructure is put into place. While these programs do serve some students with behavioral problems, they also serve many other students who do not have behavior issues but do require an alternative educational setting in order to be successful. Alternative programs have great potential for helping children achieve success; communities must understand this so they can get involved with and support the school and its students.

Recommendation Five

Should the compulsory age of attendance be raised to 18, Maryland should provide the adequate financial support to raise the age of compulsory attendance to age 18.

Rationale

This Task Force has identified many, but not all, of the costs that would be associated with an increase in the compulsory attendance age. Raising the compulsory attendance age can be done responsibly and effectively only by providing the resources necessary to engage all students at a young age and keep them engaged until they successfully complete high school.

While it is not the job of this Task Force to identify specific funding sources necessary to support an increase in the compulsory attendance age, or otherwise implement these recommendations, students will not benefit from an unfunded mandate. The subcommittee recognized that much more than an infusion of money would be necessary to effect this legislated change should it come to fruition. Preparation time would need to be built into the implementation date to allow systems to hire and professionally develop additional teachers, build additional classrooms, purchase and outfit relocatable classrooms, order needed textbooks and supplies, redraw school boundaries, analyze transportation needs, account for the special needs of the physically and educationally disabled students returning or remaining, and include the appropriate amount of money in the local school boards' funding requests to the local political jurisdictions in time to meet all of the deadlines for adequate consideration in the budgetary process. Public-private partnerships may need to be explored as the State and local school systems attempt to marshal sufficient resources to implement any changes to the compulsory age of attendance.

Recommendation Six

Appoint a group to study Maryland's existing truancy courts, examine their structure, assess their effectiveness, and, if appropriate, make a recommendation for expanding truancy courts statewide.

Rationale

Currently, Maryland lacks an established system of support and consequences for frequently truant students. And while Maryland has established consequences for parents/guardians, they are rarely enforced. Without enforcement in place, the compulsory attendance law is insignificant, and raising the compulsory attendance age will have little or no influence on keeping students in school. Therefore, the State should consider a truancy court system in each county to instill hope, improve student attendance, enhance achievement, and reduce delinquent behavior through a proactive partnership of schools, courts, and families.

Truancy courts currently exist in several Maryland counties, but data on their effectiveness is not known. Truancy courts have been used with strong success in several states, including North Carolina, where a newly developed truancy court has successfully transformed truant elementary and middle school students in two counties into perfect or nearly perfect attendance students. According to Judge Richard Chaney of Durham, North Carolina, only one student failed to graduate high school out of the students who regularly came into his courtroom. In St. Louis County, Missouri, a three-year evaluation of the truancy court showed 60 percent of students significantly improved their attendance rates, reducing absences by an average of 44

percent (St. Louis County Truancy Court, 2005). Additionally, in Ingham County, Michigan, approximately 63 percent of the 600 students referred to truancy court in the first two years have improved their attendance (Burton, 2003). Dramatic successes have also been found in Delaware. In 2003, 55 percent of the 739 students with cases closed achieved overall compliance with the truancy court; 94 percent of the students achieving full compliance remained in school at the end of the year; 70 percent of all students were still in school at the end of the year; and, 66 percent of all 2002 students involved with the truancy court continued to remain in school more than a year later (State of Delaware Justice of the Peace Court, 2003).

Should truancy courts be established, Maryland should consider a system whereby each truancy court works closely with the local State's Attorneys office, Sheriff's department, Department of Social Services, local leaders, and local boards of education to ensure compliance with compulsory attendance laws.

A statewide truancy court system should consider targeting students who were absent between 10 and 30 times. One judge, volunteer or appointed, per court could handle truancy cases once a week before or after school. The truancy judge would review a student's attendance, behavior, and academic performance. After an accumulation of multiple absences, the student would be placed on probation. If there is no improvement, the student might face community service, juvenile detention, or parental supervision in school.

The court would also intervene with issues underlying a student's truancy, including depression and drug and/or alcohol abuse, and make the appropriate referrals and placements.

Suggestions for keeping students in school through the truancy court system include transportation assistance; parent participation; counseling; parenting classes; support groups; and positive reinforcement, such as praise for small accomplishments and rewards for attendance and compliance with the truancy system.

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Subcommittee Reports

The following subcomittee reports represent the work, findings, recommendations, and opinions of the individual committees. These reports were considered by the entire Task Force, along with the Task Force's charge set forth in House Bill 36, in generating the consensus recommendations discussed previously. The content of the subcommittee reports does not necessarily represent the opinions of the entire Task Force.

Subcommittee One: Research From Other States

Subcommittee Charge

During the 2006 Legislative Session, Senator Nathaniel J. McFadden introduced legislation which established a task force to study the effects of raising the compulsory attendance age from 16 to 18 years of age and to provide guidance and recommendations to the Maryland General Assembly on its findings.

This Subcommittee of the Task Force was charged with:

- Researching, studying, and evaluating the laws of other states that raised or attempted to raise the compulsory attendance age;
- Identifying and evaluating the best practices for educating students between the ages of 16 and 18;
- Gathering data and other rationales to justify the existing laws and practices;
- Determining any fiscal impact due to a change in compulsory attendance;
- Unveiling outcomes of changes made in other states' laws; and,
- Analyzing how changes were implemented.

To accomplish its assignment, Subcommittee One researched graduation rates, dropout rates, economic statistics—including the earning power of a dropout as compared to a high school graduate—incarceration rates, truancy penalties, legislative exemptions to compulsory attendance, factors contributing to dropping out of school, and alternative programs for students and for high school dropouts.

In a review of states' legislative actions to raise the compulsory age of attendance, the Subcommittee found that the compulsory age is 16 in 23 states, 17 in nine states, and 18 in 19 states. (See Nationwide Snapshot on page 24.) Since 1996, eight states have raised the age of compulsory attendance to either 17 or 18 years of age; and in nine states, legislation was defeated or died in committee. (See Appendix F: State Legislative Comparisons.)

Findings

The Subcommittee was charged with researching, studying, and evaluating the laws of other states regarding the compulsory attendance age. Interviews were conducted with representatives from the state legislature or board of education to determine the outcome and rationale of recent attempts to change compulsory attendance laws. (See Appendix A: Summary of Interviews With State Representatives or Boards of Education.) In surveying the states that

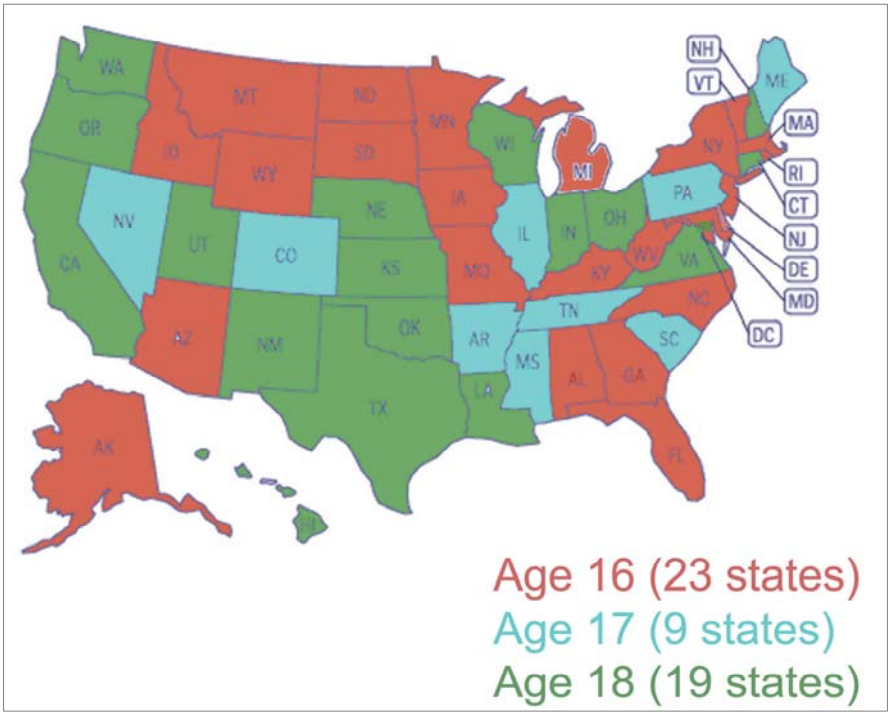
recently increased or attempted to increase the age of attendance, representatives of the legislature or state board of education indicated there were various rationales for the change, including a moral obligation, a desire to increase the graduation rate, an attempt to reduce the dropout rate, and an attempt to affect academic standing by increasing standardized scores.

Those states that were unsuccessful in attempting to change the compulsory attendance age cited such reasons as opposition from home school educators, parents, students, business/industry, legislature and local school systems or advocacy groups; being unable to determine if an increase in graduation and attendance rates or decrease in the dropout rate can be attributed to increasing the compulsory attendance age or the No Child Left Behind Act; and the fiscal estimate would increase financial burden on schools and community.

The Subcommittee charge also included identifying and evaluating some of the best practices for educating students between the ages of 16 and 18. A body of educational literature, commonly known as effective schooling research, documents educational practices in classrooms, schools, and local educational agencies. The literature studies student academic performance and behavior in educational settings. Effective schooling research compares and contrasts students, classrooms, and schools where students reach high academic achievement and demonstrate appropriate behavior to those where students are not successful.

NATIONWIDE SNAPSHOT

Compulsory attendance ages



Many educational agencies, labs, and other enterprises have engaged in collecting and reviewing effective schools research. For example, the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, Office of Educational Research and Improvement Clearinghouse (ERIC), National Dropout Prevention Center/Network at Clemson University, and the Center for Research of Students Placed at Risk at Johns Hopkins and Howard University have devoted time to reviewing and writing promising practices in education.

An overview of promising practices specifically targeted to students 16 to 18 years of age is provided in this document. The results are positive when schools acknowledge and incorporate best practices in the curriculum creating a positive and inviting climate where personal relationships are stressed. Also appearing in the literature is the need for proactive collaboration with families, students, and community, beginning in the early ages through high school.

Additionally, Subcommittee One researched data and reviewed other rationales to justify the existing laws and practices of compulsory attendance. A review of the literature and data from governmental organizations and agencies demonstrates the apparent correlation between dropping out of school, fiscal earning, and crime. State representatives indicated that some motivating reasons to increase the compulsory age of attendance were influenced by national research that including the following:

- **Education and Crime**—Broadly speaking, crime research indicates that higher educational achievement reduces crime committed by juvenile and adults. The clearest correlation can be drawn when examining the relationship between dropout status and incarceration:
    - Dropouts constitute less than 20 percent of the overall population.
    - Over 50 percent of the inmate population are dropouts (Bonczar, 2003).
    - Dropouts make up a disproportionately higher percentage (41 percent) of the nation's prison inmates (U.S. Department of Justice, 2004).

- **Education and Welfare**—According to Heckman (2000), higher education is associated with a decreased dependency on public assistance payments or subsidies. The relationship may directly result from lower rates of single motherhood or teenage pregnancy commensurate with high school graduation. High school graduation is also associated with higher incomes, better health, lower crime activity, and fewer welfare recipients.

- **Fiscal Impact**—According to a 2006 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics report, in October 2005, 68.6 percent of high school graduates from the class of 2005 were enrolled in colleges or universities. This enrollment rate was a historical high dating back to 1959.

  The report also provides that the unemployment rate for those students not enrolled in college was 20.6 percent in October 2005. After examining approximately 400,000 young people who dropped out of school during this same period of time, the report indicates participation in the labor force for these dropouts (52.7 percent) was considerably lower than the participation rate for recent high school graduates who had not enrolled in college (78.5 percent).

The unemployment rates for dropouts were lower than those with higher education. Males without a high school diploma had unemployment rates of 15.3 percent and females had a rate of 21.2 percent. Thus, dropping out of high school correlates to the following outcomes:

- The median income of high school dropouts ages 18 and over was $12,184 in 2003; and
- The median income of those ages 18 and over who completed their education with a high school/GED certificate was $20,431 (U.S. Census Bureau 2005).

Further, in reviewing the literature and conducting personal interviews, committee members investigated how changes were implemented as statutes were changed. As stated previously, several states changed the compulsory attendance age to 18. However, most statutes provide for various exceptions allowing for a student to leave school earlier than the required age. The majority of states have an exception for students who have completed the high school graduation requirements and received a high school diploma or its equivalent. For example, in Ohio, a student is exempted from compulsory attendance if he/she has received a high school diploma, completed the high school curriculum, completed an education program or received a schooling certificate. Additionally, there are exceptions for students with temporary illness or injury or with a physical, mental, and/or emotional disability. Students in a number of states, such as Connecticut, Nebraska, and New Mexico, are also not required to attend school if they have parental consent to drop out. A number of states (Colorado, Hawaii) and the District of Columbia also allow students to leave school early for employment or higher education purposes. In rural areas of the country, such as Alaska, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, students are exempt if they live a certain distance from a school, bus stop, or public highway. Also, a few states, like Illinois and Oklahoma, have a religious exception. Thus, raising the compulsory attendance age is not a bright-line rule; exemptions can be added to accommodate special circumstances. (See Appendix G: Exemptions and Penalties.)

Also, several states incorporate criminal penalties to force parents to ensure their child attends school. The vast majority of states inflict a monetary fine ranging from $25 to $1,000. A number of states, such as Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Wisconsin, impose incarceration up to one year. Community service may be ordered in lieu of a fine or incarceration in some states like Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. There are also provisions allowing for alternative penalties to be imposed on parents, including parent education and counseling programs, such as in California and Pennsylvania.

A handful of states, including Arkansas, Mississippi, New Mexico, and Pennsylvania, impose penalties upon truant students. In Arkansas, students may be denied course credit,

promotion, or graduation and face suspension of their driver's license. In New Mexico, truant students may also lose their driving privileges for up to one year. (See Appendix G: Exceptions and Penalties.)

Subcommittee Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION ONE

Create a model program devoted to helping students stay in school.

RATIONALE

Based on the research conducted by Subcommittee One, it became apparent that the State and/or the local boards of education should create model programs aimed to keep students in school. An underlying structural system targeted toward students can assist in raising graduation rates, lowering dropout rates, and providing a positive future.

Our research indicated that model programs have positive results.

The JAG Model is aimed at providing students grades 9 through 12 with skills and assistance to graduate high school or complete a GED program and/or to obtain postsecondary education and/or entry level job. The program's success rates for the class of 2002 are: graduation rate, 84.56 percent; positive outcomes rate, 72.28 percent; aggregate job placement rate, 52.4 percent; full-time jobs rate, 65.89 percent; full-time placement rate, 88.13 percent; and further education rate, 19.88 percent.

The Stanley Hall Enrichment Center in Evansville, Indiana, was created in 1988 as an open-concept alternative school program focusing on empowering students to earn a high school diploma and advance to post-secondary education or gainful employment. During the 1999-00 school year, 60 of the 89 seniors received a high school diploma. The remaining students reported attaining their identified goals. In 2004–05, 74 of the 103 seniors completed graduation requirements.

Kalamazoo Communities in School (KCIS) was created to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of students to help them learn and, ultimately, to create a strong workforce and strong leaders, parents, and communities. The vast majority of teachers and mentors participating in a recent survey saw improvements in the academic achievement and conduct of students in the program. Many students surveyed liked their mentors so much they wanted to spend more time with them.

The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program is devoted to helping students stay in school by giving personal and academic responsibility to Valued Youth tutors, who develop self-discipline and self-esteem. Results show that tutors stay in school, increase academic performance,

improve school attendance, and advance to higher education. Since its inception in 1984, the program has helped schools keep 98 percent of program participants in school, more than 12,300 young people who were previously at risk of dropping out. The program has positively impacted over 220,000 children, families, and educators. Research results indicate that the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program had a statistically significant impact on the dropout rate, reading grades, self-concept, and attitudes toward school. Only one tutor out of 101 (one percent) dropped out of school toward the end of the second year of the program, compared to 11 students of the 93 comparison group students (12 percent). Similar results were found for reading grades, self-concept, and attitudes toward school.

Check and Connect is a data-driven program grounded in research on resiliency and home-school collaboration. After two years, participants showed dramatic decreases in tardiness and truancy. A study of students ages 11 to 17 found a reduction in absenteeism and a school attendance rate of 95 percent after two years in the program.

Funding for these programs varies and is provided by a variety of sources. The Check and Connect Model is approximately $1,100 per student, and the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program ranges from $150-$250. KCIS is funded through a grant by the Kalamazoo Chamber of Commerce. The JAG Model is approximately $1,500; however, full-time employed graduates or completers repay the cost through payroll or sales taxes within 14 months. The programs may be funded through the local boards of education, local or state government, or business community. While there may be a fiscal impact with the implementation of a model program, the overall socio-economic impact is far greater. (See Appendix E: Model Programs to Address School Dropouts.)

RECOMMENDATION TWO

Create a truancy court.

RATIONALE

Currently, Maryland lacks an established punishment system for frequently truant students. Also, even though penalties are established for parents/guardians, they are rarely enforced. Thus, Maryland should institute a system to strictly enforce the penalties. Accordingly, we recommend a truancy court system in each county. Truancy courts would instill hope, improve student attendance, enhance achievement, and reduce delinquent behavior through a proactive partnership of schools, courts, and families. Specifically, each truancy court would work closely with the local State's Attorneys office, Sheriff's department, Department of Social Services, local leaders, and local boards of education to ensure compliance with compulsory attendance laws.

The truancy court system would target students who were absent between 10 and 30 times. Truancy courts would have one judge, who either volunteers or is appointed, to handle truancy cases once a week before or after school. The truancy judge would review the student's attendance, behavior, and academic performance. After an accumulation of multiple absences, the student would be placed on probation. If there is no improvement, the student faces community service, juvenile detention, or parental supervision in school.

The court also intervenes with issues underlying a student's truancy, including depression and substance abuse, and makes the appropriate referrals and placements into programs.

Suggestions for keeping students in school through the truancy court system include:

- Positive reinforcement
- Praise for small accomplishments
- Rewards for attendance and compliance with truancy system
- Transportation assistance
- Parent participation
- Counseling
- Parenting classes
- Support groups
- Parents and students signing an agreement to abide by the conditions of the truancy court. Upon successful completion, the student's truancy case is dismissed.

RATIONALE

Throughout the Subcommittee's work, the necessity for a structural system to ensure and enforce compulsory attendance laws was evident. Without enforcement in place, the compulsory attendance law is insignificant; students and parents must take compulsory attendance seriously. It is necessary for parents to take an active role in their children's education.

The research compiled by the Subcommittee demonstrates the negative impacts on society when students drop out or are excessively truant. There is a direct correlation between students who are not in school and crime. Students who are not in school are more likely to be involved in gang activity, vandalism, substance abuse, and other crimes. Additionally, students who are not in school are more likely to commit crimes as adults. Students who are not in school also have lower incomes, higher unemployment rates, and higher dependency on public assistance payments or subsidies. Also, students who are not in school have lower academic achievement and are less likely to graduate from high school or go to college.

