O'Malley/Brown Transition

Education Work Group Transition Report

June Streckfus	Alvin Thornton, Ph.D.	Patricia Foerster
Co-Chair	Co-Chair	Co-Chair

January 19, 2007

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Maryland State Department of Education and Assessment Sub-Committee	**Budget and Policy Sub-Committee**	**Community and Parental Involvement and Best Practices Sub-Committee**
June Streckfus, Chair	**Alvin Thornton, Chair**	**Patricia Foerster, Chair**
Gene Counihan	Muriel Van Dusen Berkeley	Kamala Edwards
Lauren Dugas Glover	Lavania Lee Rice-Fitzpatrick	Mohammed Mughal
David Temple	George Nilson	Mindie Flamholz
Anthony Diallo	Dawn Lobell	Bebe Verdery
Cheryl Bost	Abdul Kamus	Matthew Freiman
Bruce Taylor	David Helfman	Cynthia Wheeler
Joe Haberman	Terry Cavanagh	Sandy Teplitzky
Cheryl DeAtley	Judy Siegal	Betty Weller
Marva Goldsmith	Blair Ewing	Christy Sample
Scott Davenport	Lisa Bishop	Kelli Nelson
Kenneth Nwafor	Jennifer Eden Brady	Mary Krug
Stan Salett	Charles Burt	Roxanne Chin
Joe Smith	Charles William Hutzel, III	Loretta Johnson
Juliet Eurich	Dorie Flynn	Cecile Kahn
Audrey Clark	Clinton Macsherry	Joan Mory
Gary Brennan	Leon Andrews	Fran Brenneman
Charlene Herzins	Judith Cephas	Martin Knott, Jr.
	Sidney Hankerson	
	Carl Roberts	
	Sheila Jackson	
	Frederick Hutchinson	

Education Work Group Transition Report
Executive Summary

In response to a request from Governor Martin O'Malley and Lt. Governor Anthony Brown, 59 concerned residents of Maryland volunteered to serve on the Education Work Group Transition Team. Governor O'Malley and Lt. Governor Brown asked June Streckfus, Alvin Thornton and Patricia Foerster to serve as co-chairs of the Education Transition Workgroup. To complete its work, the Education Work Group reviewed the short and long-term issues that the O'Malley/Brown Administration may have to address and concluded that they fell into three broad areas: (1) the operation of the Maryland State Department of Education and the assessment of student and school district performance; (2) budget and policy; and (3) community and parental involvement and best educational practices. The Education Transition Workgroup considered 15 major issue areas and developed 93 recommendations for the Governor and Lt. Governor's consideration.

In the area of the Maryland State Department of Education and Assessment, the Workgroup considered the following 5 major topics and offered 22 recommendations:

- the Governor's relationship with the State Department of Education;
- gubernatorial appointments to local boards of education;
- monitoring individual student achievement;
- college and workplace readiness; and
- the need for a "signature" gubernatorial initiative.

In this section, the Workgroup had two primary interrelated goals. The first goal was to clarify review the Governor's constitutional and statutory relationship (including Board of Education appointments) with the Department and local boards and to recommend ways in which he can help define educational priorities and enhanced performance accountability and support systems. The second goal was to recommend ways that the Governor can facilitate general student achievement, college and workplace readiness, and use his unique position as Governor to

develop a "signature initiative" that will create an integrated educational, social, economic, political and community framework to support universal student success.

In the Budget and Policy area, the Workgroup considered the following 6 major topics and offered 38 recommendations:

- the Federal No Child Left Behind Act;
- Maryland's Bridge to Excellence Act (Thornton);
- school construction;
- school readiness;
- teacher and administrator recruitment and retention; and
- technology in the classroom and career and technology education.

In this section, the Workgroup examined the two major student and school system accountability statues, No Child Left Behind and Bridge to Excellence; reviewed the manner in which they intersect and recommended ways in which the Governor can ensure that they are implemented in an appropriate or adjusted as may be required. The Workgroup also examined selected critical state policies in the areas of school construction, teacher and administrator recruitment and retention and technology availability that have an impact on student academic success.

In the Community and Parent Involvement and Best Practices area, the Education Workgroup considered the following 4 issue areas and developed 33 recommendations:

- preparing students for life-long learning and involvement;
- the impact of economic disadvantage on educational achievement;
- educational pedagogy;
- parental and community involvement.

The goal of the Workgroup in this section was to stress the importance of ensuring that the State's educational system prepares students for life-long learning and contributes to their ability to participate effectively in local, state, national and international civic affairs. Understanding

the unique challenges that economic disadvantage presents for students, the Workgroup examined highlighted this factor and indicated the need for the State to give it enhanced attention. The Workgroup reviewed many of the multiple individual, social, economic and political factors that affect student academic success and offered some individual, community and school systems practices that may have a positive affect on student success.

The O'Malley/Brown Administration has a unique opportunity to advance the education of ALL of Maryland's children. It should use the public platform that is singularly available to the Governor and his Administration to reinforce, and where necessary, redefine visionary educational priorities and implementation mechanisms to ensure that all students succeed. The Governor should facilitate the enhanced coordination and restructuring, where required, of local, State and Federal educational support and accountability systems. To support these general initiatives, the Governor and his Administration should mobilize the sustained integrated and substantive involvement of parents, the business community, civic, political, religious and educational organizations in coordinated activities to advance the education of Maryland's children.

O'MALLEY/BROWN EDUCATION TRANSITION WORKGROUP REPORT

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

In response to a request from Governor Martin O'Malley and Lt. Governor Anthony Brown, 59 concerned residents of Maryland volunteered to serve on the Education Work Group Transition Team. Governor O'Malley and Lt. Governor Brown asked June Streckfus, Alvin Thornton and Patricia Foerster to serve as co-chairs of the Education Transition Workgroup. To complete its work, the Education Work Group reviewed the short and long-term issues that the O'Malley/Brown Administration may have to address and concluded that they fell into three broad areas: (1) the operation of the Maryland State Department of Education and the assessment of student and school district performance; (2) budget and policy; and (3) community and parental involvement and best educational practices. The chairs and members of the sub-committees are listed below.

In addition to full and sub-committee work group meetings and work session, the co-chairs of the Education Transition Work Group met with Dr. Nancy Grasmick, State Superintendent of Schools, and members of her senior staff to review strategic issues in public education in the State.

This Education Transition Report reviews the Governor's constitutional and statutory relationship (including Board of Education appointments) with the Department and local boards and recommended ways in which he can help define educational priorities and enhanced performance accountability and support systems. The Report also recommends ways that the Governor can facilitate general student achievement, college and workplace readiness, and use his unique position as Governor and develop a "signature initiative" that will create an integrated educational, social, economic, political and community framework to support universal student success.

The Report examines the two major student and school system accountability statues, No Child Left Behind and Bridge to Excellence; reviewed the manner in which they intersect and

recommended ways in which the Governor can ensure that they are implemented in an appropriate or adjusted as may be required. Attention is also given to selected critical state policies in the areas of school construction, teacher and administrator recruitment and retention and technology availability that have an impact on student academic success.

An important area of focus in the Report is the significance of ensuring that the State's educational system prepares students for life-long learning and contributes to their ability to participate effectively in local, state, national and international civic affairs. The unique challenges for students that are associated with economic disadvantage are addressed in the Report and possible appropriate responses for the Governor are examined. The Education Transition Report also discusses many of the multiple individual, social, economic and political factors that affect student academic success and offered some individual, community and school systems practices that may have a positive affect on student success.

O'Malley/Brown Transition Education Workgroup Report

Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE)
Assessment Subcommittee Report

Introduction

In this section of the O'Malley/Brown Education Transition Report, we assess the governance and management of the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) as well as the strategic role that the governor can play in improving public education by examining: (1) the governor's relationship with the State Board of Education, (2) gubernatorial appointments to local boards of education, (3) the status of efforts to track individual student achievement, (4) college and workplace readiness, and (5) proposing a signature gubernatorial education initiative. The MSDE Assessment Subcommittee developed 22 recommendations to address these five areas.

State Board of Education

Maryland State Department of Education sets policy for the administration of public schools by adopting bylaws and regulations, which have the force of law. The Board, often through the State Superintendent of Schools, consults with and advises county boards of education, superintendents of schools and their staffs, principals, and teachers. It also mediates disputes arising from the twenty-four local school systems in Maryland.

With the advice and counsel of the State Superintendent of Schools, the State Board of Education sets standards for instruction in schools and for programs in public libraries and vocational rehabilitation. The Board sets state high school graduation requirements and in conjunction with the Professional Standards Teaching Education Board (PSTEB), the Board also sets the standards for certification of teachers and other professional personnel. If local school systems do not comply with State standards, the Board may recommend that State funds be withheld from those districts. For schools which consistently fail to improve, the Board, through MSDE, also may intervene to help restructure their administration, organization, and instruction.