The success rates for truancy court systems are evident in several states. In North Carolina, specifically in Durham and Mecklenburg counties, a newly developed truancy court has successfully transformed truant elementary and middle school students into perfect or nearly

perfect attendance students. Judge Richard Chaney of Durham, North Carolina, stated that only one student failed to graduate high school out of the students who regularly came into his courtroom (Administrative Office of the Courts of North Carolina, 2001). Also, in St. Louis County, Missouri, a three-year evaluation concluded that 60 percent of students significantly improved their attendance rates, reducing absences by an average of 44 percent (St. Louis County Truancy Court, 2005). In Ingham County, Michigan, approximately 63 percent of the 600 students referred to truancy court in the first two years have improved their attendance (Burton, 2003).

Most significantly is the truancy court in Delaware. Between the 1995-96 and 2002-03 school year, there was a 41 percent decrease in the average number of unexcused absences. Recently, in 2003, 55 percent of the 739 students with closed cases achieved overall compliance with the truancy court; 94 percent of the students achieving full compliance remained in school at the end of the year; 70 percent of all students were still in school at the end of the year; and 66 percent of all 2002 students involved with the truancy court continued to remain in school more than a year later (State of Delaware Justice of the Peace Court, 2003).

Thus, our subcommittee feels a truancy court system will lower truancy rates and raise graduation rates. Most importantly, parents and students will be complying with compulsory attendance laws and bettering themselves and their community.

RECOMMENDATION THREE

Increase the age of compulsory school attendance from 16 to 18.

RATIONALE

Legislators and the public are demanding increased accountability from the nation's educational system. (Just one example of this demand is the Alliance for Excellent Education.) Often the word crisis describes the state of education in America. States are being asked to address this crisis since it is predicted to have devastating effects on our national economy and ability to compete internationally. The data below highlight aspects of the crisis in education and provide insight into what some states are doing to address the crisis.

- Currently, 26 states and the District of Columbia have compulsory education laws for students over the age of 16. Of these, 17 have compulsory attendance to age 18 (or until high school graduation) and nine require students to attend school until the age of 17. Compulsory education is historically imposed on students and families for the public good and their individual rights as citizens.
- Baltimore, the largest city in Maryland, has a dropout rate that exceeds neighboring cities such as Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia.

- The average income of persons ages 18 through 65 who have not completed high school was approximately $20,100 in 2005 (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2006).
- By comparison, the average income of persons aged 18 through 65 who completed their education with a high school credential, including a General Educational Development (GED) certificate, was nearly $29,700 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006).
- Dropouts are less likely to participate in the labor force than those with a high school credential or higher (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2004).
- Dropouts make up a disproportionately higher percentage (41 percent) of the nation's prison inmates (Harlow, 2003).
- Unemployed youth spend time on the streets, create families they cannot support, or participate in anti-social activities. It costs from $8,237 to 11,740 per year to educate a student (Maryland State Department of Education, 2006). In FY 2004, the Average Daily Population (ADP) in a secure detention facility under the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services Administration was 291 children. The Average Daily Cost (ADC) in FY 2004 for these children was $243. The State spends over $70,000 per day for children incarnated in a secure facility. This does not represent children in alternative placements or programs (Maryland Department of Juvenile Services, 2004).
- Those who cannot earn an adequate living often resort to welfare to support their families.
- Of the 12 million new jobs created nationally in the past decade, only 700,000 of those did not require a college education. Many high-paying jobs in manufacturing, telecommunications, and other industries have been eliminated. Technology has replaced people in recent years, spawning layoffs and the elimination of countless jobs that require minimal education (Mariani, 1999).
- Based on the comments from interviews conducted by Subcommittee One, interview subjects from 19 states that recently increased the compulsory attendance age stated that there was no foreseeable fiscal impact at the state or local boards of education, since all local school systems have alternative programs to address the needs of students between 16 and 18 years old.
- Representatives from 20 states interviewed by Subcommittee One identified rationales such as moral obligation, desire to increase graduation rate, attempt to reduce the dropout rate, and attempt to affect academic standing by increasing standardized scores for increasing the compulsory attendance age.

Appendix A: Summary of Interviews with State Representatives or Boards of Education

Alabama: No response

Alaska: Currently, the compulsory attendance age is 17. The Alaska State Department of Education is submitting a bill to the Legislature to raise the age to 18. Past attempts have failed, and strong opposition from the Legislature, local school systems, and several advocacy groups remains. At this time, there is no completed fiscal note. The Legislature is in session until May; the State Department of Education will develop a fiscal note later in the session.

Colorado: No response.

Connecticut: No response.

Hawaii: Hawaii has had a compulsory education age of 18 since its addition to the Union in 1959. Statistics place the graduation rate at 80 percent and dropout rate at 14 percent. The Hawaii State Department of Education, however, believes the information is inaccurate because the state has a high transient population that is difficult to track.

Illinois: No response.

Iowa: Last year, an introduced bill received an unfavorable report from the legislative committee. The current House Bill is attempting to raise the age to 18. If passed, the law will take effect in 2009 to allow the State Department of Education an opportunity to study the fiscal and academic impact, among other issues. However, the Department estimates they have 825 students in the range of 16 to 18 years of age. Because the current per student cost totals $5,700 for over 1,000 school districts, there should not be a financial hardship for any school district. Currently, all school districts have alternative programs and resources to address any students needing assistance. However, there are many other issues to study if the law is passed.

Kansas: The Legislature raised the age to 18 in 1996. No study has been conducted before or after the legislation. The Legislature felt it was in the best interest of the State and the students to raise the compulsory attendance age. At age 16, students can withdraw with parental permission. There has been no significant cost to the local school systems. There are 296 districts that have implemented various interventions, such as alternative programs, a virtual high school curriculum, and positive behavioral programs.

Kentucky: During the 2007 legislative sessions, two bills were introduced to raise the compulsory attendance age. One bill would raise the age to 17, and the other would raise it to 18. Neither bill received a hearing, effectively ensuring that neither became law. A similar bill introduced in previous years suffered the same fate. Opponents of the bills argued strongly against the estimated $30 million in costs. Proponents argued that dropouts cost the State billions of dollars in lost wages, uncollected taxes, and productivity.

Louisiana: In 2001, the Louisiana State Legislature increased the compulsory age from 17 to 18. In 1999, similar legislation failed, presumably because of the estimated $30 million cost associated with the increase. The 2001 fiscal note did not contain a cost estimate, but rather the possibility that in a given year there could be a reduction of state-level general fund expenditures. For example, if the number of dropouts decreased, there could be a resulting decrease in the number of students in the custody of the Department of Corrections and a decrease in the number of students dependent on assistance programs, such as welfare and food stamps.

A review of available data suggests that the graduation rate in Louisiana has improved. The rate went from 63.7 percent during 2000–01, the year prior to the change, to 69.4 percent in 2003–04, according to the latest data available through NCES. Dropout data suggests an improvement the year following the change, but none thereafter. The dropout rate fell from 9.2 percent in 2000-01 to 6.6 percent the year following the change. Since then, it has ranged between 7.0 and 7.4 percent.

Michigan: In Michigan, the following two bills were introduced: Senate Bill 4 in 2006 and Senate Bill 11 in 2007. There have been eighteen bills in the past several legislative sessions; however, until last year, no bill was ever scheduled for a hearing. The bill received an unfavorable report due to financial reasons and a concern for the impact of disruptive students on school staff.

Minnesota: Minnesota changed its compulsory attendance age in 1998, though it was delayed for several years due to financial reasons. Minnesota offers two types of diplomas: a district-issued diploma and a state-issued GED.

Missouri: In 2001, Senate Bill 363, which provides that the compulsory attendance age shall be 16 years, or 17 years in the Board of St. Louis Public Schools, was introduced. The Board of St. Louis Public Schools may also adopt a resolution lowering the compulsory attendance age to 16. In 2006, House Bill 1277 was introduced, which would have raised the compulsory attendance age from 16 to 18. A student's parent or guardian could withdraw a student and had to agree in writing to excuse students from school for work or drop from school rolls. A religious exemption to compulsory school attendance was also added. The Bill stated that students who successfully completed all elementary and secondary grade levels before the age of 18 were exempt from the compulsory school age.

House Bill 1277 was not scheduled for a hearing; therefore, the bill died in committee. Support for the bill was present because it addressed what was perceived as the "gray area" of students ages 16 to 18—too old to be forced to attend school by their parents, but too young to make the decision as an adult. No known opposition was present; however, the Bill failed due to the perceived increase in costs and the competition for funding by other legislation. A fiscal note was not completed, but increased costs at both the state and local levels were foreseeable. (The Bill was not re-introduced this year.)

Nebraska: In 2004, Nebraska passed Legislative Bill 868, which raised compulsory attendance from age 16 to age 18 beginning in the 2005–06 school year. The Bill would not apply to any child who obtained a high school diploma and allows for any child over the age of 16 to attend alternative educational programs. According to conversations with representatives from Nebraska, there were six proponents of the Bill, and four of those were from school boards. There were eight opponents, who did not represent a particular group, to the Bill. The fiscal note projected minimal financial increases, but did not specify a figure.

New Hampshire: New Hampshire has attempted to raise the compulsory attendance from age 16 to age 18 several times over the past 10 years, most recently in 2006 and 2007. In 2007, a bill was passed that raised the age to 18 and exempted home-schooled children, physically or mentally handicapped children, and children who obtained a high school diploma. The fiscal note states a possible increase in local expenditures by an indeterminable amount.

New York: Under New York State Education Law § 3205, the compulsory attendance age ranges from 6 to 16 years of age. The law requires students to attend school until the end of the school year in which they turn 16. The law also permits city school districts and union-free school districts with a population over 4,500 to require unemployed minors from 16 to 17 years of age to attend school. In April 2007, § 4686 was introduced,

but defeated. If § 4686 had passed, it would have required students in all districts to attend school until the end of the school year in which they turn 18. The State Education Department estimates that up to 8,500 additional 16 year olds would have been impacted by this bill. The total annual cost was between $59 million and $89 million. The State would have funded $27 million to $41 million. Furthermore, the cost estimate assumes that these students did not require more expensive programs and services than would be covered by the average per-pupil expenditure in New York. To the extent that this population of disaffected students required even more intensive services, costs would have increased accordingly.

Texas: In 1996, the State legislature passed a bill to raise the compulsory attendance age from 17 to 18. The legislation was unsuccessful, but only received minor opposition. The Bill did not provide financial assistance to the local school systems (LSS). Some of the LSS have hired Dropout Prevention Specialists to assist in having students re-enter school, but the expense for additional staff is the responsibility of the LSS. In contrast to the State, the LSS have instituted alternative interventions, such as additional programs and alternative schools. Attendance cases are referred to juvenile court, which has cooperated extensively to compel students to return to school. The increase in the age requirement and the cooperation of the juvenile court has contributed to increasing the graduation and attendance rates in Texas. Additionally, Texas' dropout rate continues to decline.

Utah: A law requiring compulsory education until age 18 was passed in 1919 with amendments in 1999. There has been no significant fiscal burden to the State.

Wyoming: A bill failed last legislative session due to lobbying by the home-schooling community and organization. There were many new legislators who did not understand the lobbying was from a "group," not individual voters. This year, the Bill is being introduced with the following additional provision: the State will pay full funding for each of the 48 school districts to establish programs for "at-risk" students. The district will need to create/provide after-school programs, summer school, tutors, and alternative high schools. There are three caveats for the funding: 1. The school district is accountable for demonstrating how the money for at-risk students is spent; 2. The parent/guardian must meet with school officials to withdraw underage students; and, 3. The student is accountable for demonstrating proficiency in reading, writing, and math. Students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) must meet the goals of the plan. The State will provide a refund to all 48 school districts in the amount of the cost-per-pupil. There was no fiscal note taken into consideration.

Appendix B: Who is at risk of dropping out?

Reports from the United States Department of Education and the National Center for Education Statistics calculate the event dropout rate, which estimates the percentage of both private and public high school students who left high school between the beginning of one school year and the beginning of the next without earning a high school diploma or its equivalent. Looking at national event dropout rates, the following facts emerge during the period of October 2002 to October 2003:

- Four out of every 100 students enrolled in high school left school before October 2003.
- Hispanic high school students are more likely to drop out than students of other races/ethnicities. The event dropout rate for Hispanics was 7.1 percent compared with rates of 3.2 percent for Whites and 2.4 percent for Asians.
- African-American students and students who indicate more than one race had event dropout rates of 4.8 percent and 6.1 percent, respectively.
- Students living in low-income families were approximately 5 times more likely than their peers in high-income families to drop out of school.

Appendix C: Why do students drop out?

Dropping out of school is not a sudden act, but a gradual disengagement process. "The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts" (Bridgeland, Dijulio, & Morison, 2006) presents the central message that most students drop out for one of the following reasons:

- Significant academic challenges
- Lack of connection to the school environment
- Lack of interest in school
- Employment
- Pregnancy
- Ailing/unhealthy family member

Other significant elements that influence students with disabilities to leave school include:

- Failing in school
- Being poorly prepared for high school
- Repeating at least one grade
- Being truant
- Having too much freedom
- Lacking parental involvement in school

At the 2006 National State Education Agency Forum in Clemson, South Carolina, Dr. Jay Smink and Dr. Terry Cash discussed National Dropout Prevention Center studies that revealed status factors and other variables associated with students dropping out of school, including:

Status Factors

Age	Native language	Parental involvement
Gender	Region of the country	School size
Socioeconomic background	Academic ability	Family structure
Ethnicity	Disability	Mobility

Other variables associated with dropouts

Grades	School climate	Educational support in the home
Disruptive behavior	Parenting	
Absenteeism	Attitudes toward school	Retention
School policies	Sense of belonging	Stressful life events

Appendix D: Research Findings on Dropout Prevention

What can we do to prevent students from dropping out of school? What are some of the key components that will keep students in school and be successful in their endeavor to obtain a high school diploma? The research of Dynarski (2001), Slavin and Fashola (1998), Schargel and Smink (2001), and Smink and Cash (2006) leads us in the right direction:

- Creating small school communities with small classes.
- Allowing teachers to build relationships and enhanced communication [creating personal bonds between students and teachers].
- Providing individual academic and behavioral assistance [early intervention includes comprehensive family involvement, early childhood education and strong reading and writing programs].
- Focusing on helping students address personal and family issues through counseling and access to social services.
- Recognizing the importance of families in school success.
- Developing problem solving skills to meet the demands of the school environment.

The work of Jay Smink and Franklin P. Schargel describes fifteen strategies identified through nationwide research reviewed by the National Dropout Prevention Center/Network at Clemson University, including:

School and Community Perspective

- Systemic renewal
- School-community collaboration
- Safe learning environments

Basic Core Strategies

- Mentoring/Tutoring
- Service learning
- Alternative schooling
- After school opportunities

Early Interventions

- Family engagement
- Early childhood education
- Early literacy development

Making the Most of Instruction

- Professional development
- Active learning
- Educational technology
- Individualized instruction
- Career and technical education

Dr. E. Gregory Woods, from the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, reviewed the research findings regarding the characteristics of effective dropout-prevention programs, including:

Organization/Administration: Program design and administration have an effect on the retention of at-risk students. Research has shown that schools-within-schools, low student-teacher ratios and alternative schools have had some success in lowering dropout rates.

School Climate: Safe, orderly, non-threatening environments contribute to dropout prevention. Staff training to build cultural sensitivity and developing "family" atmospheres have also proven to be effective strategies.

Service Delivery/Instruction: Instruction needs to be student-centered. Students at risk of dropping out should be identified as early as possible so that the appropriate intervention can be implemented. Research shows that early identification, family involvement, clear instructional objectives and monitoring student progress are effective in dropout prevention.

Instructional Content/Curriculum: A combination of academic and work-based learning has been shown to be beneficial.

Staff/Teacher Culture: Staff members in successful programs are committed to the program and have high standards for all students.

Appendix E: Model Programs to Address School Dropouts

Agora Cyber Charter School

The Agora Cyber Charter School is a tuition-free public virtual school that gives parents the curriculum, tools, and support to provide students a high-quality, well-rounded education. The newest public education option in Pennsylvania is modeled by curriculum experts at K12 Inc. and professional teachers and administrators to form a virtual public school for students in grades K-12.

TARGETED POPULATION

Agora Cyber Charter School focuses on students from kindergarten through grade 12. Students are placed in the curriculum per assessment data in reading, mathematics, and writing. Experts in the special education area are available to assist those students who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

MAJOR COMPONENTS

Extensive instructional materials—including textbooks, workbooks, art supplies, science equipment, and maps—to support the learning environment are provided. Desktop computers, printers, and internet reimbursements are also available. Clearly defined mastery objectives are monitored daily and recorded on students' daily sheets. Students are required to keep accurate attendance by noting the hours spent on each course. Online, synchronous teacher conferences with other students in the class are a major component of the Agora Cyber Charter Schools. Agora Cyber Charter Schools also offers foreign-language opportunities, online clubs, and extracurricular activities. Also, part of the success of the Cyber Charter Schools is attributed to workshops for parents that address specific needs of students and lessons paced for student success.

EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVENESS

- Increase in students' grades
- Positive feedback from students, including pace is a factor in success and more time allotted to acquire the knowledge presented for success

COST PER STUDENT

Agora Cyber Charter School is based on the cost per student in the district in which the parent/guardian resides and is paid by the State Department of Education. In Pennsylvania, Agora Cyber Charter School is funded through the tax base of each district.

SUMMARY

http://www.agora.org/

Check and Connect Model

Check and Connect is a model of sustained intervention for promoting students' engagement at school and with learning. Demonstrated outcomes include:

- Decrease in truancy
- Decrease in dropout rates
- Increase in obtaining credits
- Increase in school completion
- Impact on literacy

TARGET POPULATION

Check and Connect is data-driven and grounded in research on resiliency and home and school collaboration. The model was first developed in Minneapolis for urban middle school students with learning and behavioral disabilities. Today, it has been replicated for all students, grades K-12.

MAJOR COMPONENTS

Check and Connect promotes student engagement with school using seven components:

1. Relationship building
2. Routine monitoring and alterable indicators
3. Individualized and timely intervention
4. Long-term commitment
5. Persistence plus
6. Problem-solving
7. Affiliation with school and learning

A key factor in the Check and Connect model is the "monitor," who ensures a student "connects" with school and learning. An effective monitor must be persistent, willing to work closely with families using a non-blaming approach, and able to work well in different settings. Additionally, a successful monitor must believe that all children have abilities, advocate for the student, commit to documenting the intervention, and work well in different settings. The monitor must establish trust with the students and their families.

The monitor regularly checks on student attendance and academic performance, talks to the families, and listens to students, which establishes a strong connection throughout the year. The monitor periodically checks student engagement by using several indicators, including attendance, social/behavior performance and academic performance. Using these indicators, the monitor can "connect" with the student by using either basic or intensive interventions.

All students receive basic interventions, which primarily comprise purposeful conversations with the monitors once a month for secondary students and once a week for elementary students. The monitor talks to the student about progresses made in school, the connection to graduation, and possible conflicts or concerns and the resolutions.

The intensive intervention is triggered by a student exhibiting early warning signs of dropping out of school (e.g., attendance, academic performance, behavior). The monitor taps existing support services when necessary and increases the degree of interaction with the student, including calling the student and parent in the morning to ensure the student attends school.

EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVENESS

Check and Connect has been used in grades K through 6. Participants included students with and without disabilities and their families. After two years, participants showed dramatic decreases in tardiness and truancy. A study of students ages 11 to 17 found a reduction in absenteeism and a school attendance rate of 95 percent after two years in the program.

COST

Cost per student is approximately $1,100.

CONTACT

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COCA-COLA VALUED YOUTH PROGRAM

The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program is devoted to helping students stay in school by giving personal and academic responsibility to Valued Youth tutors. The program also provides schools with the ability to change longstanding philosophy and practices of devaluing at-risk students. Results show that tutors stay in school, have increased academic performance, have improved school attendance, and advance to higher education.

TARGETED POPULATION

First developed by the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) in 1984, this cross-age tutoring program takes students at risk of dropping out of school and places them as tutors for younger students.

MAJOR COMPONENTS

Seven important tenets express the philosophy of the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program. They are:

1. All students can learn;
2. The school values all students;
3. All students can actively contribute to their own education and to the education of others;
4. All students, parents, and teachers have the right to participate fully in creating and maintaining excellent schools;
5. Excellence in schools contributes to individual and collective economic growth, stability, and advancement;
6. Commitment to educational excellence is created by including students, parents, and teachers in setting goals, making decisions, monitoring progress, and evaluating outcomes; and,
7. Students, parents, and teachers must be provided extensive, consistent support in ways that allow students to teach, teachers to teach, and parents to be involved.

FIVE INSTRUCTIONAL COMPONENTS

CLASSES FOR TUTORS: Tutors meet with their secondary school teacher/coordinator once a week in order to: Develop tutoring skills; Reflect on and celebrate successes and contributions; and, Improve reading, writing, and other subject matter skills, enabling the students to teach these skills to elementary school students. The class for tutors and the tutoring sessions, which occur four times a week during the same class period, is offered as an elective or as a state or local course credit.

TUTORING SESSIONS: There is a minimum of four hours of tutoring per week—one class period a day. The student tutors earn a minimum wage stipend for their efforts and are expected to adhere to the employee guidelines of their host school. The tutors' primary responsibility is to work in a one-to-three ratio with tutees. Tutoring young children (at least a four-year grade level difference) forces the tutors to use their own experiences and apply them to the difficult task of teaching.

EDUCATIONAL FIELD TRIPS: Between two and three times throughout the year, students are invited to explore economic and cultural opportunities in the community. The field trips are an opportunity for career awareness by exposing the students to a variety of professional environments. The students can make connections among school, career, and being a professional.

MENTORS AND ROLE MODELS: Career and leadership awareness is developed through five guest speakers who model a variety of professions and experiences. Adults, who are considered successful in their fields and who represent students' ethnic background(s), are invited to participate. A person who has overcome serious barriers can also be a powerful role model.

STUDENT RECOGNITION: Students are acknowledged for their efforts and contributions while fulfilling their responsibilities as tutors. Throughout the year, students receive certificates of merit and appreciation, are invited on field trips with their tutees, receive media attention, and are honored at a luncheon or supper. These events help students understand the importance of their tutoring within their school, district, and community.

SUPPORT COMPONENTS

CURRICULUM: A primary goal of the curricular framework is to prepare secondary school students to tutor elementary school students. The objectives of the curricular framework include improving the students' self-concept, tutoring skills, and literacy skills.

COORDINATION: Periodic meetings are held to coordinate all activities, facilitate communication among personnel, and provide first-hand information for monitoring the program. Coordination is formalized through the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program implementation team at each participating site. The team includes the teacher coordinators at the secondary school, the secondary school counselor, the evaluation liaison, the family liaison, an elementary school receiving teacher representative, and the principals of the participating schools.

STAFF ENRICHMENT: Training and other instructive or enriching experiences strengthen the individual program components. The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program includes training and technical assistance in response to the participants' needs assessments. Staff enrichment is achieved through technical assistance and training.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT: Great efforts are taken to involve the tutors' families in the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program. The goal of family involvement is to show that the school takes the children's education seriously and values the families' contributions. Empowering minority and disadvantaged families requires vigorous outreach and meaningful school activities. Parent meetings and sessions, a minimum of four per year, are conducted partially or fully in the language of the parents.

EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVENESS

Since its inception in 1984, the program has helped schools keep 98 percent of program participants in school, more than 12,300 young people who were previously at risk of dropping out. The program has positively impacted over 220,000 children, families, and educators.

The key to the program's success is valuing students who are considered at risk of dropping out of school and sustaining the students' efforts with effective, coordinated strategies. The program is flexible and readily adaptable to individual schools. Its careful design and assessment have shown that certain elements are critical, such as paying tutors for the work accomplished and having experienced content-area teachers serve as the program's teacher coordinators.

The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program was extensively researched in 1989 using a longitudinal, quasi-experimental design with data collected for the treatment and comparison group students before tutoring began, during implementation, and at the end of the first and second program years. The results from the research showed that the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program had a statistically significant impact on the dropout rate, reading grades, self-concept, and attitudes toward school. Only one tutor out of 101 (one percent) dropped out of school toward the end of the second year of the program, compared to 11 students of the 93 comparison group students (12 percent). Similar results were found for reading grades, self-concept, and attitudes toward school.

The research unveiled critical elements of the program's implementation and success, allowing for replication as the program expanded across the country. The research also served as the basis for the evaluation design, which continues to be one of the most rigorous dropout-prevention models.

The research and ongoing program evaluation indicates the strength of the program. It continues to be acknowledged as one of only a few proven dropout-prevention programs in the country. In fact, the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program was identified as an effective program in "Show Me the Evidence! Proven and Promising Programs for America's Schools" (Slavin & Fashola, 1998). The article states that the Coca-Cola

Valued Youth Program is one of only two programs in the country designed to increase the high school graduation rates of at-risk students.

The program has also been recognized by the U.S. Department of Education's Program Effectiveness Panel for Inclusion in the National Diffusion Network, the Corporation for National and Community Service, the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, and President George Bush. Also, it has been featured as an educational model in books by the American Council on Education, the Committee for Economic Development, the Hamilton Fish National Institute on School and Community Violence, Jobs for the Future, the National Center for Service-Learning in Early Adolescence, and the Urban Institute.

COST

Cost per student/user (based on 25 tutors and 75 tutees) ranges from $150-$250, which includes tutor stipends, and recognition awards, staff training, technical assistance and evaluation.

CONTACT

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KALAMAZOO AREA ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM (KAAAP) KALAMAZOO COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS!

In 1992, the Kalamazoo Chamber of Commerce created the Kalamazoo Area Academic Achievement Program (KAAAP). The business community's goal was to create goal-oriented students and graduates who would join the business community and contribute to economic development.

Recently, KAAAP has merged with two similar programs to form the Kalamazoo Communities in Schools (KCIS). KCIS is a compilation of major service providers, school officials, community volunteers, business leaders, and other concerned citizens. The purpose of KCIS is to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of students to help them learn and, ultimately, to create a strong workforce, leaders, parents, and community in the future. By creating partnerships within the community, KCIS is able to assist schools with a wider variety of services.

TARGETED POPULATION

KCIS focuses on all students, K through 12, to help them successfully learn, stay in school, and prepare for life.

MAJOR COMPONENTS

KCIS repositions community resources into schools so students can access needed services. There are 10 full-service schools with on-site coordinators who have full access to dental services, mental health services, career exposure, and other support services to promote excellence in education and high achievement. The on-site coordinators are in contact with teachers, students, and families and make direct connections between community partners and students referred for services.

Activities and services offered by full-service schools are varied and include:

- Academic and emotional support through mentoring and tutoring services
- Behavioral health that includes mental health, substance abuse, grief counseling, and peer mediation
- Service learning and academic enrichment
- Health services that include health education, nutrition, dental screening, x-rays, cleaning, sealants and referral, a nurse pilot project and nurse interns, vision checks and eyeglasses
- Food pantry projects

- Coats, boots, hats, and mittens
- Housing support services
- Academic enrichment
- Parent outreach and support
- Internships and volunteer support from AmeriCorps VISTA

Additionally, KCIS offers a mentoring program, which pairs students with adult mentors who model strong lifestyles and work ethics and provide scholastic support. The mentors meet with the students at least once a week. KCIS also offers grants and scholarships to students and staff to further training in projects directly involving students and academic achievement.

EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVENESS

The vast majority of teachers and mentors participating in a recent survey saw improvements in the academic achievement and conduct of students in the program. Many students surveyed liked their mentors so much they wanted to spend more time with them.

COST PER STUDENT

Kalamazoo Chamber of Commerce Grant

SUMMARY

http://www.kcisfkidsfirst.org/index.php?inc=content

STANLEY HALL ENRICHMENT CENTER

The Stanley Hall Enrichment Center in Evansville, Indiana, was created in 1988 as an open-concept alternative school program focusing on empowering students to earn a high school diploma and advance to post-secondary education or gainful employment.

TARGETED POPULATION

High school students who are experiencing difficulty staying in school.

MAJOR COMPONENTS

The Center maintains a success-oriented program designed to assist students to build self esteem, develop and apply desired work habits, gain computer skills and career information, and increase awareness of the importance of high school graduation.

To meet the needs of diverse students, the program uses:

- Self-paced curricula
- Technology
- Student-operated branch bank
- Job shadowing
- Internships
- Service learning
- Service programs

All students must achieve a letter grade of “C” or higher for assignments and courses. Frequent conferences keep students, faculty, and families informed of academic progress. In addition, student achievement is recognized daily at Stanley Hall. Each time a student earns a credit, the teacher and class offer congratulations, and the student calls a family member to share his/her success.

The Center promotes a strong connection with the community through guest speakers, college field trips, contests, and presentation opportunities. By participating in these activities, students are encouraged to be active in the community, remain in school, and assume responsibility for their future.

Additionally, the Center has partnered with the Department of Natural Resources and Vanderburgh County Soil and Water Conservation to establish a seasonal wetland at Angel Mounds State Historic Site and Nature Preserve. Students use the site as a lab facility and have planted native grasses and cypress trees, designed a walkway for visitors to view wildlife, and installed signage. As a reward for their efforts, the students have received an environmental stewardship award and have been nominated for a National Wetlands competition. Each year, the students also participate in the United Way's Day of Caring and spend the day at the food bank getting supplies ready for distribution.

Center students are also involved with building financial literacy among students at Lodge Elementary. As a result, students strengthen their communication and organizational skills by facilitating group activities and class discussions to improve financial skills. Center students also speak one-on-one with elementary and middle school students regarding problems they encountered during their school years. During these talks, students stress attendance, citizenship, bullying, and staying in school.

EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVENESS

During the 1999-00 school year, 60 of the 89 seniors received a high school diploma. The remaining students reported attaining their identified goals. The success of the Stanley Hall Enrichment Center Program has been judged by the number of students who are retained in high school, graduate from high school, earn a GED, and secure legitimate employment. In 2004-05, 150 students attended Stanley Hall, and 74 of the 103 seniors completed graduation requirements.

COST PER STUDENT

Unknown

THE BUDDY SYSTEM PROJECT

The Buddy System is a mentoring program designed to improve participants' academic and social behaviors and promote interaction between youth and older role models. The program is based on individual and group mentoring and encouraging positive behaviors through financial incentives.

TARGETED POPULATION

Children ages 10 to 17 and multi-ethnic children

MAJOR COMPONENTS

Component	*Provided by*	*Duration*	*Description*
One-on-one mentoring	Community resident	Less than 1 year for most participants	Weekly meetings engaging in social activities; mentors are trained to establish warm, trusting relationships and to create a plan to change targeted behaviors.
Group mentoring	Community resident		When appropriate, mentors met with their mentees in group activities.
Financial incentive	Program		Students were given $10/month if their behaviors improved.

EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVENESS

STUDY 1: *The Buddy System: Effects of community intervention on delinquent offenses. Behavior Therapy*, 6, 522-524. Fo, W. S., & O'Donnell, C. R. (1975).
Evaluated population: Youth referred to program; treatment n=264 and control group n=178.
Objective: To determine the effects of the program on delinquent acts.
Measurement instrument: Records on the delinquent offenses of participants and control group.
Evaluation: *Type:* Experimental, random assignment, treatment n=264 and control group n=178. *Statistical techniques:* Z test, Significance Level=.05.
Outcome: For youth who had committed major offenses in the year prior to entering the project, program youth were significantly less likely to have committed major offenses during the Buddy System year (37.5 percent) than were the youth in the control group (64 percent). The pattern was opposite, however, for youths with no record of major offenses in the preceding year; in this case, program youth were significantly more likely to have committed major offenses (15.7 percent) than the control youth (7.2 percent).

STUDY 2: *The Buddy System: Review and follow-up. Child Behavior Therapy*, 1, 161-169. O'Donnell, C. R., Lydgate, T., & Fo, W. S. (1979).
Evaluated population: 335 youths (206 boys and 129 girls) in the experimental group. 218 youths (151 boys and 67 girls) in the control group. In the experimental group 255 were in the program for one year, 73 for two years, and seven for three years. In the control group 195 were assigned to one year, 23 for two years and none for three years.
Objective: To evaluate the effectiveness of the program based on the arrest data (for major offenses only) of participants over a three-year span.
Measurement instrument: Arrest records of participants and control group one year before participation, the year(s) of participation, and two years after the initial year of participation.
Evaluation: *Type:* Experimental *Statistical techniques:* Two tailed Z tests, Significance Level=.05.
Outcome: The Buddy System was most effective for youth who had been arrested for major offenses in the year preceding participation in the program: 56 percent of these participants vs. 78 percent of the control group ($p<.04$) were arrested for a major offense in the program year or two years after. Of participants without prior arrests, those in the treatment group were more likely to commit a major offense than those in the control group: 22.5 percent vs. 16.4 percent ($p<.05$).

COST PER STUDENT

Not provided. Funding provided through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Model Cities and the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare's Office of Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Development.

THE JAG MODEL

The JAG Model has several purposes, including:

- Keeping program participants in school through graduation or passing the GED and assisting graduates to obtain an entry-level job that would lead to a career
- Assisting graduates or GED passers in pursuit of a postsecondary education and/or an entry-level job that would lead to a career
- Extending program services to participants for 12 months after graduation or completion of a GED
- Delivering services to non-graduates and to those who did not pass the GED during the 12-month follow-up period to attain a GED or a high school diploma

TARGETED POPULATION

Students, grades 9–12, and dropouts in alternative school programs or community-based programs leading to a high school diploma or GED

MAJOR COMPONENTS

The JAG Model provides performance standards and best practices for serving students ages 15–21. Examples of program applications include: School-to-Career Program (grade 12); Multi-Year Dropout Prevention Program (grades 9–12); and, Out-of-School Program (dropouts and alternative schools).

EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVENESS

Program outcome goals include: graduation (90 percent), positive outcomes (80 percent), employment (60 percent), full-time employment (60 percent), and full-time placement (80 percent).

For the class of 2002, the JAG Network's performance outcomes were:

- Graduation Rate, 84.56 percent
- Positive Outcomes Rate, 72.28 percent
- Aggregate Job Placement Rate, 52.40 percent
- Full-time Jobs Rate, 65.89 percent
- Full-time Placement Rate, 88.13 percent
- Further Education Rate, 19.88 percent
- Average Wage, $7.54

COST PER STUDENT

The average cost per participant is $1,500 for the in-school phase of the program. Full-time employed graduates or completers repay the cost within 14 months after leaving school through payroll or sales taxes.

SUMMARY

Since its inception in 1980, JAG achieved extraordinary success in achieving the objectives of a JAG Model Program. This model operates in 29 states, including the East Coast and Midwest, as well as Washington, D.C.

MIDDLE COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOLS

Middle College High Schools are alternative high schools located on college campuses aimed to help and encourage at-risk students complete high school and attend college. The schools offer a project-centered, interdisciplinary curriculum with an emphasis on team teaching, individualized attention, and development of critical thinking skills. Students are also offered support services, including specialized counseling, peer support, and career experience opportunities. As recently as December 2006, the Middle College High Schools program was operating in 31 school districts in 12 states.

TARGETED POPULATION

Dropouts or students at risk of dropping out

MAJOR COMPONENTS

- Small schools (fewer than 100 students per grade) with substantially lower student-to-staff ratios
- Career-oriented courses, internships, and community service, which connects what is learned to real-world experiences
- Alternative assessment strategies, such as portfolios and oral presentations

EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVENESS

The What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) examined six studies on the effectiveness of the Middle College High Schools. Only one study, a randomized controlled trial, met WWC evidence standards. The program was found to have no discernible effects on staying in school.

COST PER STUDENT

Researchers estimated the cost of educating a student in a Middle College High School to be about 50 percent higher than the cost of educating a student in a regular school within the district.

SUMMARY

Middle College National Consortium (MCNC)— http://www.mcnc.us
What Works Clearinghouse (WWC)—http://www.whatworks.ed.gov

CAREER ACADEMIES

Career Academies are school-within-school programs operating in high schools. The program offers career-related curricula based on a career theme, academic coursework, and work experience through partnerships with local employers. Currently, the National Career Academy Coalition (NCAC) reports that at least 1,500 Career Academies are operable. A registry by the Career Academy Support Network (CASN) includes more than 1,600 Career Academies.

TARGETED POPULATION

Career Academies were originally developed over 30 years ago as a dropout-prevention strategy, targeting students at risk of dropping out of high school. Recently, Career Academies have broadened to serve all categories of students.

MAJOR COMPONENTS

- School-within-school organization with a career theme (health care, business and finance, technology, communications)
- Academic and vocational curricula related to career themes and taught by a core group of teachers
- Partnerships with local employers who provide internship opportunities and mentoring to students

EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVENESS

The What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) examined seven studies on the effectiveness of the Career Academies. Only one study met WWC evidence standards. The program was found to have potentially positive effects on progressing and remaining in school and no discernible effects on completing school.

COST PER STUDENT

The cost of Career Academies is approximately $600 per pupil more than the average expenditure per pupil in the district. No information is available on the cost of delivering services to high-risk youth within the Career Academies.