The Board is composed of twelve members – eleven appointed to four-year terms and a student member that is annually appointed to a one year term. (Maryland Manual On-Line: A Guide to Maryland Government).

The Governor will appoint members to the State Board of Education according to the schedule delineated below:

Table 2. Gubernatorial Appointments to the Maryland State Department of Education

July1, 2007	July 1, 2008	July 1, 2009	July 1, 2010
Appoint 3 members	Appoint 3 members	Appoint 3 members	Appoint 2 members
Appoint student member	Appoint student member	Appoint student member	Appoint student member

Recommendations

- **The Governor should appoint members of the State Board of Education that:**
  - **represent geographic and cultural diversity;**
  - **are goals, assessment and measurement oriented;**
  - **have knowledge of educational issues and complex financial and budgetary systems;**
  - **have experience with business management and workforce development; and**
  - **represent fairly and advocate for the best interests of all Maryland's children.**

- **The Governor should:**
  - **work with the State Board to set strategic priorities for education, including measurable objectives;**
  - **meet with the State Board twice yearly to review the status of those priorities;**
  - **request the State Board develop a business plan and track progress toward meeting the objectives of the plan;**
  - **appoint a strong education liaison to monitor progress; and**
  - **conduct, in concert with the State Board, a Management Review of MSDE to determine the Department's effectiveness in its work with local districts and the U.S. Department of Education.**

- **The Governor should convene education stakeholders to:**
  - **ensure alignment of efforts with State Board priorities; and**
  - **determine how each group will support the Governor's education priorities.**

Local School Board Appointments

The Governor also appoints local school board members in seven districts: Anne Arundel, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Caroline, Harford, Queen Anne (2007 only), and Wicomico. All other local school members are elected.

Each appointment process differs – in Anne Arundel a slate of candidates is presented to the governor as a result of a county-wide nominating convention, while in Baltimore City appointments are made jointly with the mayor – but the governor should view local school board appointments as a critical avenue to influence educational policy-making at the district level, as each Maryland school board is required by MSDE to develop and submit a "master plan" to address the No Child Left Behind requirements.

Recommendations
- **The Governor should appoint members to local boards of education that:**
  - **represent geographic and cultural diversity;**
  - **are goals, assessment and measurement oriented;**
  - **have knowledge of educational issues and complex financial and budgetary systems;**
  - **have experience with business management and workforce development; and**
  - **share a commitment to implement his strategic priorities for education.**

Tracking and Supporting Educational Progress

In order for the state to ensure that students are provided appropriate support to progress successfully from grade to grade, Maryland needs a data system that will track students across educational institutions statewide. A robust statewide data system will determine the

effectiveness of programs and reform in improving student achievement, identify challenges and areas of excellence, discover appropriate interventions and recognition.

The State's educational system needs to standardize and report data on:

- courses and assessments;
- graduation;
- criteria met for special recognition (i.e. National Honor Society, Maryland Scholar);
- college and work readiness;
- transitions between elementary school, middle school, high school, and college;
- transfers between schools and colleges;
- student progress while in college; and
- completion of postsecondary education and training programs.

MSDE is – through federal funding – in the development phase of establishing a longitudinal data system.

Recommendations:

- **The Governor should ensure that the new data system will be comprehensive and compatible with "State Stat," and that cost estimates and will be determined and funding secured to ensure statewide implementation of the system upon the expiration of federal grant aid.**
- **The Governor should establish a "Research Roundtable" – comprised of education and business school deans – to evaluate the process and analyze the results of state educational data for the Governor's review.**
- **It is recommended that the Governor establish with the State Board of Education and the State Superintendent of Schools specific protocols and timelines for take-over of schools that do not meet state standards.**

College and Workplace Readiness

In order for the state to ensure that students graduate from high school prepared to succeed in college and the workplace and to ensure that the state's economy continues to grow, Maryland

must provide – and promote – the opportunity for students to take and complete rigorous coursework in high school.

The Maryland Scholars curriculum includes courses beyond the current state graduation requirements – Algebra II, Chemistry, Physics (or a third lab science), and two credits of the same Foreign Language. Research shows that students who complete these courses have a significantly higher chance of graduating from college and earning higher salaries than students who do not.

<u>Recommendations:</u>
- **<u>The Governor should recognize and reward students who complete the Maryland Scholars course of study.</u>**
- **<u>The Governor should consider encouraging the State Board of Education to make the Maryland Scholars course of study more available to an increasing number of students.</u>**
- **<u>The Governor should use all means of communication to let citizens – particularly parents/guardians – know of the importance of rigorous course completion.</u>**

Ready for the Next Step (a signature gubernatorial initiative)
Success doesn't just happen. It is achieved through incremental steps, each building upon the one before. It's a cumulative result. Being fully prepared before moving to the next step is critical. The ability of each child to make an expected transition depends on his or her preparation during the prior step.

Maryland has made great strides in raising standards, increasing rigor, strengthening graduation requirements, and improving student achievement. More students in grades 3 through 8 are meeting the state standards in reading and math as measured on the Maryland School Assessment (MSA), and more students in middle and high school are passing the High School Assessments (HSA) in Algebra 1, English 2, Biology and Government. More students are completing rigorous coursework in high school, including Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses.

The fact remains, however, that many students are not adequately prepared for the next step in their education and are floundering to catch up. In addition to the extra burden this places on teachers at the next step, students often become frustrated and disengaged, display inappropriate behavior, and drop out of school.

- Two-fifths of the children who enter kindergarten in Maryland are not ready for kindergarten work that prepares them to read, write and compute.
- Only one-third of Maryland 4th graders score in the "proficient" range in reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The inability to read proficiently limits students' ability to succeed in all subjects.
- Math scores on the Maryland School Assessment (MSA) drop significantly from fifth to eighth grade (from 73% passing to 55% passing), and only 29.6 percent of Maryland eighth graders score in the "proficient" range in math on NAEP.
- One-third of students taking the Algebra I High School Assessment (HSA) in 2006 – a high school graduation requirement for 2009 – did not pass it.
- In 2006, 10,478 Maryland students dropped out of high school.
- 74% of students who enter high school in Maryland graduate four years later.
- 30% of college freshmen in Maryland are required to take at least one remedial course.
- Nearly 60 percent of Maryland employers have difficulty finding new employees with satisfactory communications and problem-solving skills.

In order for Maryland students to be ready for success in college and the workforce, they must be prepared for each step along the way. Each transition – from home to pre-school to kindergarten to elementary school to middle school to high school to college or the workplace – should demand a requisite level of achievement that will ensure each child's success. Children who are not ready for the next step are destined to fall further and further behind.

Recommendation:
- **The Governor should establish a "signature" campaign that bespeaks his vision and commitment to ensure that all students in Maryland are well-prepared for success**

at every level of their education, particularly at those important transitions as students enter Kindergarten, 6th, 9th, and 12th grades. This effort should ensure an interagency approach. Special attention should be given to the recommendations of the recently Maryland State Department of Education report on African-American Male Achievement.

During the coming year, significant events that are related to public education will take place. The Governor and Lt. Governor should take cognizance of them and ensure that they are strategically involved. The most important events and activities are listed below.

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Maryland State Department of Education
Timeline of Important Dates (2007)

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January   Last Tuesday and Wednesday (1/2 day Wednesday) of each month
                     Maryland State Board of Education meets

March   State Strategic Plan for Technology – Board approval

March 12   2006-2007 Maryland Blue Ribbon Schools honored at the Governor
                     Calvert House

March 27 – 28   Kindergarten Readiness Report released

April 20   Achievement Initiative for Maryland Minority Students (AIMMS)
                     Awards Ceremony

May 31   Maryland's 24 Local School System Teachers of the Year announced

June (mid)   Maryland School Assessment (grades 3 through 8) posted on MSDE
                     website/released

June 30   Annually, the terms of 4 State Board members, including the student
                     member, expire; new appointments are announced by the Governor's
                     Appointments Office

July (early to mid) Elementary/Middle School Adequate Yearly Progress status and
                     Elementary/Middle Schools in Improvement posted on MSDE
                     website/released

July (mid)   Persistently Dangerous schools named

August (mid)	High School Assessment scores posted on MSDE website/released
Late August or Early September	Maryland Public Schools start new school year
September (early to mid)	High School Adequate Yearly Progress status, High Schools in Improvement, School Systems in Improvement, and Highly Qualified Teacher status posted on MSDE website/released
October	Maryland Milken Award winners announced
October 5	Maryland Teacher of the Year finalist announced
November (2nd full week)	American Education Week and International Education Week
November/ December	Maryland 2007-2008 Blue Ribbon Schools announced

O'MALLEY/BROWN TRANSITION

BUDGET AND POLICY SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

Introduction

In this section of the O'Malley/Brown Education Transition Report, we examine six educational issues with budget and policy implications that will be before the Governor O'Malley and Lt. Governor Brown during the initial months of their administration. We have provided a brief overview of each issue and offered recommendations for consideration by the Brown/O'Malley Administration. We addressed: (1) the federal No Child Left Behind Act; (2) Maryland's Bridge to Excellence Act (Thornton); (3) school construction; (4) school readiness; (5) teacher and administrator recruitment and retention; and (6) technology in the classroom and career and technology education. The Budget and Policy Subcommittee developed 38 recommendations to address these six issue areas.