SUMMARY

Career Academy Support Network (CASN) —http://casn.berkeley.edu
National Career Academy Coalition (NCAC) — http://www.ncacinc.org
What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) —http://www.whatworks.ed.gov

Appendix F: State Legislative Comparisons

State	Date of Enactment (Rev.)[1]	Compulsory Attendance Age[2]	Recent Leg Proc	Avg Daily Mbrshp (02-03)[3]	Grad Rate Prior to Change	Grad Rate (02-03)[4]	Grad Rate (03-04)[5]	Dropout Rates (01-02)[6]	Dropout Rate Prior to Change[7]
Alabama	1915	7 to 16	2006–Leg. adjourned	96.6		64.7	65.0	3.7	
Alaska	2004	7 to 16		91.3		68.0	67.2	8.1	
Arizona	1899	6 to 16		86.8		68.0	66.8	10.5	
Arkansas	1909	5 to 17		93.6		75.9	76.8	5.3	
California	1874	6 to 18		99.5		74.1	73.9	----	
Colorado	2006	6 to 17	2006–To 17	88.8		76.4	78.7	---	
Connecticut	2002	5 to 18		97.3	77.5	80.9	80.7	2.6	3.0
Delaware	1907	5 to 16		92.4		73.0	72.9	6.2	
*D. C.	1864	5 to 18		84.0		59.6	68.2	----	
Florida	2006	6 to 16	LSS to raise age to 18	93.4		66.7	66.4	5.1	
Georgia	1916	6 to 16		93.5		60.8	61.2	6.5	
Hawaii	1959	6 to 18		91.3	68.3	71.3	72.6	5.1	5..3
Idaho	1887	7 to 16		94.0		81.4	81.5	3.9	
Illinois	2004	7 to 17		88.6	75.9	75.9	80.3	3.1	---
Indiana	1897	7 to 18		93.3		75.5	73.5	2.3	
Iowa	2006	6 to 16	2006–Leg. Failed	95.1		85.3	85.8	2.4	
Kansas	1996	7 to 18	1996–To 18	88.3		76.9	77.9	3.1	---
Kentucky	2001	6 to 16	2001–Leg. Failed	85.9		71.7	73.0	4.0	
Louisiana	2001	7 to 18	2001–To 18	92.6	63.7	64.1	69.4	6.6	9.2
Maine	1875	7 to 17		92.7		76.3	77.6	2.8	
Maryland	1902	5 to 16		93.0		79.2	79.5	3.9	
Massachusetts	1852	6 to 16		95.1		75.7	79.3	----	
Michigan	1871	6 to 16	2002–Leg. Failed	94.0		74.0	72.5	----	
Minnesota	1998	7 to 16		94.0	77.0	84.8	84.7	3.8	5.5
Mississippi	1918	6 to 17		93.9		62.7	62.7	3.9	
Missouri	1905	7 to 16	2001–Leg. Failed	94.0		78.3	80.4	3.6	
Montana	1883	7 to 16		89.2		81.0	80.4	3.9	
Nebraska	2005	6 to 18		91.1		85.2	87.6	4.2	
Nevada	1973	7 to 17		94.5		72.3	57.4	6.4	
New Hampshire	2007	6 to 18	2007–Legislation Passed	97.5		78.2	78.7	4.0	
New Jersey	1875	6 to 16	2006 – In committee	96.8		87.0	86.3	2.5	
New Mexico	1891	5 to 18	2007–To 18	98.9		63.1	67.0	5.2	

[1] U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2004). *Digest of educational statistics.*
[2] U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2006). *Common core of data.*
[3] U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics Information. Blank states do not report dropouts that are consistent with NCES definition.
[4] U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. *User's guide to computing high school graduation rates, volume 2.*
[5] U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. *User's guide to computing high school graduation rates, volume 2.*
[6] U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2006). *Dropout rates in the United States: 2004.* Some information not available.
[7] U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2006). *Dropout rates in the United States: 2004.* Some information not available.

State	Date of Enactment (Rev.) [8]	Compulsory Attendance Age [9]	Recent Leg Proc	Avg Daily Mbrshp (02-03) [10]	Grad Rate Prior to Change	Grad Rate (02-03) [11]	Grad Rate (03-04) [12]	Dropout Rates (01-02) [13]	Dropout Rate Prior to Change [14]
New York	1874	6 to 16	Buffalo & NYC – 17 2002 – Leg. failed	90.7		---	---	7.1	
North Carolina	1907	7 to 16		92.9		70.1	71.4	5.7	
North Dakota	1883	7 to 16		94.1		86.4	86.1	2.0	
Ohio	1877	6 to 18		92.1		79.0	81.3	3.1	
Oklahoma	1907	5 to 18		93.2		76.0	77.0	4.4	
Oregon	1965	7 to 18		88.1		73.7	74.2	4.9	
Pennsylvania	1895	8 to 17		93.4		81.7	82.2	3.3	
Rhode Island	1883	6 to 18	2007–To 18	90.2		77.7	75.9	4.3	
South Carolina	1915	6 to 17		90.9		59.7	60.6	3.3	
South Dakota	1883	6 to 16		92.9		83.0	83.7	2.8	
Tennessee	1905	6 to 1 7		91.7		63.4	66.1	3.8	
Texas	1996	6 to 18		92.7	62.9	75.5	76.7	3.8	---
Utah	1999	6 to 18	1999–To 18	91.0	78.0	80.2	83.0	3.7	5.2
Vermont	1867	6 to 16		96.0		83.6	85.4	4.0	
Virginia	1908	5 to 18		93.8		80.6	79.3	2.9	
Washington	1871	8 to 18		91.8		74.2	74.6	7.1	
W. Virginia	1897	6 to 16	2006–In committee	94.6		75.7	76.9	3.7	
Wisconsin	1879	6 to 18		93.9		85.8	---	1.9	
Wyoming	1919	6 to 16	2007–Failed	89.9		73.9	76.0	5.8	6.2

[8] U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2004). *Digest of educational statistics.*

[9] U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2006). *Common core of data.*

[10] U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics Information. Blank states do not report dropouts that are consistent with NCES definition.

[11] U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. *User's guide to computing high school graduation rates, volume 2.*

[12] U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. *User's guide to computing high school graduation rates, volume 2*

[13] U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2006). *Dropout Rates in the United States: 2004.* Some information not available.

[14] U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2006). *Dropout Rates in the United States: 2004.* Some information not available.

Appendix G: Exceptions and Penalties

State	Exceptions	Penalties
Alabama		
Alaska	Physical or mental disability; Legal custody; Temporary illness/injury; Suspension/Expulsion; Lives more than two miles from school; Completed 12th grade; Enrolled in State boarding school/district correspondence program/centralized correspondence study program/other alternative educational experience approved by board, upon written request from parent; Home school	Parent: $500 fine for every five days of unlawful absence Student: N/A
Arizona		
Arkansas	Received high school diploma or equivalent; Enrolled in postsecondary vocational-technical institution/community college/two-year or four-year institution of higher education; Enrolled in an adult education program; Enrolled in Arkansas National Guard Youth Challenge Program	Parent: $500 fine (# unlawful absence determined by school board) Student: Denial of course credit/promotion/graduation; Suspension of driver's license
California	None mentioned in statute	Parent: N/A Student: Four unexcused absences in one month or 10 unexcused absences during school year
Colorado		
Connecticut	Graduated high school; Receiving equivalent instruction; Parental consent	Parent: $25 per day Student: N/A
Delaware		
*D. C.	Received diploma or equivalent; Flexible hours for students ages 17 to 18 for work purposes	Parent: $100 fine, jail, community service for every two unlawful absences Student: N/A
Florida		
Georgia		
Hawaii	Physical/mental disability; Employment if over 15 and approved by superintendent; Family Court; Graduated high school; Enrolled in alternative education program; Home school; Enrolled in alternative education program due to behavior issues and/or poor attendance (over 16)	Parent: Guilty of misdemeanor Student: N/A
Idaho		
Illinois	Physical/mental disability; Employment; Confirmation; Religious holidays	Parent: N/A Student: N/A
Indiana		
Iowa		
Kansas	For students 16-17, enrolled in alternative educational program; Enrolled postsecondary educational institution; Attends final counseling session at which a disclaimer to encourage the child to remain in school or to pursue	Parent: N/A Student: N/A

State	Exceptions	Penalties
	educational alternatives is presented to and signed by the child and the parent	
Kentucky		
Louisiana	Written consent by parent; If over 16, enrolled in alternative education program/vocational-technical education program/adult education program; Attending National Guard Youth Challenge Program	Parent: $250 and/or 30 days in jail—penalty for violation of compulsory attendance; $100 and/or 10 days in jail—penalty for enticing/soliciting children to be absent from school Student: N/A
Maine	Enrolled in alternative education; Graduated high school before age 17; If over 15 and completed grade 9, work/home school; Habitual truancy	Parent: For every 10 full days of unexcused absences or seven consecutive school days of unexcused absences, a parent is guilty of a civil violation; May be ordered to take specific action to ensure the student's attendance at school, enjoin offender from engaging in specific conduct which interferes with student's attendance at school, or, undergo counseling Student: N/A
Maryland	Home school; Severe illness; Age 16 and lack of academic success, continual disciplinary problems, or lack of interest; Employment; Marriage; Military service; Court action; Age 16 to support family; Expulsion; Special cases with superintendent's approval; Pregnancy/parenthood—if under age 16, must enroll in appropriate educational program; Completed high school diploma/equivalent requirements; Early college admission; Disabled students, completed requirements for a Maryland High School Certificate; Physical/mental/emotional handicap; Dangerous students	Parent: If induces or harbors absent student, $500 fine and/or 30 days in jail; If fails to see child attends, first offense, $50 fine per day and or 10 days in jail, and, second and subsequent offenses, $100 fine per day and/or 30 days in jail; Court may suspend sentence and establish terms and conditions to promote attendance Student: Discretion of school system/staff
Massachusetts		
Michigan		
Minnesota		
Mississippi	Physical/mental/emotional disability; Enrolled in special education/remedial education/education for handicapped; Home School; NOTE: Certificate of Enrollment must be completed to participate in these programs	Parent: If child is absent within 18 days after the first day of school or 12 unlawful absences during school year, parent subject to $1,000 fine and/or 1 year in jail Student: Subject to youth court discretion to order child to enroll or re-enroll in school; superintendent may assign child to alternative school program
Missouri		
Montana		

State	Exceptions	Penalties
Nebraska	Met graduation requirements; Ages 16 to 17 to attend alternative education programs; Age 16 with parental permission	Parent: Class III misdemeanor Student: N/A
Nevada	Obtained permission to take GED; Juvenile court may release child who has completed grade 8; Age 14 if written evidence shows child needs to support himself or family; Age 14 to 17 and completed grade 8 may be excused from full-time school attendance for employment	Parent: N/A Student: N/A
New Hampshire		
New Jersey		
New Mexico	Graduated; Age 17 and employed w/parental consent; Parental consent	Parent: $25–$100 fine or community service; second and subsequent violations, $500 fine and/or 6 months in jail Student: For 10 or more unexcused absences, 90 days suspended driving privileges; second and subsequent violations, 1 year suspended driving privileges
New York		
North Carolina		
North Dakota		
Ohio	Received diploma; Completed high school curriculum; Completed education program; Received an age and schooling certificate; Special Education; Physical/mental disability; Home school; Age 14 for employment to support himself or family	Parent: $500 fine or 70 hours community service Student: N/A
Oklahoma	Physical/mental disability; Emergency; Age 16 with consent of parent and school administrator; Religious holy days	Parent: First offense, $25-$50 fine and/or 5 days in jail; Second offense, $50-$100 fine and/or 10 days in jail; Third and subsequent offenses, $100-$250 fine and/or 15 days in jail; Community service may be ordered in lieu of fine/jail; Court may order as a condition of a deferred sentence or as a condition of sentence, the following: 1. Verifying attendance of the child with the school; 2. Attending meetings with school officials; 3. Taking the child to school; 4. Taking the child to the bus stop; 5. Attending school with the child; 6. Undergoing an evaluation for drug, alcohol, or other substance abuse and following the recommendations of the evaluator; and 7. Taking the child for drug, alcohol, or other substance abuse evaluation and following the

State	Exceptions	Penalties
		recommendations of the evaluator, unless excused by the court. Student: N/A
Oregon	Acquired equivalent study of grades 1–12; Home school; Legal; Age 16-17 for employment, community college or alternative education; Emancipated minors	Parent: Class C Violation Student: N/A
Pennsylvania	Physical/mental disability; Home school; Age 16 and employed; Age 15 and engaged in farm work/domestic service; Age 14 and engaged in farm work/domestic service and completed elementary school; Resides two miles from nearest public highway	Parent: $300 fine or parent education program or 5 days in jail; 6 months community service Student: Age 13 and absent 3 or more days, $300 fine; suspended driving privileges
Rhode Island	2007 Legislature changed to 18 years of age	
South Carolina	Graduated; Received equivalent high school education; Physical/mental disability; Completed grade 8 and employed for necessity of home; Pregnancy/parenthood; Age 17 and disruptive/unproductive/not in best interest—court determined	Parent: $50 fine or 30 days in jail Student: N/A
South Dakota		
Tennessee	Received diploma/certificate; Enrolled/completed GED courses; Home school; Parent withdraws; Physical/mental disability; Age 17 and detriment to good order/discipline of other students	Parent: Class C misdemeanor; Fines placed in public school fund Student: N/A
Texas	Enrolled in special education; Physical/mental disability; Expelled; Age 17 and attending GED courses, required by court to attend course, established residence apart from parents, homeless or received GED/equivalent; Age 16 and attending GED courses if court ordered or enrolled in Job Corps; Enrolled in Texas Academy of Mathematics and Science/Texas Academy of Leadership in the Humanities/Texas Academy of Mathematics and Science at The University of Texas at Brownsville/Texas Academy of International Studies	Parent: N/A Student: N/A
Utah	Age 16 and completed grade 8 for employment—partial release; Completed graduation requirements; Physical/mental disability; Employment; Age 16 and negative attitude toward school/unprofitable experience; Home school	Parent: Class B misdemeanor Student: N/A
Vermont		
Virginia	Age 16 to 18 in adult correctional facility attending GED classes; Obtained high school diploma/equivalent; Religion; Students who cannot benefit from education at school; Children suffering from contagious/infectious diseases; Children without immunizations against communicable diseases; Age 10 and live more than one mile from public transportation to school; Age 10 to 17 and live more than 1.5	Parent: Class 3 misdemeanor; Subsequent offenses and offenses committed knowingly and willingly constitute Class 2 misdemeanor Student: N/A

State	Exceptions	Penalties
	miles from public transportation to school	
Washington	Home school; Physical/mental disability; Age 16 and employed with parent consent, met graduation requirements, or received certificate of educational competence	Parent: N/A Student: N/A
West Virginia		
Wisconsin	Age 16 to 17 and attending technical college or GED courses with written parental consent and written agreement with school board agreeing to completion of high school—part time; Age 17 in juvenile correctional facility completing GED courses; Physical/mental disability; Written parental consent; Home school; Parent may request board-approved modification, including but not limited to: work training/study program, alternative education, private school, home school, school outside district	Parent: First offense, $500 fine and/or 30 days in jail; Second and subsequent offense, $1,000 fine and/or 90 days in jail; Community service; Counseling; Attend school with child Student: N/A Other: Any school district administrator, principal, teacher, or school attendance officer who violates this section shall forfeit not less than $5 nor more than $25.
Wyoming		

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Subcommittee Two: Maryland Programs and Motivation/ Engagement Strategies

Subcommittee Charge

Subcommittee Two was charged with generating recommendations to ensure students stay in and complete school. The recommendations were developed as a result of Subcommittee members' review of literature, surveys, and student feedback.

The Subcommittee had one area of focus from House Bill 36: "(e) (3) project the impact on student attendance and achievement outcomes, and assess the fiscal and social benefits to the students and the State, of raising the compulsory public school attendance age to 18."

Throughout the recommendations are references to risk and protective factors for students at risk of dropping out. Other states have raised the compulsory attendance age with some retention success; however, they have added community services for students at risk of dropping out.

Findings

The recommendations presented by the subcommittee evolved through a process that included information gathering, surveys, brainstorming, and reaching consensus. Through a facilitated process, the subcommittee was able to engage in a meaningful and candid dialogue on the topic. Surveys were submitted to a variety of local school systems, local management boards, social service agencies, and the court system. In addition, numerous articles, journals, and reports were used to determine what the best course of action is to provide extra supports and safety nets for those students at risk of dropping out.

In the 2005–06 school year, Maryland had 11,058 dropouts (Maryland State Department of Education, 2006). The problem of school dropouts disproportionately affects African-American males. The problem also disproportionately affects urban youth, with the two most urban districts in the state (Baltimore City and Prince George's County) ranking first and second respectively in terms of dropout rates. Several large-scale longitudinal studies have shown that dropping out significantly increases the risk for subsequent economic (unemployment), behavioral (crime, drug involvement), and social (family instability) problems. Consequently, dropout prevention is a significant priority, both locally and nationally.

Dropping out is not a single event, but a process that is often triggered by disengagement from school and early academic problems. There are multiple factors at different levels (individual, family, community, school) which contribute to a student's withdrawal from school. Below we briefly summarize some of the most commonly cited risk factors for dropout.

A study of school dropouts found that the most commonly cited reason for dropping out of school is disliking school, followed by poor academic performance, and the availability of work opportunities. Students who feel disconnected from others in the school are at greater risk for dropping out of school. Similarly, students who feel disengaged from the educational process tend to receive lower grades and have less positive attitudes toward school—two predictors of school dropout.

A related risk factor for early school leaving is lacking interest in school and low motivation for education attainment. In the survey done for the "Silent Epidemic" report for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (Bridgeland, DiJulio, & Morison, 2006), 69 percent of the respondents cited they were not motivated or inspired to work hard, 80 percent did one hour or less of homework each day in high school, 66 percent would have worked harder if more was demanded of them (higher academic standards and more studying and homework) Furthermore, several of the students who dropped out of school reported that their classes were not interesting and that they did not understand the relevance of their coursework to the real world. Other studies indicate that youth who drop out of school tend to perceive that they have limited control over their future, set only short-term professional goals, and have a difficult time planning for the future. They also tend to make poor decisions related to their future and are more interested in immediate rather than long-term rewards.

Truancy is another common risk factor for early school leaving. Truancy is defined by the State of Maryland as a student meeting the following criteria:

1) The student was between the ages of 5 and 20 during the school year;

2) The student was in membership in a school for 91 or more days;

3) The student was unlawfully absent for 20 percent or more of the school days in membership.

Truant students miss the opportunity to gain fundamental skills necessary to successfully navigate the educational system. Many truancy problems can be traced back to disengagement in education, poor academic achievement, and grade retention in elementary school.

Another related risk factor for dropping out is academic problems. Findings from a recent study of Chicago Public Schools (Roderick, 2006) indicate that students who failed a core course, such as Algebra or English, had an 80 percent chance of dropping out of school. Academic problems can lead to frustration and disengagement from school. A recent report about Boston Public Schools ("Too Big to Be Seen," 2006) reported that many youth cited the pace of instruction (not feeling challenged, falling behind) or not being on track to graduate as

primary reasons for leaving schools. Interestingly, some students reported that they felt frustrated by too slow a pace, while others were frustrated because they were so far behind they could not catch up.

Youth with a history of behavior problems are at increased risk for displaying problems in school and leaving school early. More specifically, youth with substance abuse problems and who are involved in gang or other criminal activity are at risk for dropping out of school. These behavior problems can also contribute to disciplinary problems at school, such as office discipline referrals and suspensions, both of which are also risk factors for dropping out. Similarly, affiliation with deviant peers has also been identified as a precursor to academic failure and early dropout (Battin-Pearson et al., 2000).

Common family-level risk factors include parents' low expectations for their children's success and lack of parental engagement in the educational process. Other family risk factors include low parental monitoring and poor parental discipline. Furthermore, youth who lack positive adult role models—family or non-family—tend to be at greater risk for delinquent behaviors, including dropping out. Family demographic factors that are associated with an increased risk for early school leaving include poverty, parents' educational history (i.e. dropout), and parental unemployment (Marcus & Sanders-Reio, 2001).

Subcommittee Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION ONE

Maryland will provide adequate financial support to raise the age of compulsory attendance to age 18 in FY 2011.

RATIONALE

Providing adequate financial support will reduce the societal costs of incarceration, social services, and other services. The "opportunity cost" to implement and manage the increased student population in Maryland high schools may initially be significant. Nevertheless, the long-term return on this investment is discernable. Increased tax revenues from a more educated workforce will be evident. Past reports indicate that the "lower annual earnings of dropouts cost the federal government $158 billion or more in lost revenue each year" (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2002). Based on research from Moretti (2005) and Muenning (2005), Melville tells us in "The School Dropout Crisis" (2006) that "a one-percent reduction in the dropout rates would reduce the number of crimes by 100,000 annually. Increasing graduation rates by 10 percent would correlate with a 20 percent reduction in murder and assault rates." Moreover, the impact of high school dropouts on crime statistics is considerable: "Each youth who drops out

and enters a life of drugs and crime costs the nation between $1.7 – 2.3 million dollars in crime control and health expenditures."