The No Child Left Behind Act: Context and Requirements

History and Purpose of the Act

The *No Child left Behind* (NCLB) Act of 2002 *(Public Law 107-110)* is the 8th reauthorization of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA) of 1965. Enacted during the presidency of Lyndon B. Johnson, the ESEA was designed primarily to address the unique educational needs of educationally disadvantaged children and it provided federal funds to school districts, libraries, and state education departments. The Act was designed to help states and school districts close the achievement gap that existed among America's K-12 students. Most of the funds under ESEA, which became the largest source of K-12 education spending, were focused on schools that served economically disadvantaged children under Chapter I of the Act, or what is now referred to as Title I.

After 29 years, the academic achievement gap among America's K-12 students was still very evident. In response, the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 was passed. It included an accountability system that was not as rigorous as the one that would be included seven years later

in the *No Child Left Behind Act*. It required the testing of only Title I students, limited disaggregation for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) purposes, significant flexibility, AYP based only on school aggregate student scores, state and district determined sanctions, and no universal proficiency timeline.

In 2001, President George Bush, Senator Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.) and the Congress led an effort to strengthen the ESEA and enhance the accountability requirements that had been added to the ESEA. Their efforts resulted in the passage of the bipartisan NCLB Act, which was signed in January of 2002. To receive funding under NCLB, states must: (1) have content standards and the stipulated testing program; (2) disaggregate student performance data by major student subgroups and report statewide and school-level performance data; (3) set annual objectives to increase the number of students scoring at grade level on state tests with the goal of reaching 100 percent proficiency by 2014; (4) implement sanctions for schools that do not meet required AYP on annual measurable objectives (AMO); (5) participate yearly in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (Nation's Report Card) math and reading tests at the 4th and 8th grades (the Report Card provides longitudinal data to comparable state performance data); and (6) require that all individuals who teach designated essential subjects be "highly qualified" by the end of the 2005-2006 school year. The NCLB Act is scheduled for reauthorization in 2007.

After six years of not achieving the required AYP goal, schools and school districts must choose from a range of remedial options to improve the quality of education in the school and district. The actions include: (1) allowing an outside organization to operate the school; (2) reopening the school as a charter school; (3) making staff adjustments; (4) permitting the state to operate the school; and (5) making fundamental adjustments in school governance. To some degree, the NCLB seeks to create a common minimum performance level for students in each of the states through a common accountability system with some flexibility that recognizes differences among the various state education systems.

Impact of the No Child Left Behind Act on Public Schools

The Federal government has assumed a much more prominent role in K-12 education and the NCLB Act has had positive and negative effects on public schools. On the positive side, NCLB related test scores in reading and mathematics are improving and the achievement gap among sub-groups of students is narrowing or being stabilized; instruction and curricula are being aligned more closely; and considerably more attention is being given to the achievement needs of sub-groups of students that have traditionally performed poorly academically. On the negative side, more time is being spent on reading and math instruction and test preparation, often at the expense of other important subjects; in some instances, only surface changes are being made in low performing schools, rather than necessary fundamental changes; and there is insufficient federal funding to address the Act's performance expectations.

Maryland's Response to the No Child Left Behind Act

Before the passage of the NCLB Act, Maryland had initiated an enhanced program of accountability in K-12 education (MSPAP/SPI followed by MSA and High School Assessment). "Prior to the introduction of the No Child Left Behind Act, Maryland was one of only a few states to use state supervision and intervention in low performing schools as part of its school improvement efforts. With the passage of the NCLB Act, Maryland built upon its existing school accountability system and supports to create its current improvement and restructuring strategies. Based on 2004-05 test data, under the State's accountability system, 231 (95 Title I schools) of the State's 1,300 schools were identified for improvement during 2005-06. "In the 2005-06 school year, 79 Maryland schools were either in the planning or implementation phase of NCLB restructuring." Maryland has eight alternative governance options available to it to address schools that do not meet NCLB requirements (Center for Education Policy and Maryland State Department of Education, Alternative Governance Guidelines, *Building on State Reform: Maryland School Restructuring*).

Management Efficiency and Accountability: Enhancing Public
Support for Adequate NCLB Funding

An implicit assumption that is associated with the NCLB Act is that federal, state and local funds that are appropriated for K-12 education will be used efficiently with accountability. People in Maryland strongly support public education, but they want to make sure that education funding is targeted on the classroom and not into bureaucracy and unnecessary paperwork. They want to be sure that the investment they are making is a solid one, and that the money is being spent efficiently, that there is transparent accountability for results, both to the state government and to the public. If the public sees that the money is well spent, and the results have been achieved with the least expenditure, while maintaining quality, public support for education will grow. Therefore, the State needs to develop standards of efficiency in the management of funds, both those provided by the State and those made available by local governments through their own resources. It needs to develop these standards in conjunction with local districts and then monitor the implementation of them and report regularly on what the results show. Increased management efficiency and accountability will help solidify public support for equitable and adequate local, State and Federal education funding.

Recommendations:

- **The Office of the Governor should work with the Maryland State Department of Education to review the intersection between the State's Bridge to Excellence Act (Thornton) and NCLB.**
- **In coordination with the Office of the Governor, the Maryland State Department of Education should conduct a study to determine the specific personnel and materials cost of responding to the NCLB Act for both the State and LEA's.**
- **The Governor and the Maryland Department of Education should organize structured sessions with members of the State's congressional delegation and relevant constituency groups to review the pros and cons of the reauthorization of the NCLB Act, giving specific attention to the areas such as special education, variation of growth models, assessment systems that are accurate and fair, the provision of reliable and useful data to educators to inform instruction; the use of multiple**

measures and methods of student learning assessment; assistance with definition and development of "highly qualified" teachers, English Language Learners, and out-of-school time learning.

- **The Governor should facilitate the targeted recruitment, development and retention of education degree graduates through enhanced pension benefits, and consideration of loan repayment assistance for teachers.**

- **The Governor should work with the State's congressional delegation to ensure that any reauthorized version of the NCLB Act includes adequate levels of federal funding that is associated with the Act's academic performance and personnel and materials requirements.**

- **The Office of the Governor should work with the State Department of Education and Local Education Agencies to implement minimum management efficiencies and accountability standards, which might include, but are not be limited to: (1) a ratio of overhead costs to the costs of the system as a whole in local districts. Most districts have already developed this ratio, but the standard needs to be uniform across the state so that appropriate comparisons can be made. (2) efficiencies in management systems, including finance, personnel, transportation and any other management systems employed by local school districts. (3) efficiencies within the central management offices of local districts. (4) efficiencies within the State Department's management of its functions.**

- **The Governor should support the enhancement of federal support for summer enrichment opportunities for all students, especially those who are not achieving at the required level. Eligibility notification from State and Local Education Agencies for summer programs to parents should be provided twice during the school year, with one being near the end of the school year.**

- **The Governor should work with the State Department of Education and Superintendent of Schools to make sure that education funding is used efficiently as part of an effort to solidify public support for adequate local, State and Federal funding.**

- **The Governor should review the current structure, objectives, and operations of the current Pre-K – 16 Council to ensure that the state's educational goals are maximized.**

Maryland's Bridge to Excellence School Funding and Accountability Program

Throughout the last decade, the Maryland School Performance Program (MSPP) was the statewide k-12 education accountability system. It prescribed specific individual student and school level performance standards. In response to the need to determine whether Maryland was equitably and adequately funding K-12 education, in line with its performance requirements, and using appropriate standards of excellence and accountability, the Governor and General Assembly created the Commission on Education Finance, Equity, Equity and Excellence (more commonly known as the Thornton Commission).

The Commission was charge with doing the following: (1) ensuring adequacy of funding for students in public schools; (2) ensuring equity in funding for students in public schools; (3) ensuring excellence in schools systems and student performance; (4) providing for a smooth transition when current educational funding initiatives sunset at the end of the fiscal 2002; (5) analyzing whether it is more effective to provide additional State aid in the form of targeted grants or by increasing funding through the base formula; and (6) ensuring that local property tax policies do not affect the equitable allocation of funding for students in public schools.