RECOMMENDATION TWO

Students passing the GED will become completers of Maryland high school graduation requirements and will not be counted as dropouts; MSDE will monitor districts to ensure that GED rates reflect appropriate use of this alternative path to a diploma.

RATIONALE

Since GED counts as a diploma, students passing the GED should receive the same opportunities and benefits that accrue to persons holding a diploma, at a lesser cost to the local school systems. However, we believe that completion of a comprehensive high school program provides social and educational benefits beyond those available via the completion of the GED. After careful review, this Subcommittee supports raising the compulsory school attendance age from 16 to 18, or until graduation requirements are met. Students should be expected to follow the standard academic programs until age 16; however, from ages 16 to 18 the local school system may offer other program options for earning a high school diploma or GED tailored to meet individual students' needs. A legitimate effort must be made to ensure student success in earning a high school diploma and offering options to those students aged 16 to 18 who need added flexibility and options. The most significant aspect of the success of any new opportunity is leadership. Leadership provides the framework for developing a vision, making the commitment needed for success, and ensuring the shared responsibility for student success. Local school systems should develop diploma options that will allow all students the opportunity to earn a high school diploma. Maryland State Department of Education personnel should support local school systems' efforts and assist with the coordination of professional development for teachers and administrators.

Many school systems in Maryland have supports and programs currently in place to serve high school students who are not successful in the regular school program. Systems responded to a survey regarding such supports and programs. These include alternative programs, individual academic success plans, and career centers. A summary of these is listed in the Appendix to the Subcomittee report.

Currently, students completing a GED program earn a Maryland high school diploma. However, to participate, they must first drop out of school. The GED is a viable option for some students, and participation in this program should not first require students to drop out of high school. Eleven states have implemented the GED Option, including New York and Virginia. It is designed to target a subgroup of students who have the ability to complete high school requirements, but are behind in the credits needed to graduate with their class. The GED Option

involves the student remaining enrolled, attending high school, and receiving a minimum of fifteen hours of instruction per week. This instruction includes not only GED preparation, but also workforce development skills and/or career and technology education. To implement the GED Option program, COMAR Regulations must be amended to recognize the GED as an approved program leading to a Maryland high school diploma.

The impact of increasing the age of compulsory school attendance will vary from district to district, school system size, location, and current dropout rate. Smaller, more rural systems may be limited in the number and types of options they can offer. Larger school systems may be significantly impacted by the increase in the high school population.

Changing the compulsory attendance age should have a positive effect upon student achievement as measured by the attainment of a Maryland high school diploma or GED. The longer students are required to remain in school, the more likely they will complete their education. More students earning this credential will result in a better trained workforce, improved potential for participation in post-secondary education and/or training, and the development of lifelong learners. A more educated populace will result in more involved and active citizenry.

RECOMMENDATION THREE

Public and private local school systems share resources and collaborate to support at-risk youth, improve dropout prevention and intervention programs and services, address risk and protection factors, and use strategies associated with effective dropout prevention programs.

RATIONALE

An example of effective intervention is the alternative education program. Many students who are sent to alternative learning environments enjoy an atmosphere that is conducive to learning and improve academically. Students in alternative education schools report higher levels of satisfaction and confidence that their schools will meet their needs than do students in traditional schools (Smith, Gregory, & Pugh, 1981). Students are encouraged by the staff-to-student ratio, and the structure allows students to build productive and positive relationships with adults. As has been seen with most studies on dropouts, the need to feel like there is one adult in the school that you can talk to and that will advocate for you is immense and cannot be devalued.

Alternative education students excel behaviorally and academically because they are a part of a smaller community. Staff are sensitive to the environment and subsequently can be hyper-vigilant about safety and security. Alternative schools report reduced discipline problems and violence (Butchart, 1986). Students feel safe and can focus on their class work or focus on their behavior issues through an assigned therapist or social worker. A recent study done by the State of Oklahoma (Storm & Storm) addressed the success of its alternative schools. Students

responded to the survey question, “What is the best thing about alternative school?” Comments included:

1. “Teachers care about us.”
2. “The class sizes are smaller.”
3. “You can get the help you need.”
4. “I feel safe here, while I didn’t at the other school.”

Alternative programs have smaller student-to-staff ratios that allow teachers to focus on specific interventions and targeted instruction for students lacking the basic skills necessary to compete in today’s global economy. Smaller classrooms and program sizes also allow the teacher or staff member to target specific behavioral interventions to behavioral challenges. Smaller program and classroom sizes permit the teachers and program staff to provide different learning opportunities and experiences for students.

SUMMARY

Our subcommittee believes in supporting the increase in raising the compulsory attendance age from 16 to 18 years of age; however, it is imperative that if the law is changed, there are resources devoted to its success. The education of children is a broad experience from the home, community, and schoolhouse. That experience must be made relevant and substantial for all students.

Appendix: Maryland Programs

Anne Arundel County	
Program	**Population served**
Attendance Contracts: Developed by counselors and administrators for students with attendance concerns.	Students with attendance concerns
Attendance Letters: Sent to parents of students with excessive absences.	Students with excessive absences
Attendance Review Committee: Committee composed of administrators, counselors, school psychologists, pupil personnel workers, school nurses, and other assigned staff. The committee meets on a regular basis to discuss, monitor, and work with students with excessive absences. They also gather teacher input and meet at the end of each semester to determine whether students will be granted credit for courses taken.	Students with excessive absences, both excused and unexcused
Closing the Gap Action Plan: Based on ASCA domains, standards and competencies are developed and implemented. Activities are delivered through classroom, small group, and individual counseling.	Targets groups of at risk and/or minority student populations
Evening High School: Alternative instructional program offered in the evening at four county high schools.	Targeted groups of at risk and/or minority student populations
Summer School Program: Offered in various locations throughout the county during the month of July.	All students needing to make up classes
Twilight School: After-school credit recovery opportunity offered at each high school.	Ninth-graders in all high schools
Procedures for Prevention and Notification of Senior Failures: Prescribed steps taken by counselors, teachers, and administrators in working with juniors and seniors. Steps include meeting with and reviewing the credits of every student; providing every senior a copy of his/her transcript and the High School Graduation Notification Agreement during the month of September; reviewing student interim reports and meeting with students in danger of failing classes needed for graduation; contacting by phone and mail the parents of seniors in danger of failing classes needed for graduation; arranging parent/ teacher conferences; and meeting with all seniors in need of interventions and/or alternative programs in order to meet graduation requirements.	Juniors and seniors in all high schools
Smaller Learning Communities (SLC): Restructure four high schools into smaller units called career clusters. The goals of the project are to enhance academic achievement, increase academic rigor, and create a better school climate. The SLC schools include Arundel, Glen Burnie, Meade, and Old Mill high schools.	Implemented for ninth graders at selected schools

Anne Arundel County Public Schools pays for all students, grades 9 through 11, to take the PSAT. This gives students access to personalized college and career planning with My Road. Advanced Placement potential data is a tool used to facilitate the enrollment of students in rigorous classes.	All high school students, grades 9 through 11
Centers of Applied Technology North and South: Vocational-technical centers that provide students the opportunity to earn a high school diploma while gaining skills, employment, and certification in over 20 career programs in the areas of engineering and mechanical technology, health and human services, and information technology.	Students in all county high schools who apply, meet criteria, and are accepted into the program
Mentorship Programs: Variety of programs offered at each high school to address the needs of the student population. Mentors include staff members who volunteer to work with individual students referred to them and students, who include peer helpers, mediators, and tutors. Programs are organized by the individual high schools. Some schools also work with community agencies to provide mentorship opportunities	Students who request the services or who have been referred by staff members
Teacher Advisory Programs: Offered at most high schools on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis depending on the school. Teacher advisory lessons are developed and implemented to meet the needs of students in each grade level. Teacher advisors present the lessons and serve as another adult to assist students in their school adjustment success.	All high school students
Consent Form: A form authorizing Anne Arundel County Public Schools to provide public/nonprofit programs or agencies directory information for students planning to withdraw from school. These agencies will provide students with information on education and career opportunities to assist them in completing their high school diploma, earning a GED, or gaining skills for employment.	Students withdrawing from school
Alternative Education Programs through Home and Hospital Teaching: The Office of Home and Hospital Teaching provides alternative education services for a variety of reasons in different locations, including the student's home, a hospital, or alternative sites. *The Teen Parent Alternative program provides instructional services at two sites to girls who have given birth and are in need of childcare in order to attend school. *Pathways Drug Treatment Center provides educational services to students throughout the state. *Anne Arundel County Detention Centers receive services for confined students.	All students in need of services
Mary E. Moss Academy: Works with families and communities to provide academic and behavioral support services to students who have not met with success in their previous academic setting.	Referred students
Phoenix Center: A regional special education center for students who have been diagnosed with the disability "Emotionally Disturbed." Staff conveys realistic behavioral expectations, models and teaches age-appropriate social skills, and prepares students for transition to general education or to the workplace.	"Emotionally Disturbed" students K–12

Evening High School: Credit recovery and original program for students presently in comprehensive schools, transfer students from day school, and assigned students on extended suspension or expulsion. Evening High School hours are 3 to 9 p.m.	Serves grades 10 to 12 if the student is over 16, unless he/she is assigned for discipline sanction. Evening High School is a diploma-granting school serving an increasing number of non-concurrent, full-time Evening High School students.
Summer School: Credit recovery with a small number of original credits.	Serves grades 6 to 12 for four and a half weeks each summer. Summer school primarily gives students remediation opportunities so they can move on to the next grade and make progress toward graduation.
Twilight School: Credit-recovery program for ninth graders and seniors; organized by each school with the support of the principal of Evening High School. Twilight school hours are usually 2 to 3:30 p.m.	Each semester, twilight school offers remedial opportunities for courses not passed the previous semester. Helps ninth graders with difficulty acclimating to high school and seniors needing credit recovery to support graduation.
Prep Programs: Tutoring programs offered to high schools with large numbers of students failing tested area courses. Prep programs are run by individual schools with the support of the principal of Evening High School. Hours are from 2 to 3:30 p.m.	Students in grade 10 English and Algebra 1 who do not pass the first marking period, and other students as determined by the school. Runs continuously through the school year up to the May administration of the High School Assessments.
Annapolis High School Attendance Supports: School social worker conducts home visits, contacts families, leads support counseling groups, encourages students to share contact information with each other and provides incentives for improved attendance.	High school students with truancy and school absences
Community Ambassadors: Engages professionals in the Annapolis community to assist selected students with attendance, behavior, and academic difficulties.	
Positive Behavioral Intervention Strategies (PBIS): Schoolwide behavioral intervention program at Old Mill High School.	Secondary students at risk of dropping out due to academic and behavior difficulties
Old Mill High School FBA/BIP Process—A psychologist works with implementing behavioral interventions.	Individual counseling and behavioral intervention programming for Old Mill High School students
Ninth Grade Academy: To increase probability for promotion, ninth graders are grouped into smaller learning communities, and teachers are grouped into interdisciplinary teams, rather than by subject area. Two staff people address improved family and school communication.	Ninth-grade students with a goal of promotion to grade 10
Schools participate in attendance communities. Should social or emotional concerns be “uncovered” during those meetings, the school psychologists and social worker become involved	Secondary students with emotional needs
Alternative Evening Mid-School (3 sites in high school): Social workers provide direct counseling services and consult with teachers about students’ learning profiles. A social worker advises students about behavior changes to be successful upon return to the home school.	Students with disabilities placed on extended suspension or expulsion

NCHS Recovery Program: Academic and clinical interventions. Two designated teachers and one social worker. Academic intervention in reading and math recovery in one-on-one contacts and small groups. Social workers meet individually to discuss low grades and non-attendance, develop behavioral incentives, review progress sheets, work on organizational skills, communicate with parents, teachers, and staff.	Students at risk of failing; first-time ninth graders; "yellow zone" kids with grades of high E through C
Project Attend: Multi-agency program that aims to reduce the absence rate of chronically truant students.	Chronically truant students under the age of 16
Collaborative Supervision and Focused Enforcement (CSAFE): A collaborative effort between state and local public safety agencies to reduce crime and ensure public safety.	Identified students in areas that contribute to the most significant crime levels
Allegany County	
Program	**Population served**
Project Y.E.S. (Youth Experiencing Success)	Students in grades 8, 9, and 10 identified by the Pupil Services Team as at risk for dropping out (based on grades, attendance, home environment). Eleventh and twelfth graders monitored.
	Sixth- to 12th-grade students are placed on a community work site when suspended from school. Students work five hours and are tutored for two hours each day they are suspended. Placed through Board of Education hearing or by school administrator. Students are not on streets unsupervised and return to school with assignments completed.
Academic Village	Sixth- to 12th-grade students are placed with a certified teacher when attendance, grades, or behavior prevents them from working successfully in a regular classroom. They work their way back into the regular schedule.
Math School	Grades 6–8
Algebra School	Grades 9–11
SRA Corrective Reading	Grades 9 and 10
HSA Preparation for High School	Grades 9 and 10
Extended Learning Opportunities	
Co-teaching	
Alternative School	Grades 7–12
Pregnant/Parenting Program at YMCA	Grades 8–12
General Education and Special Education Cohesive Programming	Grades 6–12
Baltimore County Public Schools	
Program	**Population served**
Afternoon Middle School Learning Centers	Students in grades 6 to 8 who are on expulsion, administrative transfer, or program review status when alternative schools are at capacity

Alternative Middle and High Schools provide innovative curriculum, counseling, and social skills to assist students when returning to comprehensive schools.	Students in grades 6 to 12 who are on expulsion administrative transfer, or program review status
Evening/Saturday High School Program offers courses to continue credit classes and/or accelerate credit programs. A graduation ceremony is held for students who complete their graduation requirements.	High school students and individuals between 16 and 21 years of age (students in grades 9 through 12 who are on expulsion, administrative transfer, or program review status)
Life Works program offers support to alternative school students in grades 11 and 12. Focus is on assistance with transitioning back to their home school, finding employment, and graduating.	Students in alternative school (Rosedale Center) in grades 11 and 12
Home and Hospital services students restricted for reasons of physical or emotional health. The students are taught either by distance learning or individual instruction in the home, hospital, or therapeutic center.	Students in grades K-12 (regular education) or ages 3 to 21 (special education), who are unable to attend school for reasons of physical or emotional health
Home Teaching provides individualized instruction at the home or a community location.	When appropriate, students in grades K-12 who are on expulsion, administrative transfer, or program review status
Maryland's Tomorrow/Advance Path Academy is an in-school alternative program that provides a flexible schedule and curriculum based on technology.	Students in grades 9–12 who are at risk of dropping out of school.
Maryland's Tomorrow program's primary goal is to increase the number of students who graduate from high school. This program is offered in targeted high schools.	Students in grades 9–12 who are at risk of dropping out of school
Neglected and Delinquent Youth Grant provides instruction to incarcerated youth, 21 and under, to assist their return to a comprehensive school or to help prepare them to pass the GED.	Youth 21 and under who are incarcerated at the Baltimore County Detention Center (must be an Adult Center)
Summer School program offers specific, grade-level instruction in preparation for the Maryland School Assessment and High School Assessments.	Students in grades 3–12 who are in need of help with acceleration, promotion, or credits
Therapeutic Services program offers individual, family, and group counseling, home visits, and case management services to qualified students and families.	Selected students based on need and/or recommendation
Secondary Academic Intervention Model (SAIM) focuses on academic and behavioral intervention to address the needs of students who are the lowest academic performers, most disruptive, and at greatest risk of dropping out of school.	Grades 6–10
Bridge Center provides support for secondary students transitioning into Baltimore County Public Schools.	Students who are entering or returning to BCPS after a long absence, being released from incarceration, or in foster care
Baltimore City Public Schools	
Program	**Population served**
Novell Credit Recovery program offers review credit opportunities during and after school to help students recover credits from courses they have previously failed.	High school students in grades 9–12 who have failed courses required for graduation

Calvert County Public Schools	
Program	**Population served**
Calvert County Alternative School offers students an opportunity to continue education services toward graduation in a non-traditional setting.	Middle school students, grades 6–8, who need an alternative setting as a result of disciplinary action or special education needs High school students, grades 9–12, who need additional support through disciplinary actions, special education services, or behavioral interventions
Alternative programs are located in each of the county's four high schools and two regional programs housed in the county's middle schools. The programs serve as an intervention for students with various needs that are struggling in a regular education setting.	Grades 6–8: Regional programs at two of six middle schools assist students who require an alternative setting to meet their educational needs Grades 9–12: High school students who need an alternative setting to continue with high school courses toward graduation
Twilight School focuses on students who need extra support to complete coursework toward graduation. The intervention is focused on state-assessed courses.	Grades 9–12: High school students who are in danger of failing a state-assessed course needed for graduation
Ninth Grade Academy is used to assist with transitioning of students from middle school to high school and to focus on small learning communities that address students' individual needs.	Grade 9—High school students that are involved in the standard curriculum are placed in cohorts with a core group of teachers to assist with the transitioning to high school.
Sixth-grade teams assist the fifth graders in transitioning to middle school with a focus on small learning communities with the same core of teachers.	Grade 6—Middle schools work with students in cohorts with a group of teachers to assist with academic, social, and emotional needs of transitioning students.
Saturday for Middle School is a program in middle schools that works with students who need additional academic support. Enrichment programs are offered to allow students to explore additional information and points of interest.	6th–8th graders are involved in the program to work on academic remediation and enrichment.
Saturday School for High School program provides additional opportunities for students to get academic assistance in core courses.	9th–12th graders can be assigned or volunteer to come and receive academic assistance.
Algebra Enhancement program provides remediation to enhance students' Algebra skills in preparation for the High School Assessments.	9th–12th graders will receive instruction based on the skills and content covered on the High School Assessments.
Cecil County Public Schools	
Program	**Population served**
Detour: Offers after-school tutorial, anger-management counseling, career guidance, drug/alcohol counseling, and community referral.	Grades 8–12, students referred through school, agency, or family
ASP (Alternative Suspension Program): Provides for suspension reduction through community services, anger-management counseling, and schoolwork recovery.	Grades 6–12, students referred by school administrator and parent
Cecil Alternative Program is an alternative school for students referred for inappropriate behaviors and those entering from a nonpublic placement.	Grades 6–12