After almost two years of work and more than 15 deliberative hearings throughout the State, the Commission arrived at 5 policy recommendations that reflected a broad consensus of the people of Maryland about education finance, excellence and accountability in the following areas: (1) adjusting base education funding; (2) State and local share of education funding and wealth equalization; (3) kindergarten and pre-kindergarten education; (4) guaranteed tax base; and (5) accountability for the use of education funds.

The historic Bridge to Excellence Act resulted in a significant restructuring of school financing and accountability for Maryland School Systems based on the Commission's recommendations. In

this section, we address only those aspects of the Act that have budget and policy implications and should be given immediate attention by the O'Malley/Brown Administration.

Adequacy and Equitable Funding to Meet State Academic Performance Standards

During the legislative process leading up to passage of the Bridge to Excellence Act, the Commission's funding proposals were scaled back and delayed ("phased in" through 2007-08). Since it was passed, a major component of the Act, the Geographic Cost of Education Index (GCEI), has not been not funded. Although the State through Bridge to Excellence funding has funded k-12 education at historic levels, with increased equity and adequacy, there remain several demographic, legal, and student assessment and system accountability changes that must be addressed if the Thornton Commission's quality of education vision is to be fully realized.

Maryland's Department of Legislative Services' last Adequacy Progress Report (January 2006) projects that even assuming full funding of GCEI, in the final year seven school systems will continue to have adequacy gaps (as defined in the Thornton Commission's Report). These per pupil adequacy spending gaps are: $87 in Baltimore City, $102 in Garrett County, $205 in Talbot County, $535 in Prince George's County, $627 in Wicomico County, $992 in Dorchester County, and $1,181 in Caroline County. While some of the figures seem small, they translate into a $2,125 to $29,525 shortfall for each 25-student classroom. This shortfall should continue to be a concern for local and State governments and the people of Maryland.

Local School Funding to Meet State Performance Standards

The Thornton Commission recommended that the State's share of education funding should be increased substantially (41% to 49%) and that the percent of State education funding that is wealth equalized should be increased from 71% to 80%. The Commission stressed the need for Maryland Counties to maintain their education funding efforts to compliment the Thornton funding. Counties have maintained their funding efforts as defined in the Bridge to Excellence Act (no less than the per pupil dollar level from the previous year). They should work to increase the level of

per pupil funding that is allocate for education as consistent with increased State funding and escalating costs.

Budget and Policy Implications of Changing State and Federal Education Performance Expectations

The Bridge to Excellence Act was passed before the implementation of the Federal NCLB Act. The NCLB Act's assessment and teacher development requirements have significant budget implications that must be addressed in the State's education funding program. The Bridge to Excellence Act was based on finance equity and adequacy tied to MSPAP, an assessment system no longer used in Maryland. In addition, the Bridge to Excellence Act it did not fully consider needs associated with the not-yet-existent High School Assessments (HAS), a set of tests linked to graduation requirements. A coalition of education advocacy interest groups is promoting passage of legislation establishing a task force to study policy and finance implications of HAS as a graduation requirement.

Funding to Meet the Needs of At-Risk Student Populations

Original calculations for each of the factors for the three identified categories of at-risk populations (Special Education, Compensatory Education, and Limited English Proficiency) were higher than the final statutory factors. Reductions in these three areas, from 1.17 to 0.74, 1.39 to 0.97, and 1.00 to 0.99, respectively, were based upon the possible overlapping of at risk students falling into more than one at risk category and assumptions of continuing levels of federal and state funding that support at risk programs.

State Funding for Gifted and Talented Students

Funding for Gifted and Talented students was one of the many grants and/or programs whose funding was absorbed by the Thornton formula. As it did for several other special grants and funding programs, the Thornton Commission found that funding for Gifted and Talented students should be included in the Commission's enhanced foundation funding amount. A reasoned

argument was made before the Commission that Gifted and Talented students should be considered a special needs group.

Student Transportation

State funding for student transportation for students requiring special transportation services was increased under Thornton the funding formula from $500 per student to $1,000 by 2008. The State should examine whether $1,000 represents a 50% state share of actual cost and is consistent with the overall goal of a shared local and state responsibility for education funding in this area where there is consistent and growing need.

Recommendations:
- **Fully fund the final year of the Bridge to Excellence Act (Thornton), including the Geographic Cost of Educating Index (GCEI).**
- **Examine the adequacy of County increases to ensure there is not a supplantation of additional State resources. Examine the recommendations of the Maintenance of Effort Task Force to ensure that there are no disincentives to local governments providing additional resources.**
- **Support legislation to create a Task Force to review the policy and fiscal implications of the High School Assessments program.**
- **Examine whether there is overlapping funding across the special categories of student funding (Special Education, Compensatory Education, and Limited English Proficiency) and determine whether such overlapping reduces or compounds the additional cost needed to meet adequacy targets.**
- **Examine the trend in Federal funding as compared with the Thornton assumptions.**
- **Examine the trend of Gifted and Talented programs over the five-year period to determine their viability; explore including this group in the student enrollment count for the Special Education funding factor.**
- **Conduct a study to determine if a fixed statutory student transportation allocation is appropriate or whether an annual adjustment would be more appropriate. The study should include an examination of regional transportation cost differences.**

- **The Governor should examine the degree to which the Bridge to Excellence Master Plan has been properly implemented.**

School Construction: Addressing the Need for Adequate Public School Buildings in Maryland

In February of 2004, the Task Force to Study Public Facilities issued its final report after a comprehensive assessment of the conditions of Maryland's public school buildings. The Task Force was headed by Treasurer Nancy Kopp and is commonly known as the Kopp Commission Report. The Kopp Commission Report identified the need for $3.85 billion in improvements and new construction to meet minimum standards and to accommodate growth in student enrollment. The General Assembly passed legislation in 2004 that codified the intent to fully fund this recommendation along with other recommendations of the Task Force. This funding, according to the legislation, should be provided by fiscal 2013.

Of the $3.85 billion identified in needed funding, $2.0 billion is the State share and $1.85 billion is the local share. Meeting this objective would require the State to spend an average of $254 million annually from fiscal 2006 to fiscal 2013. It is important to note that construction costs continue to increase as raw material costs escalate. The General Assembly was able to meet the Kopp Commission recommendations during fiscal 2006 and 2007 by allocating additional capital resources of $104.9 million.

In addition to expressing legislative intent to fully fund the Kopp Commission recommendations, legislation passed in 2004 also addressed the Aging Schools Program that provides funding for repairs of older buildings based on the proportion of older schools in each jurisdiction. The legislation made the program permanent and altered the allocation of funding to better reflect the actual distribution of older facilities in the State. The statutorily mandated funding for the program totals $10.4 million in fiscal 2007. During the 2006 Maryland General Assembly, legislation was passed that increases the current level of the basic state grant for aging schools by the increase in the consumer price index for the prior year compared to the second prior year. The projected increase for fiscal 2008 is $374,400.

Recommendations:

- **Support the Kopp Commission funding recommendations and the Aging Schools Program.**

- **Work to keep the annual floor for school construction funding at $254 million or higher within a budgeting framework (combination of GO bond funds and PAYGO general funds to the extent available) that does not jeopardize the State's coveted AAA bond rating.**

- **In consultation with the State's Capital Debt Affordability Committee and the General Assembly's Spending Affordability Committee, examine whether adjustments can be made to the State's debt capacity to support enhanced funding for school construction.**

School Readiness: Ensuring That All Children Are Prepared To Enter and Succeed in School

There is now virtually unanimous agreement among researchers and educators that the foundations of life-long learning and well-being are based on the experiences during early childhood, which form, in the words of the National Research Council, "either a sturdy or fragile stage for what follows." In fact, 90% of brain growth occurs before age 5 (although 90% of public spending on children occurs after age 5).

Maryland has invested in many programs – from the Maryland Model for School Readiness to credentialing and accreditation for child care providers to Family Support Centers, Child Care Resource Centers, and Judy Centers – to improve the early experiences of the State's children. These programs have the potential to move the State toward the achievement of one of its foremost goals; namely, that all children arrive at kindergarten with the skills and capabilities they need to succeed in school.

Yet, only 60% of incoming kindergartners in Maryland arrive with the skills required to succeed in school. The problem is statewide, although in some jurisdictions it is especially acute: In Baltimore City, for example, only 35% are assessed as ready; in Prince George's County, only

51%. The remaining children lack the fundamental cognitive, social, and communication skills necessary to progress in school. They have not had the quality early care and education experiences that would help them acquire these skills. In Maryland, as in the rest of the nation, many childcare programs do not provide the stimulating and nurturing experiences that are the foundation of school readiness. Clearly, the State's quality enhancement initiatives have not yet been able to deliver their full potential for transforming the childcare system.