High School After School is a grade recouping program that offers students failing core subjects the opportunity of tutorial instruction and test retaking.	Grades 9–12. Students who are failing core classes may stay after school for instruction and test retaking.
Evening High School offers review credit as well as original credit.	Grades 9–12. Students may enroll in Evening High School to pick up additional or review credits for graduation.
High Roads School is a nonpublic day program for emotionally disturbed students with a credit program and behavior intervention.	Grades 6–12
High School Academic Intervention Team: An in-school team that provides academic intervention to identified students. Provides direct and referral services.	Grades 9–12
Charles County Public Schools	
Program	**Population served**
Case Management Pilot Project at Henry Lackey High School: Individualized interventions are being developed by case managers at a pilot high school to retain special education students at risk of dropping out of school.	Special education students at risk for dropping out
Check and Connect Pilot Project at General Smallwood Middle School: Students are assigned mentors who monitor engagement with school, then intervene to reestablish connections and enhance social and academic competencies.	Students who exhibit dropout indicators, including low academic performance, poor attendance, and unproductive behaviors
21st Century Community Learning Center at Malcolm is a once weekly after-school mentoring program.	Malcolm neighborhood students in grades 3–12 who exhibit dropout indicators, including: low academic performance, poor attendance, or unproductive behaviors
Maryland's Tomorrow offers academic support and encouragement throughout the high school experience. Assistance is geared toward improving attendance, academic performance, and career objectives.	Students who are experiencing difficulty maintaining a satisfactory level of academic performance, and identified by their 8th grade guidance counselor as at risk of dropping out of school
Student Support Teams function in each school to identify students who are not being successful academically or socially.	K–12
Summer Youth Achievement program is designed to meet the needs of at-risk middle school students. Summer school students, alternative school students, and students referred by outside agencies in grades 6,7, and 8 are eligible to participate. Students receive academic assistance, social skills training, recreational trips, and planned field trips.	At-risk middle school students (approximately 100 students)
Freshman Seminar is designed to promote a successful transition from eighth to ninth grade and to promote academic and social success for all students. Freshman seminar will examine skills all students need for success in school and life. This course will provide students with opportunities to develop skills and knowledge.	Entering ninth graders

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a system-based approach to enhancing the capacity of schools to educate all children by developing research-based schoolwide and classroom discipline systems. The process focuses on improving a school's ability to teach and support positive behavior.	PBIS impacts all students K through 12 with a strong focus on students exhibiting difficulties in social and academic development.
Behavior Education Program: The Check-IN/Check-Out program is a school-based program providing daily support and monitoring for students who are at risk of developing serious, chronic behaviors. It incorporates core principles of positive behavior support and enhances communicating among teachers, improves school climate, increases consistency among staff, and helps teachers feel supported.	Students who demonstrate persistent patterns of problem behavior K through 12
Southern Maryland College Access Network: Academic support provided through weekly individual meetings with a trained site advisor, as well as group activities aimed at increasing academic success, encouraging career exploration, and planning for college admissions and the financial aid process.	Serving La Plata High School students (and one high school from each adjoining southern Maryland county) who are identified as low income and minority, to encourage college preparation and attendance
College of Southern Maryland's Education Talent Search program: Academic support, along with high school and college orientation and advisement. College tours and assistance with college admissions procedures are also provided.	Available to all Charles County middle and high school students
STAY program assures that all students develop the necessary social, behavioral, and academic skills to become responsible members of society. Consistency, setting high behavioral standards, and expecting positive outcomes for each student accomplish these goals. Individual, group, and family therapy/parent training are essential components of the program. Collaboration between home, school, and community service providers is critical to each student's success.	Serving children, both regular and special education, grades K–8, whose behavioral needs have not been within their home school setting
Juvenile Intervention Officer (JIO) develops and serves in the role of the law enforcement liaison to assigned primary and secondary schools in Charles County that include enforcement, intelligence gathering, prevention and intervention strategies. The role also includes serving as a student mentor which has proven to be a very positive influence for many students in both middle and high school.	All middle and high schools
Garrett County Public Schools	
Program	**Population served**
Evening High School provides opportunity for students to enroll in classes in which they have lost credit.	High school students
J-ROTC provides the opportunity to gain leadership and achievement skills by students.	High school students
Freshman Seminar provides instruction in various skills needed by high school students.	9th graders
Academic Remediation/After school Tutoring provides the opportunity for tutoring and remediation in challenge subjects.	K–12
Maryland's Tomorrow provides classes and interventions for identified students.	High school, at-risk students
Back to School is a re-entry program for returning students.	High school students who re-enroll
Family Worker/STAR/PBIS –Student-family, school intervention	K–12, at-risk students

Drop-out prevention case managers	Grades 6–12, at-risk students
Instructional Consultation Teams provide review and intervention for students experiencing academic or behavioral difficulty.	K–8 students
Harford County Public Schools	
Program	**Population served**
Online Credit Recovery System uses an assessment and curriculum generation tool to produce an individualized prescriptive remediation specific to each student.	High school students who have failed courses required for graduation
PBIS is a schoolwide system of support that includes proactive strategies for defining, teaching, and supporting appropriate student behaviors to create positive school environments.	Students in the Alternative Education Programs
Reconnecting Youth and Techs Bridge	Students who have already dropped out of high school
Math and reading intervention programs, intervention specialists, after school programs, and home visitors (Title 1 schools) are various academic interventions designed to assist at-risk students.	All eligible students
Capturing Kids' Hearts and other grade 9 Freshman Academy strategies focus on adults and their developing relationships with students in order to help them make strong connections in high schools.	All 9th grade students
Peer Helpers program: Leadership training program in all secondary schools. Peer helpers are available to help new students, provide tutoring, facilitate mediation, and assist their fellow students.	All middle and high school students
Student 2 Student is a specific type of peer-helper program focusing on transitioning military students, supported by the military child education coalition (MCEC) and a partnership with Aberdeen Proving Ground.	Aberdeen High School and Edgewood High School students
Howard County Public Schools	
Program	**Population served**
In School Alternative Education Programs (AEPs) provide behavioral and academic support, parent outreach services, and intensive case management for students at risk of school failure. These entry-level alternative education programs are designed to provide resources that allow students with challenging behaviors to remain in their districted school.	K-12 students exhibiting significant behavioral and academic difficulties in school
Maryland's Tomorrow is a high school dropout-prevention program. Facilitators employed at five high schools work in tandem with AEP staff to provide academic tutoring and supplementary instruction to students at risk of dropping out of school.	High school students exhibiting significant difficulties, inconsistent attendance, and low motivation to succeed in school
Gateway High School is one of the programs that comprise the Homewood Center. Homewood is a countywide alternative learning center. Gateway provides behavioral and academic support services to students whose needs exceed what can be provided at the districted schools. Gateway provides a more individualized approach to teaching and learning, counseling, and socio-emotional support and a high level of structure and supervision for participating students.	High school students exhibiting significant difficulties whose needs cannot be met in their districted schools

Evening School program provides academic and behavioral support services for students in the middle and high schools who exhibit behaviors that require their removal from the districted school. Some students may attend by choice.	Middle and high school students serving extended suspensions or who are expelled but continue to qualify for educational services; High school students that elect to attend original credit courses in lieu of or in addition to attending classes during regular school hours; Students 18 years of age or older who have dropped out and then request re-enrollment
Teen Parenting and Childcare is a teen parenting program that provides academic guidance, support, childcare, and counseling for teens and their children. The program enables pregnant and parenting teens to complete their high school education while receiving instruction, job skills, and daycare services. Pregnant and parenting teens are able to attend school fulltime.	High school students; Outreach component of the program serves pregnant and parenting teens at middle and high school levels
Other Academic Intervention Services include extended day, extended week, and extended year programs, the Black Student Achievement Program, and Community Based Learning Centers. These programs are designed to implement effective practices to accelerate the achievement of students performing below grade level. High school programs enable students to score at the proficient level or higher on the Maryland School Assessment and to pass the High School Assessments.	
Montgomery County Public Schools	
Program	**Population served**
Pupil Personnel Workers (PPWs): Each school has an assigned PPW to monitor students with absentee rates of 20 percent or greater. PPWs work with school staff and families to investigate these cases and to provide supports and resources to improve school attendance.	K–12
HAPIT (Honors Advanced Placement Identification Tool) was developed locally to examine a variety of data points for each high school student to determine/verify the appropriateness of course levels. Not only does this assist staff in determining when more rigorous coursework is appropriate, it allows staff to ensure that struggling students receive more interventions and supports.	All students grades 9–12
Reading and Mathematics Interventions: Programs, including Read 180 and Challenge Reading, to help students who are struggling with reading.	Students grades 3–12 who are in need of academic support
Extended Day/Extended Year Programs: Individual schools are provided funding to offer extended day and school year programs for students who are struggling with academics, have failed courses, or are at risk of not passing assessments required for graduation. These programs offer low student-to-teacher ratios and make use of research-based programs proven to positively impact learning. At the high school level credit-recovery programs are being piloted.	Students grades 3–12 on Saturday mornings
George B. Thomas Learning Academy: The mission of this tutoring and mentoring program is to accelerate student mastery of academics, specifically reading, language arts, and mathematics.	Students grades 1–12 on Saturday mornings

Alternative Programs: MCPS operates a continuum of intervention services for middle and high school students who are unsuccessful in their home schools. Level 1 programs are provided in every secondary school. These programs provide intervention strategies and supports to students in their home schools. Level 2 programs are available for students who are successful in their home schools, even with the support of a Level 1 program. Each of these programs provides academic instruction as well as behavioral and social skills instruction. The goal of Level 2 programs is to provide students with the skills needed to successfully return to their home schools. Level 3 programs are available to students in lieu of expulsion.	Students grades 6–12 who are unsuccessful in their home schools
Gateway to College is a program at Montgomery College for high school students who have stopped attending MCPS high schools and for whom high school completion is at risk. The program gives students an opportunity to earn a high school diploma while transitioning to a college campus. Students may simultaneously accumulate high school and college credits, earning their high school diploma while progressing toward an associate degree or certificate.	16- to 20-year-olds who have stopped attending MCPS high schools and for whom high school completion is at risk
Student Withdrawal Interview: School staff contact parents and interview any student who wishes to withdraw from school after age 16, but prior to graduation. During the interview, school staff presents instructional interventions and alternatives available to encourage the student to remain in school. All information is documented on a MCPS form specifically designed for this purpose.	Any student over age 16 considering withdrawal from school prior to graduation
Interagency Truancy Review Board: The purpose of the Truancy Review Board hearing is to motivate parents of habitually truant students to send their children to school. The hearing is essentially an "end stage" strategy when a sequence of interventions implemented by the school has failed to gain results.	Students through age 15 who are habitually truant
Queen Anne's County Public Schools	
Program	**Population served**
Alternative Program at the Learning Center, Queen Anne's County High School	Grades 9–12 in county high schools
Midshore Alternative Program Collaboration with Caroline County Public Schools	Grades 6–8
Saturday School	9–12th grade students in lieu of in-school suspension
Character Counts! is a joint effort of the Local Management Board and Board of Education of Queen Anne's County to promote a program of character education to all students. Embedding character education into curriculum and the language of the school makes a difference in the school climate.	All grade levels in all QACPS
Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports (PBIS) is a schoolwide system of support that includes proactive strategies for defining, teaching, and supporting appropriate student behaviors to create positive school environments.	K–12

St. Mary's County Public Schools	
Program	**Population served**
Credit Recovery Program allows students to recover credits for classes they previously failed.	9–12th graders who have failed a course
Evening High School offers students the opportunity to receive original credit for courses previously failed or for courses that could not be taken during the school day.	9–12th graders who have failed required courses for graduation receiving a percentage grade of 44 percent or below 9–12th graders who need original credit for required courses for graduation but cannot fit courses into their schedule during the normal school day
Baby Talk offers students with children, infants up to age 3, daycare within the student's high school during school hours.	9–12th graders who have infants and toddlers and are in need of daycare in order to remain in school
Evening Counseling Center offers free counseling services to public school students who are struggling with issues that impact their ability to be successful in school.	K–12 students struggling with personal issues that negatively impact their ability to be successful at school
School Counseling program: High school counselors and pupil service team members meet with 9–12th grade students at risk of dropping out and develop individual intervention plans.	9–12th graders who demonstrate excessive absences, fail multiple courses, or are not scheduled to graduate within the four-year time frame
Talbot County Public Schools	
Program	**Population served**
Educational Options Computer Curriculum offers independent study courses for a variety of subjects. This program is used in several different situations.	Middle and high school students
Independent study classes are part of the regular school day during the second, third, and fourth periods.	Students who have failed a number of courses to recover credit
Extended day program runs two hours after the regular school day.	Students who have failed a number of courses to recover credit
Adult High School Diploma program is offered four nights a week at two locations and five days a week during the day.	Students 16 years of age and in lieu of dropping out
Talbot Family Support Center provides daycare.	Students who have children
Alternative Educational Center (AEC): Extended services for chronically disruptive students beyond existing programs and in-school programs.	Students of any age are scheduled for a morning and afternoon session
Tutoring	Available to all students participating in the program
Washington County Public Schools	
Program	**Population served**
High School Dropout Prevention Program: Develop caseload of students most at-risk for dropping out; build positive relationships; develop strategies and provide intervention; Student Support Team; Maintain and analyze academic, behavioral, and demographic data in order to target appropriate students and provide meaningful intervention.	All WCPS high school students who are at risk of dropping out

Middle School Dropout Prevention Program: Develop caseload of students most at-risk for dropping out; build positive relationships; develop strategies and provide intervention; Student Support Team; maintain and analyze academic, behavioral, and demographic data in order to target appropriate students and provide meaningful intervention. Work to ensure effective transition to high schools.	All WCPS middle school students
Washington County Family Center administers a high school credit program for pregnant and parenting students, provides case management, childcare, and parenting instruction.	Parenting students
WC Evening High School (WCEHS) is an alternative high school educational program that offers up to two courses each semester, original and credit recovery; dual enrollment at home high school and WCEHS.	WCPS high school students
Nova Net Computer/Web-based Instruction: Provides credit recovery and original credit in non-assessed courses; serves selected students at WCEHS, Antietam Academy Alternative Learning Center, and Washington Family Center.	15 to 30 at-risk high school students
Wicomico County Public Schools	
Program	**Population served**
Mentoring Project: Matches a student and an adult to meet one hour per week in the school setting.	Students K-12 who are identified by administration as at risk of failure due to attendance, behavior, or academics
Evening High School enables students to recover credits for promotion or to maintain credit count. Can be used as original credit.	Students 16 or older who have not passed a course
Dropout Reduction: Work with students on a daily basis to offer assistance on grades, attendance, conduct issues, and other matters that affect student performance and advancement.	9–12th grade high school students who have failed courses required for graduation; suggested rising eighth graders who are at risk of struggling in high schools
HSA Remediation: Assist students in areas of weakness in preparation for retaking the test.	Students who fail to pass a required course or test
College Tutors offer in-class tutoring for students during the school day to help students get caught up with work and increase their understanding of core subjects.	Volunteer students who feel they need additional help in core subject areas
Middle School Visits to High School gives middle school students an opportunity to visit Career Technology Educational Center to experience firsthand the types of crafts/careers that are offered. (Motivation to keep students in school to be able to attend one of these programs.)	8th grade middle school students
After School Tutoring program offers individual and group assistance after school to help students work on core and elective courses that they are experiencing difficulty with.	High school students

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Subcommittee Three: Practical Implications and Resources

Subcommittee Charge

Task Force Subcommittee Three was charged with examining the adequacy of resources for and developing an action plan to accomplish the implementation of an initiative to raise the compulsory age of attendance. Assessing the fiscal impact on the State and local governments seems imperative as families, business leaders, politicians, and educators consider raising the compulsory age of attendance from 16 to 18 years of age. The appropriateness of mandating students return to or continue to attend educational settings from which they desire to drop out is the primary charge of other subcommittees. Our charge is to clarify the fiscal impact of continuing education for an additional two years without changing the instructional program, class size, mode of delivery, or length of the school day/year.

Findings

ADEQUACY OF RESOURCES

To examine the adequacy of resources we collected current information and data on dropouts, statewide enrollment projections, high school state rated capacity, costs per pupil belonging, and estimated construction costs for permanent construction of additional classrooms and costs for portable classrooms. A projection was made to determine the number of students who would potentially return to school buildings by the change in the age of compulsory attendance. The resources required by these additional students and the projected fiscal impact of these additional students in Maryland schools were extrapolated from this data.

To this end, the Subcommittee's research included determining:

- The additional number of students who would be continuing for at least two years;
- An analysis of present classroom capacity to accommodate the additional students and the funding necessary to provide additional classrooms;
- The additional funding necessary to staff schools to accommodate these additional students and to purchase necessary textbooks and instructional supplies.

To calculate the fiscal impact on the State and local school systems, we made certain critical assumptions. An initial assumption is that these students will be returning to the same

schools from which they dropped out. This assumption would allow for a base price cost estimate for returning students without any change in staffing ratio, program, resources, or length of instructional day/year. Based on figures from the Maryland State Department of Education, the average number of students dropping out of Maryland's public schools each year is approximately 10,500. For calculation purposes we projected that this number would remain unchanged so that a two-year total would be approximately 21,000 students. Facility analysis was based on an assumption that students would return to a typical classroom with 20 to 25 students. Based on the present Public School Construction Program facilities capacity formula (25 students per teaching station at 85 percent utilization), we assumed 21.25 students per classroom. The committee took into account each system's present overall high school capacity without regard for the fact that some geographical areas of a local school system might be more heavily impacted by returning students than other neighborhoods. Statewide usage capacity is already at 100 percent with 11 systems above 100 percent. The number of high school students is projected to decline in the state through 2014, but the total public school enrollment in Maryland in 2015 is trending up. To calculate the staffing needs, we used the statewide average of one instructor for every 19 students. Recognizing that "new construction" often takes years to come to fruition, the subcommittee decided to provide both the cost to provide newly constructed classroom space and the cost to provide portable classrooms to expand facility capacity in the short term. New construction costs and portable classroom costs are based on current Public School Construction Program budget estimates. New construction was calculated at $247 per square foot. The purchase and installation of portable classrooms is estimated at $80,000 per unit. The more likely approach of purchasing portable classrooms to accommodate the additional 21,000 students totals approximately $46 million. Additional space is required in 15 of the 24 school systems.

The total additional costs for providing educational and related services to the additional students are approximately $200 million per year. This figure varies in the projected impact on local jurisdictions from a low of $385,000 in Talbot County to a high of $60 million in Baltimore City. See tables 1-6 for specific district information and table 7 for a state summary.