In 2005 and 2006, State officials recognized this situation and took steps to increase program scale, effectiveness, and efficiency by moving all the State's childcare and early education programs to the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), creating a new Division of Early Childhood Development. There are three substantial benefits associated with the reorganization. First, childcare and early education programs are now housed in a single department that views their success as critical to the Department's core mission. This ensures support that is more reliable from the Administration, including more consistent allocation of resources. Second, many early care programs are still targeted to disadvantaged children, where the impact is the greatest—with every $1 invested returning $17 in reduced expenditures for special education, juvenile justice, public assistance, and other costly factors. However, the State's involvement in early care is understood to be part of a continuum that benefits *all* children. Third, located in a single department, programs can more easily be aligned to support child development from birth to completion of high school. Moreover, the department being held accountable for children's educational success is now in a far stronger position to achieve that goal.

Maryland needs to foster, in the words of national experts Anne Mitchell and Louise Stoney, "an integrated early care and education system for children from birth to age 5 that is state-wide and community-based."

Recommendations:

- **Support the new Division of Early Childhood Development, which has consolidated all the State's child care programs within MSDE and has positioned Maryland to become a national model for early care and education.**

- **Adequately fund the Child Care Subsidy Program (formerly called Purchase of Care, or POC), which suffered gravely due to $80 million in transfers to other programs under the previous Administration. A blueprint for restoring the subsidy program has been laid out by a POC Study Group, which released its findings in November 2005. The recommendations contained in that report should be endorsed by the Administration.**
- **Sustain the State's key childcare quality initiatives; such as the Maryland Child Care Resource Network, Family Support Centers, childcare program accreditation, and child care staff credentialing.**
- **Meet the pre-kindergarten mandates of the Thornton Commission, which call for extending pre-K opportunities to all economically disadvantaged children - without undermining the birth-through-five childcare infrastructure. Local school systems should consider all options to provide high quality cost -effective pre-K child care services and programs to all eligible students; giving particular attention to issues related to classroom construction and student transportation.**

Teacher and Administrator Recruitment and Retention

There is a growing shortage of highly qualified teachers in Maryland and effective teaching is vital to student growth and achievement. Additionally, there is a shortage of strong educators/leaders choosing to go into administration. Rising student enrollment in public schools and practices that are more inclusive for special needs students has increased class size. Public schools are overwhelmed and lack adequate resources to accommodate the increased demand. The national data on teacher supply and demand indicate that the shortage of teachers is particularly acute in inner cities and isolated rural schools, in fast-growing regions of the country, and in the fields of mathematics, science, bilingual education and special education.

The performance requirements set by the Federal *No Child Left Behind Act* placed greater expectations for accountability on teachers' performance as well as student achievement. Given the competition nationally for hiring teachers, it is incumbent upon the State to provide the necessary incentives (salary and benefits enhancements, working conditions, and general support)

for teachers to work and stay in Maryland. It is also incumbent upon the State to initiate programs to encourage educators to pursue the field of administration and examine programs to retain both experienced teachers and administrators.

Financial incentives to entice prospective teachers are increasingly popular and include college scholarships and loan forgiveness programs, signing bonuses, assistance with moving expenses and housing subsidies and state and federal tax breaks. The State of Maryland   provides each of these incentives. These programs focus primarily on recruitment instead of retention. A review of these programs needs to be conducted to evaluate their effectiveness. Many teachers are leaving the profession due to financial reasons and so much more. Many teachers cite school discipline, inadequate physical facilities, workload, and lack of administrative support as reasons for leaving the profession. Are we adequately preparing teachers and giving them the necessary support to perform their jobs? As one example, the National Association of State Directors of Special Education predicts the need for approximately 80,000 new special education teachers by 2010. The demand for new special education teachers continues to outpace the number of graduates being produced.

Recommendations:

- **Monitor in collaboration with the General Assembly the relative value of the pension benefit and fund a higher multiplier to increase pension competitiveness.**
- **Survey current teachers to determine the resources they need to make their jobs more efficient, productive and more creative and develop a plan of action to insure these resources reach classrooms across the state.**
- **Analyze higher education teacher preparation programs to ensure best practices and quality programs within our state colleges and universities.**
- **Streamline the teacher certification application process with the goal of eliminating delays.**
- **Foster development of co-teaching/mentoring models for teachers and administrators.**
- **Promote programs to incorporate best practices in teacher retention.**

- **Examine affordable housing programs, tax credits for educators, and other such programs to help retain Maryland teachers and administrators.**
- **Examine K-12 class size limits to address the growing needs of students and the growing workload of educators, and earmark capital funding to make this possible without increasing the use of "relocatables" for classrooms.**

Technology in the Classroom and Career and Technology Education

Maryland has a comparatively impressive and long record of accomplishment of preparing its public school students for success in post-secondary education. Maryland's graduation and college acceptance rates remain among the highest in the country. Similarly, Maryland has a large number of residents with advanced degrees. During the last 15 years, Maryland has also become a pioneer in revamping traditional vocational education options into more relevant career and technology programs for the 21st century workforce and worker. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) oversees the State's Career and Technology program and provides technical assistance to all 24 local school districts and their local advisory councils. The Department currently partners with the Department of Business and Economic Development, the Higher Education Commission, and the Department of Labor and Licensing and Regulation to engage Maryland businesses to expand and sustain meaningful work-based opportunities for high school students and meet critical labor shortages throughout the state.

Going forward, Maryland has an opportunity to build on its solid foundation in this area by increasing support for first-class career and technology education programs throughout the State. Maryland needs a highly skilled workforce to sustain its economy and attract international corporations. Additionally, with an increasingly competitive global economy, the skills and competencies for workers have changed. A 2005 report, published by Achieve, Inc., found that college professors and employers now share common expectations of high school graduates including the following: "analytical thinking, ability to do math, writing and communications, computer skills, work and study habits, problem solving and practical application."

Recommendations:

- **Partner with the Governor's Workforce Investment Board and the Maryland Business Roundtable for Education to host annual summits of business leaders from various business sectors and educators.**
- **Ensure that all Career and Technology Education teachers are aware and actively pursuing the certification required under the Federal No Child Left Behind.**
- **Explore formal year-round mentorship opportunities, pairing high school students with perspective employers.**
- **Engage the Local Advisory Councils in promoting the need for a strong, highly skilled workforce in Maryland.**
- **Increase corporate and philanthropic partnerships that provide technology, job shadowing, mentoring, and early higher education enrollment incentives.**
- **Incorporate financial literacy components to current career and technology plans.**
- **Compile an annual report on students who complete career and technology programs.**
- **Increase the integration of technology throughout the K-12 curriculum, including technology training for teachers and administrators.**

**Community and Parental Involvement and Relevant Practices
Sub-Committee Report**

Introduction

In this section of the O'Malley/Brown Education Transition Report, we examine four areas that address parental and community involvement and relevant practices. We have provided a brief overview of each issue and listed "Program Examples" for that issue. Following this, you will find the recommendations for consideration by the O'Malley/Brown Administration. We addressed relevant issues relating to: (1) Parental and Community Involvement; (2) Impacts of poverty on education; (3) English language learners; (4) Student Achievement Gaps; (5) Reducing the Drop out Rate; (6) Positive Learning Environments/ Behavior Intervention; (7) Alternative Schooling Options; (8) Correctional Facility Instruction; (9) Teacher and Administrator Workload; (10) Class Size Reduction; (11) Gifted and Talented Programs; (12) Expanded Learning Opportunities; (13) The Classroom Teacher and Building Administrator as Professional and Leader; (14) Alternative Testing; (15) Higher Education Preparation; and (16) Preparing students for life. The Parental and Community Involvement and Relevant Practices Subcommittee developed 28 recommendations to address these issue areas.

Community and Parental Involvement

Business and Education Partnership

A pivotal stakeholder in the future of children as they grow into adulthood is the business community. If children are not adequately prepared to enter the workforce when they graduate, businesses will suffer. Government, through its policies and budgetary appropriations, can encourage these partnerships and collaboration among all of a community's stakeholders.

Relevant Practices

MSDE should work with school districts to convene an ongoing roundtable of educators, business and community leaders, and representatives from the state's arts providers to jointly develop initiatives, which address student needs.

Recommendation: Maryland Public Schools must promote a productive partnership between business and education to combine respective resources and expertise. See recommendations on page 31.

Family, School, and Community Partnership Office

This office will provide leadership at the local school level; facilitating a more coordinated and collaborative effort between all stakeholders. Communication is the foundation for establishing and maintaining any type of partnership. Further, a quality educational system cannot be accomplished without seamless ties extending to all stakeholders. Establishing operable partnerships will provide support resources, to avoid critical programmatic cuts when confronted with allocations of scare resources. Partnership endeavors must include dialogue between school- parent/ families, school- community agencies, school-business, school- and the community at-large to include: ethnic and faith based agencies.

Recommendation: Maryland State Department of Education shall implement the Maryland Parent Advisory Council recommendations to establish a family, school, and community partnership office consisting of no less than one full-time staff person.

School Readiness Programs

Most new parents have clear direction on how to address the physical needs their offspring. More recently, attention has focused on the important intellectual and emotional development that occurs during the first five years of life. There is a greater understanding of how play activities, communication and physical activity with the infant, toddler and preschooler can enhance their readiness for school. Maryland governmental agencies and individuals should assess the applicability of the findings of brain research to their clients and children.

Maryland must expand early childhood education programs to meet the needs of all children. Many of the activities needed to ensure that children from all backgrounds enter school ready to learn are no cost or low-cost, and can be achieved at home, eventually early childhood programs become necessary. The role played by parents and organized programs need to compliment each

other. The pay-offs are enormous for the child, parents and the larger community. If children enter school ready to learn, resources can be spent on educational advancement rather remedial efforts, and children regardless of gender, ethnicity, or social status can achieve at the full level of their innate natural abilities. To achieve that outcome, the Governor's visible leadership and a well-planned, concerted program promoting early childhood growth and development needs with parents, caregivers, community leaders, business and mass media, can affect significant progress.

To maximize the positive impact of families, schools must be viewed as welcoming, teachers seen as partners, and administrators as trusted facilitators through the bureaucratic labyrinth. Activities such as the arts, bring families into the building, provide an emotional connection to the school, and increase a child's creative capacity, which will be critical to their success in the economy of the 21st century.

While early childhood education programs provide the necessary support so that parents can provide for the economic welfare of their children; the broader societal purposes are addressed when all children are provided with strong, aligned school readiness programs. Both of these factors contribute to the strong economic development of the State.

Examples
- In Maryland, the Casey Foundation has funded Leadership in Action, which works to improve school readiness. The program first began in Baltimore City, resulting in the Countdown to Kindergarten program. Currently, the program is running in Southern Maryland and it not yet complete. These action plans reflect the input of education professionals, parents, community volunteers and public service organizations.
- Even Start has been an important and effective program that involves parents in their child's education, however Federal funding has been cut. The Governor should work with Senator Cardin and Majority Leader Hoyer to demonstrate the state's unified support for this program.
- In Southern Maryland, a Home Visitation program for the "informal caregivers" – e.g. grandma or next-door neighbor—of the children of welfare-to-work mothers who had exhausted their daycare vouchers was effective and popular, bringing monthly activity kits to these caregivers along with personal guidance on how to use them and other ways

to promote school readiness. It was eliminated for lack of funds. If funding were restored, the state could replicate this program in other locales.

Recommendation:

- **The Governor and The Maryland State Department of Education must support programs that promote early childhood education and school readiness.**
- **With the Governor's strong leadership and voice, he should create a statewide program to advance early childhood growth and development needs in conjunction with and targeted to parents, caregivers, community leaders, governmental agencies, business and mass media.**
- **The Office of the Governor should work with the Maryland State Department of Education to create and use incentives to encourage the development of early childhood educational programs (pre-K, etc) within the existing and new public schools.**
- **The Maryland State Department of Education should monitor all educational programs, both public and private, for the sufficiency, strength and alignment of these programs.**
- **The Maryland State Department of Education should provide support systems to increase the number of fully certified early childhood educators in both public and private early childhood education programs. (See Department of Education, UMBC website for specific certification requirements)**
- **The Office of the Governor in conjunction with the legislature should provide salary and benefit packages commensurate with the requirements and responsibilities of the positions.**

Impacts of Poverty on Education

A 4th grader who qualifies for a free- or reduced-price lunch program is two-and-a-half times less likely to be proficient in reading than a child who doesn't meet income eligibility requirements. (Source: National Assessment of Educational Progress, "The Nation's Report Card: 2005")

Research and experience have proven a correlation between poverty and poor academic performance. With 17.6% of the nation's children (18 and under) living at or below the poverty line, the relationship between poverty and education is in need of continual exploration. Although, Maryland boasts some of the richest communities in America, 10.5% of Maryland's children live in poverty[1]. In Baltimore City, Dorchester and Somerset County Schools the percentage of children who live in poverty eclipse the national average at 25.9%, 18.1% and 23.2% respectively.

It is also well documented that children from low income communities are less likely to graduate or go to college and more likely to be unemployed, under-employed; spend time in a juvenile detention program or behind bars as an adult than their more affluent counterparts. Of the six largest school districts in Maryland, graduation rates are tied closely to economic indicators. For example, while Baltimore City Schools enjoy a smaller pupil per full time equivalent teacher ratio (indication of class size) and relatively high expenditures per pupil, 71% of students qualify for free or reduced lunch (FRL) and graduation rates in Baltimore City are significantly lower than the other large school districts in Maryland.

Table 3.   Diploma Completion, Graduation Rates, Economic Need, Educational Expenditures and Student-Teacher Ratios by Jurisdiction.

Maryland Jurisdiction	No. of Pupils	No. of Diploma Awarded	Other Completion	Freshman Graduation Rates	FRL Eligibility Rate	Expenditures Per Pupil	Avg. Pupils/ FTE Teacher
Anne Arundel	74,508	4466	0	79.9	17.8	$8,361	626.1
Baltimore City	94,049	4524	5	47.3	71.3	$9,639	497.6
Baltimore County	108,523	6859	58	87.1	29.7	$8,744	649.8
Howard County	47,833	2990	25	89.7	10.4	$9,420	673.7
Montgomery	139,201	8282	91	87.0	22.6	$10,580	717.5
Prince George's	137,285	7552	109	77.6	44.9	$8,621	676.3

National Center for Education Statistics; The 100 Largest Public Elementary and Secondary School Districts in the United States: 2003–04 Statistical Analysis Report, September 2006

[1] U.S. Census Data; Small Area Income & Poverty Estimates; Estimates for Maryland School Districts, 2004

Although deficiencies in public education can be identified as some of the causes that lead to these depressing statistics, school remains the bastion of hope for many impoverished youth and indeed is a safe haven from sometimes difficult home environments.

There are a variety of potential solutions for reversing the negative impact of poverty on education. Poverty as a whole has been described as a generational issue, afflicting each new generation within a family until the cycle, with much effort, is broken. It is not simply income level that is passed from generation to generation, however. Studies have shown that children living in poverty are exposed to and adopt a variety of behaviors that are not conducive to educational and workplace environments. Taking these inappropriate or anti-social behaviors into the classroom strongly influences the individual child's ability to learn as well as his or her peers.

In addition, research shows that teachers should be trained to identify and be more hands-on with children living in poverty. Teachers can begin teaching students from low-income backgrounds the *hidden* rules of behavior in educational and workplace settings that they are not learning at home. Additionally, we must become aware of personal bias or a lack of knowledge regarding children from low-income backgrounds and then work to alleviate the situation. These issues can be addressed through specialized training for teachers working within lower-income populations.

Program Examples

The following are following programs are described here as examples of schools that have taken new approaches to learning and have had successful results:

- **Ginter Park Elementary School, Richmond, VA**
  Of the 532 students in grades PK-5, 82% are identified as eligible for the Federal Free and Reduced Price Meal program. More than 50% of these children were identified as needing extra reading help after fall 2001 Phonological Awareness and Literacy Screening (PALS); by the spring 2002, PALS these levels had dropped to 36%.

Teachers incorporate a variety of teaching structures to engage students and achieve high levels of learning. The incorporated a Quality Kids program, where students sustain enthusiasm for learning, behave responsibly, feel proud of their achievements, and strive to meet high standards. Whole group instruction is used to provide universal access to grade level materials. Small flexible grouping, extra assistance, and enrichment activities are used to solidify learning. Hands-on, active learning opportunities are part of mathematics and science classes. A comprehensive school-wide reading plan includes a daily 2-hour block of uninterrupted reading instruction and an additional 30-minute intervention/enrichment block for extended learning and individualized instruction. A clearly defined and consistently enforced Positive Behavioral Support Program provides a system for effective school-wide discipline that has led to a decrease in office referrals and suspensions as well as an increase in academic achievement.[2]

- **Whittier Primary School, Peoria, IL**

  Rated in 2005 as a consistently high-performing school in science, math, and reading by Just for the Kids, 67% of the school's 349 students in grades PK-4 are eligible for free and reduced price meals. The school population includes African American students (48%), White students (45%), as well as Latino (4%), American Indian (2%), and Asian (1%) students.