TABLE 1

High School Dropouts and Retentions, Grades 9-12

Local School System	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	**Average Last 3 yrs**
Allegany	111	91	116	**106**
Anne Arundel	1,208	577	503	**763**
Baltimore City	3,229	3,212	2,898	**3,113**
Baltimore	1,591	1,662	1,569	**1,607**
Calvert	131	123	134	**129**
Caroline	70	42	53	**55**
Carroll	130	123	139	**131**
Cecil	243	221	235	**233**
Charles	329	325	317	**324**
Dorchester	91	104	98	**98**
Frederick	86	93	102	**94**
Garrett	49	37	33	**40**
Harford	336	409	442	**396**
Howard	220	231	231	**227**
Kent	36	45	27	**36**
Montgomery	814	838	990	**881**
Prince George's	1,305	1,668	1,863	**1,612**
Queen Anne's	64	81	87	**77**
St. Mary's	124	157	217	**166**
Somerset	46	49	67	**54**
Talbot	25	18	21	**21**
Washington	144	129	155	**143**
Wicomico	202	189	153	**181**
Worcester	26	51	31	**36**
State Total	**10,610**	**10,475**	**10,481**	**10,522**

TABLE 2

High School Capacity School Year 2005-06

Local School System	State Rated Capacity	Enrollment SY05-06	Utilization Rate	Seats Available (Needed)	Classrooms Available (Needed)
Allegany	3,491	2,835	81%	656	31
Anne Arundel	24,309	23,151	95%	1,158	54
Baltimore City	26,592	15,452	58%	11,140	524
Baltimore	30,662	31,381	102%	(719)	(34)
Calvert	5,556	5,761	104%	(205)	(10)
Caroline	2,125	1,819	86%	306	14
Carroll	9,891	9,806	99%	85	4
Cecil	5,432	5,552	102%	(120)	(6)
Charles	7,086	8,437	119%	(1,351)	(64)
Dorchester	2,115	1,988	94%	127	6
Frederick	10,978	10,934	100%	44	2
Garrett	1,520	1,478	97%	42	2
Harford	11,886	12,311	104%	(425)	(20)
Howard	13,539	15,578	115%	(2,039)	(96)
Kent	1,195	835	70%	360	17
Montgomery	38,750	43,954	113%	(5,204)	(245)
Prince George's	35,859	40,870	114%	(5,011)	(236)
Queen Anne's	2,314	2,510	108%	(196)	(9)
St. Mary's	1,560	1,065	68%	495	23
Somerset	5,445	5,191	95%	254	12
Talbot	1,786	1,605	90%	181	9
Washington	7,040	6,607	94%	433	20
Wicomico	3,811	4,375	115%	(564)	(27)
Worcester	2,408	2,305	96%	103	5
State Total	**255,350**	**255,800**	**100%**	**(450)**	**(21)**

TABLE 3

Projected High School Capacity With Additional Pupils

Local School System	Additional Pupils	Classrooms needed for Additional Pupils	Total Enrollment w/Additional Pupils	Utilization Rate w/Additional Pupils	Seats Available (Needed)	Classrooms Available (Needed)	Additional Classrooms Needed for Total Enrollment	Additional Classrooms Needed for Addl Pupils Only
Allegany	212	10	3,047	87%	444	21	0	0
Anne Arundel	1,525	72	24,676	102%	(367)	(17)	17	17
Baltimore City	6,226	293	21,678	82%	4,914	231	0	0
Baltimore	3,215	151	34,596	113%	(3,934)	(185)	185	151
Calvert	259	12	6,020	108%	(464)	(22)	22	12
Caroline	110	5	1,929	91%	196	9	0	0
Carroll	261	12	10,067	102%	(176)	(8)	8	8
Cecil	466	22	6,018	111%	(586)	(28)	28	22
Charles	647	30	9,084	128%	(1,998)	(94)	94	30
Dorchester	195	9	2,183	103%	(68)	(3)	3	3
Frederick	187	9	11,121	101%	(143)	(7)	7	7
Garrett	79	4	1,557	102%	(37)	(2)	2	2
Harford	791	37	13,102	110%	(1,216)	(57)	57	37
Howard	455	21	16,033	118%	(2,494)	(117)	117	21
Kent	72	3	907	76%	288	14	0	0
Montgomery	1,761	83	45,715	118%	(6,965)	(328)	328	83
Prince George's	3,224	152	44,094	123%	(8,235)	(388)	388	152
Queen Anne's	155	7	2,665	115%	(351)	(17)	17	7
St. Mary's	332	16	1,397	90%	163	8	0	0
Somerset	108	5	5,299	97%	146	7	0	0
Talbot	43	2	1,648	92%	138	7	0	0
Washington	285	13	6,892	98%	148	7	0	0
Wicomico	363	17	4,738	124%	(927)	(44)	44	17
Worcester	72	3	2,377	99%	31	1	0	0
State Total	**21,044**	**990**	**276,844**	**108%**	**(21,494)**	**(1,011)**	**1316**	**571**

TABLE 4

Instructional Staff Needed

Local School System	Additional Pupils	Additional Instructional Staff Required
Allegany	212	11
Anne Arundel	1,525	80
Baltimore City	6,226	328
Baltimore	3,215	169
Calvert	259	14
Caroline	110	6
Carroll	261	14
Cecil	466	25
Charles	647	34
Dorchester	195	10
Frederick	187	10
Garrett	79	4
Harford	791	42
Howard	455	24
Kent	72	4
Montgomery	1,761	93
Prince George's	3,224	170
Queen Anne's	155	8
St. Mary's	332	17
Somerset	108	6
Talbot	43	2
Washington	285	15
Wicomico	363	19
Worcester	72	4
State Total	**21,044**	**1,108**

TABLE 5

Estimated Costs

Local School System	Additional Pupils	FY05 Cost per Pupil Belonging	Cost for Additional Pupils (Annual)	One Time Cost Perm. Construction Classrooms (Additional Pupils Only)	One Time Cost Portable Classrooms (Additional Pupils Only)
Allegany	212	$9,194	$1,949,128	$0	$0
Anne Arundel	1,525	$9,275	$14,147,467	$4,269,710	$1,382,902
Baltimore City	6,226	$9,603	$59,788,278	$0	$0
Baltimore	3,215	$9,439	$30,346,385	$37,369,647	$12,103,529
Calvert	259	$9,224	$2,385,941	$3,006,620	$973,804
Caroline	110	$8,568	$942,480	$0	$0
Carroll	261	$8,708	$2,275,691	$2,049,616	$663,843
Cecil	466	$8,701	$4,054,666	$5,416,565	$1,754,353
Charles	647	$8,535	$5,524,990	$7,524,298	$2,437,020
Dorchester	195	$9,358	$1,827,929	$794,275	$257,255
Frederick	187	$8,650	$1,620,433	$1,666,039	$539,608
Garrett	79	$9,195	$729,470	$433,945	$140,549
Harford	791	$8,237	$6,518,213	$9,198,086	$2,979,137
Howard	455	$10,585	$4,812,647	$5,284,831	$1,711,686
Kent	72	$10,422	$750,384	$0	$0
Montgomery	1,761	$11,740	$20,678,053	$20,472,910	$6,630,902
Prince George's	3,224	$9,103	$29,348,072	$37,474,259	$12,137,412
Queen Anne's	155	$8,720	$1,348,693	$1,797,773	$582,275
St. Mary's	332	$8,903	$2,955,796	$0	$0
Somerset	108	$10,390	$1,122,120	$0	$0
Talbot	43	$9,024	$385,024	$0	$0
Washington	285	$8,522	$2,431,611	$0	$0
Wicomico	363	$8,998	$3,263,275	$4,215,467	$1,365,333
Worcester	72	$11,228	$808,416	$0	$0
State Total	**21,044**	**$9,661**	**$200,015,162**	**$140,974,039**	**$45,659,608**

TABLE 6

Summary by Local School System

Local School System	Additional Pupils	Additional Instructional Staff Required	Additional Classrooms Needed for Additional Pupils Only	Cost for Additional Pupils (Annual)	One Time Cost Portable Classrooms (Additional Pupils Only)
Allegany	212	11	0	$1,949,128	$0
Anne Arundel	1525	80	17	$14,147,467	$1,382,902
Baltimore City	6226	328	0	$59,788,278	$0
Baltimore	3215	169	151	$30,346,385	$12,103,529
Calvert	259	14	12	$2,385,941	$973,804
Caroline	110	6	0	$942,480	$0
Carroll	261	14	8	$2,275,691	$663,843
Cecil	466	25	22	$4,054,666	$1,754,353
Charles	647	34	30	$5,524,990	$2,437,020
Dorchester	195	10	3	$1,827,929	$257,255
Frederick	187	10	7	$1,620,433	$539,608
Garrett	79	4	2	$729,470	$140,549
Harford	791	42	37	$6,518,213	$2,979,137
Howard	455	24	21	$4,812,647	$1,711,686
Kent	72	4	0	$750,384	$0
Montgomery	1761	93	83	$20,678,053	$6,630,902
Prince George's	3224	170	152	$29,348,072	$12,137,412
Queen Anne's	155	8	7	$1,348,693	$582,275
St. Mary's	332	17	0	$2,955,796	$0
Somerset	108	6	0	$1,122,120	$0
Talbot	43	2	0	$385,024	$0
Washington	285	15	0	$2,431,611	$0
Wicomico	363	19	17	$3,263,275	$1,365,333
Worcester	72	4	0	$808,416	$0
State Total	**21044**	**1108**	**571**	**$200,015,162**	**$45,659,608**

TABLE 7

STATE SUMMARY

Additional Pupils	**21,044**
Additional Instructional Staff	**1,108**
Additional Classrooms Needed	**571**
Cost for Additional Pupils (rounded, annual)	**$200,015,000**
Cost for Additional Portable Classrooms (rounded, one time)	**$45,660,000**

ACTION PLAN, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AND PARTNERSHIPS

Task Force Subcommittee Three was also charged with making recommendations that would support successful implementation of an initiative to raise the compulsory public school attendance age from 16 to 18 across Maryland. The Subcommittee had three primary areas of focus: an action plan, professional development that would assure success of the action plan, and partnerships that would enhance opportunities for students to successfully complete high school.

According to the National Youth Employment Coalition (2005), nearly one third of the students in the United States are not completing high school in four years. The result of this failure to complete high school means that approximately 5.4 million young people between the ages of 16 and 24 are out of school and out of work in this country.

In order to develop an action plan for the implementation of such an initiative, infrastructure must be constructed. That infrastructure must be based on what the students need, rather than on what schools traditionally have offered in a new location or with new labels.

Researchers and educational writers differ markedly about what students need to keep them in school and to earn a diploma. Rather than sift through conflicting opinions, the Subcommittee found it most useful to explore the question of why students drop out in the first place. Knowing those reasons will dictate program design.

In a survey (Bridgeland, Dijulio, & Morison, 2006) of nearly 470 dropouts throughout the country, nearly 50 percent said they left school because their classes were boring and not relevant to their lives or career aspirations. A majority said schools did not motivate them to work hard, and more than half dropped out with just two years or less to complete their high school education.

Two-thirds of those surveyed said they would have worked harder to graduate if their schools had demanded more of them and provided the necessary academic and personal supports

to help them succeed. Others said that as they grew older, increased freedom and other distractions drew them away from school. Sixty-two percent reported they had grades of C's or better when they left school; 70 percent were confident they could have met their school's graduation requirements; and 74 percent would have stayed in school if they had to do it over again. Significant reasons given by students for dropping out included not being sufficiently challenged, and feeling unmotivated, bored, and unsupported. Other, more personal reasons, were also significant: needing a job, becoming a parent, taking care of a sick family member.

"Most students don't wake up on a single morning and decide to drop out of school. Rather, dropping out is the end of a long-term process of disengagement, as students find school to be disconnected from—even at odds with—the rest of their lives," said Geoff Garin, President of Peter D. Hart Research Associates.

While these former students accept some responsibility for not completing high school, they say that there are "supports" that can be provided at school and at home. More than 70 percent believe that the problem could be addressed through better teachers, real world learning opportunities, smaller classes, increased supervision, and improved communication between parents and schools.

"As we work to improve our nation's high schools for all students, it is vital for us to consider the insights and reflections of the young people who were failed by our schools," said Jim Shelton, Education Divison Program Director at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. "Our education system needs to respond by ensuring all students—no matter where they go to school—have access to the challenging, relevant and supportive education to ensure their success in this tough new economy." (Bridgeland et al., 2006).

The Subcommittee reviewed current practices and programs, collected data from school systems on existing programs, analyzed the evidence shared by districts, and examined the findings of national longitudinal dropout studies in order to consider the most effective responses to the questions of implementation of action plans, professional development and the fostering of partnerships. From our examination of practices in Maryland we found:

- There is significant discrepancy among districts in what is identified as an alternative education or dropout-prevention program.
- A lot of programs exist in the name of dropout prevention, yet one-third of entering high school students leave high school before graduation with no viable options for gaining their diploma or equivalent.
- The data evaluating these programs are inconsistent.
- It is difficult, if not impossible, to compare the costs per student of these programs.
- While Maryland's demographics may mirror the national demographics to some extent, there are unique factors in Maryland's data; a significant number of

Maryland's dropouts are not members of the traditional subgroups. The majority (more than 60 percent) of students dropping out in Maryland are students of color. Only 40 percent of the dropouts are in subgroups of special education, FARMS, LEP, migrant, or 504.

- Structures to engage the families of potential dropouts appear to be insufficient based on the review of program information from districts.
- There is recognition that meeting the needs of students who are most likely to drop out is not the same as preventing students from dropping out of school by changing the compulsory age of attendance.

School climate, adult expectations, scaffolding for learning, and content relevance have much to do with the student's decision to drop out. These points constitute the design principles for an action plan to keep students moving toward a diploma until their eighteenth year.

ACTION PLAN

Following the design principles itemized above, an action plan to keep youth productively engaged in working toward a diploma would be something other than more of what schools offer now. After all, if schools do the same things, why should we expect different results?

An action plan to accomplish the goal could do any combination of things to support positive climate, high expectations, scaffold learning, and relevant content for students.

According to the National Youth Employment Coalition (2005), students between the ages of 16 and 18 who are likely to drop out will need some support to stay engaged in school. The support these students will need is often identified as alternative education.

Currently, the State of Maryland has no formal definition of alternative education. Such a definition is found, however, in several other states, Wisconsin for one. Too often, alternative education programs have developed a reputation in their respective communities as programs for "bad kids." This view must be changed as an infrastructure is put into place. While much of the work to prevent students from dropping out of school must be done in pre-kindergarten through grade nine, the question of how to best serve those students who leave school when they reach the age of 16 must be addressed. A review of the literature and current practices across the nation indicates the following:

Alternative education programs can be:

- A separate room or teacher within a comprehensive high school where additional services are provided;
- A school within a comprehensive high school; or,

- A separate facility.

(Source: State of Wisconsin, Department of Public Instruction)

Elements of Quality Practice and Programming:

- Offer low student/teacher ratio
- Are accredited
- Grant credentials (High School Diplomas or GED)
- Offer credit recovery
- Hire certified teachers
- Provide flexible scheduling
- Negotiate strong relationships at the local level
- Secure private funding

(Source: State of Wisconsin, Department of Public Instruction)

Models of Alternative Education need to offer anger management; small group instruction; some individualized instruction; computerized, self-paced instruction; guidance services; and study skills. Strong, consistent, and persistent support services are critical to these students' success.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Any professional development discussion related to dropouts must address two separate areas: ongoing growth of all staff who meet and teach students throughout their public school experiences, and the fine-tuned professional development of staff devoted to alternative programming focused on those students least likely to earn a diploma.

Professional teaching staff as well as administrative staff are at a premium due to national shortages in both work forces. Before considering professional development needs, the Subcommittee recognized initially that adequate staff may not be available for a plan of this scope, even if funding would be.

According to the Maryland Teacher Staffing Report 2006–2008 (Maryland State Department of Education, 2006), the State is experiencing a critical shortage of non-classroom positions: principal, reading specialist, and speech/language pathologist. Also in short supply are teachers who are: male, members of minority groups, and certified in critical content areas (including mathematics, science, ESOL, foreign language, career and technology, and special education).

Each of Maryland's 24 school systems is projected to have a shortage of certified teachers. This continuing employee shortage, coupled with a successful plan to keep students in school, suggests a need for alternate approaches to teaching certification and for alternative

delivery of instruction as well. While it is not the purview of this report to suggest restructuring of Maryland Higher Education, it is also true that Maryland must begin to move toward producing more certified teachers to meet the instructional needs of its students. At the same time, Maryland must implement strategies to welcome college graduates with relevant job skills and experiences to instruct our most vulnerable youth at risk of not earning a high school diploma. In light of continuing high-stakes requirements for a diploma in Maryland, alternative programming for youth who currently drop out is a complex issue. Those youth must meet the same High School Assessment and graduation requirements as all other students, so their program is not a difference of content as much as it is a difference of delivery. Finding adequate numbers of staff who can fulfill this requirement during a time of shortage is more than a professional development question.

PARTNERSHIPS

In order to ensure the success of an initiative to meet the needs of students who are in the age range of 16 to 18 years, and who, for whatever reason, have been unable to complete high school, an extensive and sophisticated network of interagency collaboration needs to be in place. Critical guiding principles to consider include these from the National Youth Employment Coalition (Mala & Henry, 2005):

- Partner with community-based organizations and higher education for the good of all students;
- Access multiple funding streams to protect programming;
- Provide support services, such as case management and counseling, to assure continued student attendance;
- Provide contextual, applied, experiential, and project-based learning to engage the learner;
- Offer a personalized learning environment embedded in youth development principles; and
- Integrate community service and service-learning opportunities which offer connections to employment, training, and postsecondary education.

Without a solid foundation of well articulated and established partnerships, the initiative has a greatly diminished possibility for success. Certainly, the school systems have a great deal of responsibility for providing the most appropriate service to all students. However, the federal, state and local governments, a multitude of social service agencies and the private sector all share in this responsibility. Each in some way provides support and acts as a barrier to providing appropriate programming and experiences for the students who are not completing high school.

In reviewing the current state of America's dropouts, the National Youth Employment Coalition (Mala & Henry, 2005) addressed the issue of dropouts by observing:

- Given the new economy and global competition, the goal for the American High School must be to graduate the overwhelming majority of students with proficient skills.
- School districts and the State will need to develop a portfolio of secondary school options—all having the highest standards—while customizing to the needs of a diverse population.
- Funding and policy must be realigned to support the re-invention of the American High School, which would include expansion of educational options. While the American High School works for about two-thirds of all students, it clearly does not work for a large section of the student population.

According to the National Longitudinal Study conducted by the U.S. Department of Education Statistics (Kaufman et al., 1999), the key reasons why eighth- to tenth-grade students dropped out were school-related: did not like school (51 percent), could not get along with teachers (35 percent), and were failing school (39 percent). While some reasons were job-related or family-related, the primary reasons resided in the structure, pacing, time of instructional delivery, and the overall feeling about being in school. To stay in school, some of our students need a different type of school experience.

Subcommittee Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION ONE

Factors other than age must be addressed in any program or legislation that attempts to reduce the dropout rate.

RECOMMENDATION TWO

A definition of alternative education must be developed by the State Board that addresses different modes of instruction and age-appropriate implementation of strategies targeted to the population likely to, or who has already, voluntarily dropped out of school.

RECOMMENDATION THREE

Establish a state-wide initiative that will:

a) Be flexible while providing a consistent philosophy of approach in addressing the needs of 16- to 18-year-old dropouts regardless of where they live or attended school;
b) Establish and evaluate pilot programs based on proven or promising approaches prior to statewide implementation. Consideration should be given to geographic location, size, and diversity of school systems.
c) Provide an infrastructure (people, organization, time of day, location, resources, community and family involvement) and identify reallocation of funding and new funding that guarantees effective services that are interagency and assures increased numbers of students who stay in school and graduate;
d) Examine articulation and funding agreements and formulas among agencies and institutions to determine which of these enhance students' opportunities and which serve as barriers.

RECOMMENDATION FOUR

Expand the data collection work on existing dropout prevention and re-entry programs that has been done, and design and implement a program to analyze the effectiveness of these dropout prevention programs.

RECOMMENDATION FIVE

Use what has been learned in previous studies (African American Males, AEMMS, MPAC report) to address the disproportionate rate of dropouts in minority populations and the need for greater parental involvement.