  The educators at Whittier work together in professional learning communities during regular meeting and planning times. The school is part of the Professional Development School Partnership with the Bradley University College of Education and Health Sciences. Teachers use assessments to guide student instruction and interventions in well-designed classroom environments. Bradley Buddies from the university provide one on one support to students. The combination of a positive and structured school climate, targeted instruction, and community support has resulted in test results that show 90% of Whittier students meet or exceed state standards in Reading and 93% meet or exceed standards in Mathematics.[3]

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[2] National Center for Urban School Transformation

Recommendation: Maryland Public Schools must provide administrators and teachers with the time and training to implement innovative teaching strategies with children living in poverty. The Office of the Governor should work with the Maryland State Department of Education to further examine the program examples and concepts identified in this report and determine the feasibility of implementation.

English Language Learners

It is essential that our English language learners to have the ability to use and understand written and spoken English, in order to be able to function in society as well as the workplace.

Montgomery County Maryland is an example of an area where this challenge is significant.

> "The number of students enrolled in ESOL has increased dramatically each year, with students coming from more than 165 countries and speaking more than 140 languages. In FY 2006, ESOL enrollment topped 14,000 students pre-k-12. The distribution by grade level continues to follow the pattern established over the past few years with the highest concentration of ESOL students at the elementary grades. Students in grades pre-k-5 make up 68 percent of the total ESOL enrollment. Many of these children, although born in the United States, have lived in non-English speaking environments and come to school with very limited English language skills. In addition, some lack a basic oral language foundation in their own language that is prerequisite to developing reading and writing skills in any language"
> (http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/curriculum/esol/admin/overview.shtm).

While these statistics are dramatic, other jurisdictions in Maryland are experiencing a growing population of English language learners, both as adults and students entering the public schools of Maryland.

Program Examples

- **Greenway Middle School, Transitional Bilingual/ESL Program** in Paradise Valley Unified School District, Arizona is a program at the Greenway Middle School serves mostly Spanish speaking students. There are also new immigrants from other countries who participate in the sheltered English and ESL classes. Depending on the level of

proficiency, students are placed in bilingual, sheltered, ESL, or mainstream classes. Bilingual classes are taught using Spanish with Spanish textbooks. Students follow the grade level curriculum and scope and sequence of the mainstream classes. Bilingual offerings include math, reading and writing, science, and social studies.

Additionally, there are several avenues for bilingual students' families to become involved in their students' education. First, Spanish speaking parents meetings are held once a quarter. At these meetings, parent and student concerns are discussed as a group with faculty and administration. Topics include: high school registration, college planning, financial aid, gang influences, and others. Second, special outreach to bilingual students' parents fosters a much higher turn out of bilingual students' parents at events like open house and parent conferences. Third, teachers in the bilingual program spend a lot of time making home phone calls to discuss concerns about student progress or behavior. Special individual conferences are arranged with parents when a special issue or concern arises regarding student progress.

(http://www.alliance.brown.edu/pubs/pos/greenway.html)

<u>Recommendations: Maryland Public Schools must strengthen and expand the programs to meet the needs of our English language learners and their families. The Governor's office should work with the Maryland State Department of Education and local school systems to review current programming efforts in light of current needs and make recommendations as appropriate.</u>

Student Achievement Gaps

"The 'achievement gap' is a matter of **race and class**. Across the U.S., a gap in academic achievement persists between minority and disadvantaged students and their white counterparts. This is one of the most pressing education-policy challenges that states currently face."

"Looking at the NAEP data, the Education Trust concluded that, 'By the time [minority students] reach grade 12, if they do so at all, minority students are about four years behind other young people. Indeed, 17 year-old African American and Latino students have skills in English,

mathematics and science similar to those of 13-year-old white students'"
(http://www.subnet.nga.org/educlear/achievement/).

Program Examples

- **Friendship Public Charter School, Washington, DC:** Sixty-nine students at Friendship Public Charter School's Collegiate Academy in Northeast Washington are enrolled in the school's early college program. The program allows the students to take courses without charge at the University of the District of Columbia. Friendship is part of a broad movement nationwide to reinvent high schools, reduce the high school dropout rate and boost college graduation rates among low-income minority students. The foundation is providing more than $120 million in grants to help high schools become smaller and more rigorous so they can better prepare students for college and employment. The Gates program, which operates in more than 20 states, has established 67 programs enrolling about 12,000 students. By 2011, officials plan to have more than 165 programs enrolling 62,000.

- **Pikesville Middle School, Baltimore County and the Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk (CRESPAR):** In a study published in the *Journal of Educational Research,* Dr. Frances Van Voorhis reported on a quasi-experimental study of the effects of interactive homework. Six classes received weekly TIPS activities with specific guidelines for students to interact with family partners; four classes received the same weekly homework, but without guidelines for family involvement. Eighty percent of the TIPS students reported that families were sometimes, frequently, or always involved in science homework, while about 80% of the comparison group reported that families were never, rarely, or sometimes involved. Students in both groups who more regularly involved family partners completed more assignments. TIPS students also earned higher science grades, even after taking into account students' prior science abilities, family background and the amount of homework completed. These findings support the hypothesis that TIPS positively affects family involvement in homework, science attitudes, and student achievement in the middle grades.[3]

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[3] Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk (CRESPAR) http://www.csos.jhu.edu/crespar

- **Johns Hopkins University Talent Development High School Model:** The Talent Development High School Model, is a comprehensive reform model for large high schools facing serious problems with student attendance, discipline, achievement scores, and dropout rates. The model includes organizational and management changes to establish a positive school climate; curricular and instructional innovations to prepare all students for high-level courses in math and English; parent and community involvement to encourage college awareness; and professional development to support the recommended reforms.

  - For first-time ninth-grade students, Talent Development produced substantial gains in academic course credits and promotion rates and modest improvements in attendance. The percentage of ninth-graders completing a core academic curriculum increased from 43 percent on average before the implementation of Talent Development to 56 percent after implementation began. This increase is about three times the level of increase in similar schools in the district. Promotion rates in the Talent Development schools increased by just over 6 percentage points, while they fell by 4 percentage points in the comparison schools.

  - Improvements in ninth-grade course credits earned, promotion, and attendance were strongest in the first three schools to begin using Talent Development, and these schools sustained improvements into the second and third years of implementation.

Because these preliminary results are based on a small sample of schools in a single school district at the early stages of implementation, they should be interpreted with caution. Still, the initial evidence of Talent Development's capacity to keep ninth-grade students on track for graduation is encouraging. Future reports will track outcomes for up to five years, include analysis of students in all high school grades, and examine the extent to which the fidelity of program implementation varies across schools and over time.

Recommendation: Maryland Public Schools must continue the work to close the student Achievement Gaps. The Office of the Governor should work with the Maryland State Department of Education to further examine the program examples identified in this report and determine the feasibility of implementation.

Reducing the Dropout Rate

"In 1998 the unemployment rate for dropouts was 75 percent higher than for high school graduates (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2000, Figure 24). Even if they find a job, dropouts earn substantially less than high school graduates. A study by the U.S. Census Bureau found that more than one-third of all high school dropouts who were employed full-time and year-round in 1990 worked in "low wage" jobs that paid less than $12,195 per year—the official poverty rate for a family of four (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1992)."

Family background is widely recognized as the single most important contributor to success in school. Although early work by Coleman, Jencks, and others suggested that family background alone could explain most of the variation in educational outcomes (Coleman et al., 1966; Jencks et al., 1972), subsequent research found that much of the influence of family background was mediated through schools. Research has consistently found that socioeconomic status, most commonly measured by parental education and income, is a powerful predictor of school achievement and dropout behavior (Bryk & Thum, 1989; Ekstrom et al., 1986; McNeal, 1999; Rumberger, 1983; Rumberger, 1995; Rumberger & Larson, 1998; Pong & Ju, 2000).[4]

The Governor and MSDE must create a comprehensive Public Relations campaign around the new method for calculating graduation rates in Maryland. The new method will make it appear that dropout rate is going up, when, in reality, it will not have changed; just the method will have. It is imperative that the public understands this change and supports it.

Recommendations:
- **Maryland Public Schools' initiatives to close the student achievement gap go hand in hand with efforts to reduce the dropout rate. Maryland Public Schools must continue to design, explore and implement programs to reduce the dropout rate and close the student achievement gaps, particularly among students in high-poverty areas and ensure that these students are ready to enter the workplace.**

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[4] Why Students Drop Out of School and What Can be Done; Russell W. Rumberger; University of California, Santa Barbara Revised May 2001

- **The Governor and MSDE must create a comprehensive Public Relations campaign around the new method for calculating graduation rates in Maryland.**

Positive Learning Environments/ Behavior Intervention

Nothing interferes with a child's learning more than the lack of discipline in a classroom and/or the lack of respect for others. Bullying, name-calling, and other intimidating behaviors demean and destroy children's self-esteem. Aggressive and violent actions must not be acceptable in any Maryland school. Graduates must learn to incorporate Conflict Resolution and other non-violent means to solve problems. Students must be provided opportunities to learn about, understand, and respect the diversity of races, religions, gender, socio-economic status, geographical regions, ages, and disabilities. Maryland's "Character Development" curricula should include Disability Awareness in its Diversity components. Disruptive students steal valuable instructional time from other students, as well as themselves.