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Subcommittee Four: Special Populations

Subcommittee Charge

Subcommittee Four was to address Subsection (e)(5) of House Bill 36: "Examine the implications for raising the compulsory public school attendance age to 18 on standards-based outcomes, students with disabilities, and students with limited English proficiency."

The Subcommittee examined carefully the impact of any change in the compulsory public school attendance age on special population students, specifically on students with disabilities receiving special education and students with limited English proficiency (LEP). Students with disabilities receive special education and related services that are specifically designed to meet the unique needs of the student. These services and specialized instruction are provided to the student at no cost to the parents. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004) is the federal law that mandates that all children residing in the state with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) between the ages of 3 and 21.

Limited English Proficient students are students who have a primary or home language other than English, and who have been assessed as having limited or no ability to understand, speak, read, or write English. Those LEP students are also entitled to a public education between the ages of 3 and 21 (COMAR 13A.01.04.02 (11)). As described in the Findings section of this report, some research and data indicate that being entitled to FAPE until age 21 does not necessarily result in a higher rate of school completion for these special populations.

Both the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 have established goals that will improve the education and preparation of young adults for employment and independence upon exiting school. The success of these legislative initiatives depends on change, i.e. change in educational standards, student expectations, instruction, and assessments. According to Knokey (2006), "What happens in classrooms every day is what students experience directly and it is the mechanism through which educational interventions are most likely to produce the desired changes in improved student achievement." To meet the needs of this diverse subgroup of students, appropriate educational program options, services, and supports are necessary.

For consistency of understanding throughout this report, definitions of special education participant/student with disabilities, Limited English Proficient, Dropout, and Graduation, as defined by the Maryland Report Card (2007) are listed in Appendix A.

To accomplish its assigned task, the subcommittee reviewed and discussed research and data regarding:

- Current federal and State law pertaining to Special Education and non- English proficient/limited English proficient (NEP/LEP) students;
- Graduation and dropout rates for the identified subgroups;
- Factors contributing to student dropout;
- Existing and potential alternate educational opportunities to meet the needs of the identified subgroups; and,
- Post school outcomes of the students in the identified subgroups.

Findings

The IDEA 2004 emphasizes that post school success is the ultimate outcome of the FAPE guaranteed to students with disabilities by declaring that its purpose is "To ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a FAPE that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education or, employment, and/or independent living." To determine if services provided to students with disabilities are effectively preparing them to meet the goals of IDEA, the Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services has been conducting the Maryland Longitudinal Transition Study (MD LTS). It is a parallel study of the National Longitudinal Transition Study – 2 (NLTS2) being conducted by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. These two studies began in 2000 and will conclude in 2009. The Maryland study began with 1000 students with disabilities with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) between the ages of 13 and 18. The MD LTS has been divided into Waves, or sections, focusing on student school age experiences and bands of post school year outcomes. The first Wave looked at students while in school, concentrating on educational instruction and support along with out-of-school activities such as home life, part-time employment, recreational activities, and social relationships. The MD LTS Wave 1 and Wave 2 Final Report is included as Appendix B to the Subcomitte's report.

All data and findings are weighted estimates of the total population of youth who received special education support during their public education. The MD LTS includes both youth who exited school with a diploma or a certificate of program completion, and those who dropped out.

Wave 2 is the first look at the post-school activities of the participants. Those participants have been out of school for up to two years. The majority are male, 18 or 19 years of age. The following table provides information on the modes of post school engagement of the study participants (Cameto, 2006).

TABLE 1

Post School Engagement Activities

from Wave 2 of the Maryland Longitudinal Transition Study

Activity	***Graduate/Certificate***	***Dropout***
Employment Only	42.8%	46.6%
Postsecondary Education Only	4.8 %	0%
Job Training Only	11.4%	11.1%
Employment and Postsecondary Education	29.8%	18.8%

While it is important to keep in mind that these students have only been out of school for up to two years, it is alarming that the number of young adults engaged in post school activities is so low. Responses listed in the chart above do not equal 100 percent since respondents could check off more than one activity, or could indicate that none of the options were applicable. Therefore, the data indicate that approximately 50 percent of "school leavers" in this subcategory (students with disabilities) were engaged in employment, job training, and/or postsecondary education at the time of the report.

The rate of students with disabilities completing their education programs proved to be a concern to the Subcommittee. The following tables summarize trend data for dropout and graduation rates for the school years 2001-02 to 2005-06. Based on these data, it becomes obvious that few young adults with disabilities are engaged in postsecondary activities.

TABLE 2

Maryland Dropout Data—Students with Disabilities

Summary of trend data for the 2001-02 to 2005-06 school year

Source: Maryland Report Card

Year	***Special Education***	***Regular Education***	***Difference***
2006	5.65%	3.38%	+ 2.27%
2005	5.13%	3.50%	+ 1.63%
2004	4.12%	3.81%	+ 0.31%
2003	4.10%	3.30%	+ 0.8%
2002	3.71%	3.68%	+ 0.03%

TABLE 3

Maryland Graduation Rate Data—Special Education

Summary of trend data for the 2001-02 to 2005-06 school years

Source: Maryland Report Card

Year	Special Education	Regular Education	Difference
2006	76.77%	86.21%	- 9.44%
2005	77.56%	85.47%	- 7.91%
2004	77.56%	84.89%	- 7.33%
2003	78.35%	85.20%	- 6.85%
2002	80.71%	84.08%	- 3.37%

For Limited English Proficient (LEP) students, several factors were identified that may explain the striking differences between rates of drop out and graduation compared to students with disabilities. One important difference is the extreme diversity of students comprising the total LEP population. Local school system personnel who are actively engaged with these students and their families note that there are subgroups that choose to migrate to Maryland specifically for the educational opportunities available and who have high expectations for their children's academic achievement. There are also subgroups that migrate to Maryland for employment opportunities and, due to economic necessity, may be forced to work for long hours to meet their family's basic needs, leaving less opportunity to focus on their children's academic progress. While these are just two simplistic explanations, those factors do not negate the fact that dropout and graduation rates are significant issues for LEP students.

TABLE 4

Maryland Dropout Data—Limited English Proficient

Summary of trend data for the 2001-02 to 2005-06 school years

Source: Maryland Report Card

Year	Limited English Proficient	Regular Education	Difference
2006	1.22 percent	3.38%	- 2.16%
2005	1.44%	3.50%	- 2.06%
2004	1.13%	3.81%	- 2.68%
2003	1.03%	3.30%	- 2.27%
2002	1.79%	3.68%	- 1.89%

TABLE 5

Maryland Graduation Rate Data—Limited English Proficient

Summary of trend data for the 2001-02 to 2005-06 school years

Source: Maryland Report Card

Year	Limited English Proficient	Regular Education	Difference
2006	85.41%	86.21%	- 0.8%
2005	91.74%	85.47%	+ 6.27%
2004	86.41%	84.89%	+1.52%
2003	82.57%	85.20%	- 2.63%
2002	88.61%	84.08%	+ 4.53%

Dropping out of high school is related to a number of negative outcomes:

- The median income of high school dropouts age 18 and older was $12,184 in 2003 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005).
- The median income for those who completed their education was $20,431 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005).
- Dropouts make up a disproportionately high percentage of the nation's prison inmate population (Harlow, 2003).

Dropping out of high school is not a sudden act, but a gradual process of disengagement. Most students drop out because of significant academic challenges, lack of connection to school community, a belief that school is boring, the need to get a job, pregnancy, or the necessity to care for a family member. There are many warning signs that a student has begun the process of school disengagement. Signs may include:

- Downward spiral of grades;
- Poor attendance;
- Increase in discipline referrals;
- Lack of participation in classes; and,
- Non-adherence to school policies.

One Maryland school system conducted a survey of young adults who dropped out of school during recent years. The survey included, but was not limited to, students with disabilities and LEP students. The following chart provides concrete examples that reflect national research listed above. (For purposes of this survey, similar and repeated responses were combined.)

TABLE 6

Results of Maryland School System Survey of Recent Dropouts

Question	*Responses*
Why did you leave school?	Family conflict
	Hate school
	Medical issues
	Quicker to get GED
	Bullied by others
	Drugs
	Boy issues
	Attendance failure
	Just wanted out
	Split home
	Teachers don't like me
	Wanted to work
What kept you from succeeding in your school program?	Did not want to repeat a grade
	Pregnancy
	Need more one-on-one
	Did not try
	Did not feel comfortable
	Needed too many credits
	Hard to sit still
	No math help
	Always in trouble
What did you like about school?	Nothing
	No idea
	Helping out
	Everything
	Office staff
What courses or programs could we have offered that would have caused you to stay in school?	Smaller classes
	Shorter or later day
	Flexible schedule for medical issues
	Nothing

What are you doing now?	Vo-Tech in grade 8 Classes are not the issue Special education Accelerated diploma Free night school None Nothing GED class Trying to save money Waiting for an opening at the Bridges Program Two month waiting list for the GED program Looking for a job Going to court Working
What do you like about what you are doing now?	Being on my own Freedom Making money Finished GED Don't have to deal with the drama and immaturity Don't have to get up until 10:00 and GED class is over at 2:00 Will finish GED faster than getting a diploma Taking care of my baby Nothing

Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION

The Subcommittee recommends that the age of compulsory attendance be increased along with an earlier starting age. Compulsory attendance should begin at age 4 and end at age 18. Research is proving that early education/intervention leads to greater success.

RATIONALE

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and the 2004 reauthorization of IDEA have placed new focus on educational outcomes. This focus provides Maryland with the opportunity to reexamine how education is delivered. The Maryland Report Card is providing us with annual data on the progress of children to meet these desired outcomes using existing educational frameworks. Dr. Ruby Payne, in her body of work on "Understanding and Working with Students and Adults from Poverty" (1996), strongly advocates beginning formal education at age 4. Building a solid educational and social foundation will lead to students achieving their desired post school outcomes. As stated earlier, federal and State law requires public education be available at age 3 for children with disabilities and LEP children. Because of this entitlement, children are meeting with much greater success. The opportunity to begin education earlier should be made available to all children. The additional years at the end of public education will provide the opportunity for the establishment of five-year high school programs and alternative formats for delivering instruction.

FIVE YEAR HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMS.

An additional year of high school could be used to address some of the reasons given by students for dropping out of school in the survey discussed earlier, such as:

- Students could receive additional help in academic subjects;
- Work-study could be more easily built into student schedules beginning at an earlier age;
- Additional time would be available to meet graduation requirements, including the High School Assessments.

ALTERNATIVE FORMATS FOR THE DELIVERY OF INSTRUCTION.

Alternative formats for instructional delivery may enable students to complete their education. For example:

- Schedules may use part-time day classes;
- Schedules may combine part-time day classes in combination with night school;
- Schedules could include work study and technical and/or post-secondary education.

The increased age of compulsory attendance would allow LEP students to enroll at an older age. Many families immigrating have children ages 16 and older. Too often they are discouraged from enrolling because of their age and lack of prior schooling.

Students could be provided with activities that demonstrate the importance of their coursework, such as internships and cooperative education opportunities.

Appendix A: Maryland Report Card Definitions

From http://mdreportcard.org

Special Education Program Participants: The number and percentage of special education program participants—students with disabilities who have current Individualized Education Plans (IEPs).

Limited English Proficient (LEP) Program Participants: LEP students have a primary or home language other than English and have been assessed as having limited or no ability to understand, speak, read, or write English.

Graduation Rate: The percentage of students who receive a Maryland high school diploma during the reported school year. This is an estimated cohort group. It is calculated by dividing the number of high school graduates by the sum of the dropouts for grades 9 through 12, respectively, in consecutive years, plus the number of high school graduates.

Dropout Rate: The percentage of students dropping out of school in grades 9 through 12 in a singular year.

The number and percentage of students who leave school for any reason, except death, before graduation or completion of a Maryland-approved educational program, and who are not known to enroll in another school or State-approved program during the current school year. The year is defined as July through June and includes students dropping out over the summer and students dropping out of evening high school and other alternative programs. The dropout rate is computed by dividing the number of dropouts by the total number of students in grades 9–12 served by the school.

Note—Students who re-enter school during the same year in which they dropped out of school are not counted as dropouts.

Appendix B: Maryland Longitudinal Transition Study, Wave 1, Components 1 and 2, Final Report Summary, April 13, 2004

BACKGROUND

As part of a comprehensive longitudinal research related to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS2) is being conducted by SRI International. SRI is conducting this study under contract with the U.S. Department of Education. Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Allegany County students and their families are taking part in the study. OSEP asked that states be offered the opportunity to augment the sample of students selected for the NLTS2 with additional students to conduct a state-level companion study. The Maryland State Department of Education elected to participate and is conducting the Maryland Longitudinal Transition Study (MD LTS). 1,200 students, their parents/guardians, teachers, and school administrators from 9 local school systems are participating in the Maryland Longitudinal Transition Study (MD LTS). These students were ages 13 through 16 on December 1, 2000. The sample includes enough youth in the following disability categories to report findings for them separately: learning disabilities, speech/language impairments, mental retardation, emotional disturbance, other health impairments, autism and multiple disabilities.

The framework of the MD LTS is the same as the NLTS2. There are to be 5 components within this wave. Component 1 of the study is a look at the characteristics of students with disabilities and their households. The demographic characteristics shall depict the diversity of the students. The second component addresses the extracurricular activities of the students. It looks at all out of school activities. Component 3 and 4 focus on the school. Component 3 summarizes findings regarding the characteristics of schools attended by secondary school-age students with disabilities. Component 4 will focus on the school programs of students, including courses taken, placements, and access to the general education curriculum. Component 5 will address student achievement in multiple domains such as: academic achievement in the general curriculum, areas of independence, and employment. Component 5 will also report on absenteeism and dropout.

The nearly 1,200 MD-LTS students represent **all** students in Maryland who were ages 13 through 16 on December 1, 2000, and receiving special education services. All of the descriptive statistics presented are weighted estimates of the population of students with disabilities. We should also be cautious when interpreting the results due to the low actual number of youth in a given group, e.g., disability category or racial/ethnic group.

The MD LTS was initiated in August 2001 and will conclude in August 2010. Maryland has now received the report for Wave 1, Components 1 and 2. This is a summary of these two reports.

WAVE 1 COMPONENT 1: INDIVIDUAL AND HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

Component 1 addresses key questions regarding the characteristics of students with disabilities and their households. The demographic characteristics will depict the diversity of the population of students with disabilities. A detailed description of their functional abilities and their prior service histories will illustrate what students bring to their educational experiences. A thorough understanding of the characteristics of students and their households is the foundation for effective policy and practice. The data for this component was reported by parents using telephone interviews and from school data reports. Five areas are discussed in Component 1 of the MD LTS.

1. Demographic characteristics of youth with disabilities

- The distribution of youth with disabilities in the MD LTS differs from that of the nation as a whole, as represented in the NLTS2.

	NLTS2	MD LTS
Learning Disability	62%	54%
Mental Retardation	12%	8%
Speech/language Imp.	4%	9%
Emotional disturbance	11%	14%
Multiple disabilities	2%	14%

- 71 percent of youth with disabilities in the MD LTS age range were male.
- 91 percent of youth with autism were males.
- Maryland youth with disabilities represented by MD LTS differed only slightly from the general state population in terms of their racial/ethnic backgrounds. These findings are contrary to considerable evidence that “disability has long been linked to the conditions of poverty, family structure, and minority status.”
- English is the predominate language.

2. Characteristics of Students’ Households

- Living arrangements of students with disabilities closely mirrored those of the general population in the U.S.
- Only about half of youth with mental retardation or emotional disturbance lived in two-parent households, where as 61 to 71 percent of youth in most other categories of disabilities were living with two parents.

- Among youth with disabilities, 53 percent who lived with their parents lived in households in which another individual was reported to have a disability or special need.
- 12 percent of youth with disabilities had mothers without high school diplomas compared with 18 percent of youth in general population.
- 49 percent of youth with disabilities have private health insurance and 19 percent have government insurance.
- One in nine youth with disabilities were receiving SSI and four percent were in households receiving TANF.
- Youth with mental retardation stand out as being among the most disadvantaged.
- 15 percent of parents reported that their insurance had refused to cover some type of service needed by the youth.

3. Disability Profiles

- This data was reported by the parents, and in many cases reports of disabilities did not include the primary disability classification identified by schools.
- Parents of more then 40 percent of youth reported that they had attention deficit or attention deficit / hyperactivity disorder. Although there is much debate concerning the true prevalence of an appropriate diagnosis of these conditions, the rate at which parents perceived them as part of students' disability profile is telling and may be unaccounted for in the way school staff interact with youth with disabilities.

4. Functional Abilities

- 10 percent or fewer of youth with disabilities were reported to have difficulties in mobility, vision, or hearing.
- 25 percent of youth reported to have problems in one or more of the areas related to conversing, speaking, or understanding others.

5. Daily Living and Social Skills

- There were considerable ranges in parents' perception of students' daily living, social abilities, and strengths.
- Males were more likely to take on household responsibilities.
- Females were more likely to excel at the performing arts.

WAVE 1 COMPONENT 2: LIFE OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM FOR YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

Although school is a critically important learning environment for children and youth, the majority of their time is spent at home with family, interacting with peers, taking part in

extracurricular activities, pursuing individual interests or various forms of recreation. These activities provide opportunities for learning through real life experiences. The choices youth make about how they spend their time outside of school can reap important benefits or result in serious negative consequences, both of which may affect their transition to adulthood. Component 2 describes the lives of youth with disabilities in their non-school time, focusing on the following aspects of their experiences: a broad look at the use of free time, interaction with friends, participation in extracurricular activities, and employment. Analyses also explore the question of how participation in friendships, extracurricular activities, and employment relate to the level of social skills youth possessed as reported by parents.

1. **Use of Free Time**
    - The activities listed by parents were very typical of young teenagers. The activities ranged from playing on computers to hanging out to listening to music.
    - For youth with mental retardation, autism, or multiple disabilities, watching television was the most commonly named activity.
    - Using the computer was the most commonly named activity for youth with learning disabilities.

2. **Interaction with Friends**
    - 90 percent of youth with disabilities visited with friends outside of school at least once a week. (We do not know if these are friends with or without disabilities.)
    - 80 percent of youth with access to a computer used it to communicate with friends.
    - There are differences in the social activities associated with primary disability categories, which demonstrate how functional limitations can have significant effects on social interactions. Youth with learning disabilities tended to be the most socially active. Youths with autism or multiple disabilities have less frequent contacts with friends; approximately 20 percent of them had none of the interactions with friends that were investigated.

3. **Participation in Extracurricular Activities**
    - 80 percent of youth with disabilities had participated in extracurricular activities and programs through which they could explore interests, learn skills, develop friendships, and participate actively as members of their school and community.
    - Youth with learning disabilities, speech impairments, or mental retardation were the most likely to participate in volunteer activities.

4. **Employment**
    - Employment was broken into two categories: work-study and non-school related.
    - 18 percent of youth with disabilities had employment through work-study programs.
    - 48 percent of students in work-study programs received school credit but no pay.
    - 40 percent of youth with autism had work-study jobs.
    - 2/3 of all students were employed in food services, maintenance, or personal care positions.
    - 60 percent of youth with disabilities worked at 1 non-school job during a 12-month period spanning 2001 and 2002.

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Attending to Learn

The Implications of Raising the Compulsory Age for School Attendance

Final Report of the Task Force to Study Raising the Compulsory Public School Attendance Age to 18

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