Program Examples: **Life Skills 4 Kids "MDM" (Million Dollar Machine)** is a K-6 Elementary Education Program focusing on Self-awareness, Interpersonal skills, Decision-making, and Drug Awareness. (www.lifeskills4kids.com).

Recommendation: Maryland Public Schools must provide a learning environment and culture that encourages respect for others in order to maintain positive behavior and eliminate bullying, name-calling, and aggressive behaviors. The Office of the Governor should work with the Maryland State Department of Education to further examine the best practices identified in this report and determine feasibility of implementation.

The New Mexico Public Education System has a behavior model called Positive Behavior Support (PBS). In one middle school with 550 students, the school system saw a 54% reduction in office discipline referrals; 300 fights per year dropped to a handful. (http://www.ped.state.nm.us)

Recommendation: Maryland Public Schools must adopt successful behavior intervention plans that will alleviate disruptions in classrooms resulting in improved student learning. The Office of the Governor, in conjunction with the Maryland State Department of

Education to further examine the program highlighted in this report and others to determine the feasibility of implementation.

Alternative Schooling Options

Maryland public schools strive to meet the needs of each child in his or her neighborhood school. Only after exhaustive efforts have been explored, should a disruptive student be given the option of attending or placed an alternative school. In the vast majority of cases, these students should be provided with a program designed to move them back to their home school once measurable, personal behavioral and educational benchmarks have been met. Each local school system has developed a variety of home and school interventions designed to avoid suspensions, expulsions or alternative school placements. Additionally, schools are striving to avoid being classified as 'persistently violent' by NCLB standards.

Recommendations: Maryland State Department of Education in conjunction with local school systems should evaluate programs and needs. Using the data and recommendations, the Office of the Governor should work with the Maryland State Department of Education to determine how best the state can help reduce school disruption and violence.

Correctional Facility Instruction

Maryland, through the State Department of Education, is responsible for providing appropriate educational opportunities for individuals who are sentenced to its correctional facilities as part of the State's rehabilitation programs. Because in most instances, incarcerated individuals will return to their communities it is in the State's interest to ensure that they have access to educational opportunities.

Recommendation: The Maryland State Department of Education and the Office of the Governor should review the quality and status of educational opportunities within the State's correctional facilities.

Teacher Workload

By systematically studying the issues involved in educator workload and working conditions Maryland can appropriately address an issue that educators rank as highly as compensation and retirement benefits in their decision to continue, or enter, teaching. In conjunction with reducing class size and effectively organizing the school's resources, addressing the most egregious workload and working condition issues will reap two important, interrelated benefits for the state. First, Maryland will be able to retain more of the educators in whom the state has invested so many resources; Secondly, as workloads are reduced, student achievement will improve, as it did in North Carolina.

Educators require support through the strategic placement of paraprofessionals in classrooms, particularly those educators in hard-to-staff schools with a high-poverty rate. These children need more individualized attention and having a paraprofessional in the classroom, along with the teacher allows those children the support they need.

Additionally, teachers require secretarial support to alleviate with teacher workload issues. Teachers could focus more on planning individualized instruction if they had to spend less time standing in line at the copy machine. It would be more cost-effective to have a secretarial support person make copies, so the teacher can focus on teaching.

Program Examples:

North Carolina Association of Educators (NCAE) has a model for paperwork reduction, which allows teachers to spend more time in preparation for the students than doing paper work. Examples are in Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools, Catawba County Schools, and Wake County Public Schools (http://www.ncae.org)

- **North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Initiative:** Under the leadership of Governor Mike Easley, North Carolina became the first state in the nation to study teacher working conditions by surveying those whose opinion matters most on these issues—teachers themselves. Governor Easley's Teacher Working Conditions Initiative began with a teacher working conditions survey originally developed and piloted by the

North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards Commission in 2001. The Commission, with the support of the State Board of Education, conducted research and focus groups to develop 30 working conditions standards for schools in five broad categories: time, empowerment, professional development, leadership, and facilities and resources. Focus groups with more than 500 teachers validated the categories or "domains." The original survey was made available to every licensed public school educator in 2002, and it solicited teacher responses on 39 statements regarding working conditions in these five categories.

The findings from that survey demonstrated a level of dissatisfaction across the state with teacher working conditions, particularly related to the amount of time available for teachers to perform their jobs. The survey results also indicated that the collective perception of principals was far more positive than teachers' collective perception. Elementary teachers and teachers in smaller schools were more likely to rate their work environment positively. (http://www.teachingquality.org/pdfs/twcabout.pdf)

- **Teaching Quality in the Southeast, Best Practices & Policies: (http://www.teachingquality.org/BestTQ/issues/v03/v03n09.pdf)**

Recommendations:

- **The Office of the Governor should work with the Maryland State Department of Education to examine the effective practices to reduce workload at all levels and explore how best to assist local school systems in providing an adequate number of support staff to assist with the students' instructional program and related non-instructional duties.**
- **Empower a Governor's commission to create the mechanism necessary to replicate and apply to Maryland the work advanced by North Carolina's Governor Mike Easley. This will allow Maryland to identify the workload/working condition issues that impede Maryland's ability to retain highly qualified educators and at the same time, enhance our ability to reduce the student achievement gaps in Maryland.**

Class-size Reduction

Overcrowded classes negatively affect academic achievement, graduation rates, and contribute to higher dropout rates. With a lower student-to-teacher ratio, teachers will be able to work more individually with each student and provide him or her with the instruction that they need to be successful. The student-to-teacher ratio should be report using a more reliable method, specifically, using only classroom teachers to report the ratio rather than all staff in the building. Additionally, lower class sizes usually means less behavioral problems because the teacher is better able to deal with behavior problems more immediately. Class sizes must be lowered enough to actually make a difference- not just one or two students at a time.

U.S. Department of Education report concludes: "A growing body of research involving large-scale, carefully controlled experiments shows that lowering class size in the early grades will produce significant and lasting benefits for students. The early implementation experience shows that the Class Size Reduction Program is well on the way to helping schools throughout the country realize these benefits." Unfortunately, once these students leave 2nd or 3rd grade they enter classes with double the students than their previous year. This creates a problem for the student who still requires that individual attention in order to be successful. This is why it is imperative to reduce class size at all levels.

Program Examples

Several new analyses of the Tennessee Class Size Reduction program show that reducing class size has both immediate and long-term benefits. The benefits of participating in small classes increase from year to year, both in the early grades when classes were small, and in subsequent years when students were placed in larger classes. At the end of fifth grade, students who were in small classes in grades one through three were about half a school year (5 months) ahead of students from larger classes, in all subjects - reading, language arts, math and science. Further, follow-up studies of the same students show that high school students who were in small classes in grades one through three beginning in 1985 were less likely to be held back a year or be suspended compared with their peers from larger classes. Students from small classes were found to be making better grades in high school and taking more advanced courses. (http://www.tepsa.org)

Recommendation: Maryland Public Schools must reduce class-size to a level that is conducive to individual and small group attention that each group of students need. While the greatest benefit is realized with substantial class size reduction in the pre-K and primary level, commensurate class size reduction should be realized at all levels. The Office of the Governor should work with employee representatives, local school systems and the Maryland State Department of Education to further examine the best way to implement class size reduction.

Gifted and Talented Programs

Many teachers spend a great deal of their time assisting average and below average performing students. Unfortunately, this leaves Gifted and Talented students to work on their own most of the time. This occurs in both general education and special education classrooms. Teachers need to be given the resources necessary to enable them to challenge their gifted students and to allow them equal time to work with those students.

Best Practices

Manassas City Public Schools has a program that provides students with an accelerated program to meet specific needs in a selected academic and visual arts curriculum. Furthermore, the program gives students the opportunity to develop individual talents and to strengthen their skills. There is an emphasis on positive self-image, relationships with others, and strategies to develop critical thinking skills. This enables the students to become independent, self-directed learners. (http://www.manassas.k12.va.us)

Recommendations: Maryland State Department of Education must ensure that adequate time and resources are being devoted to Gifted and Talented Programs and students throughout the state. The Office of the Governor should work with the Maryland State Department of Education to further examine the best practices identified in this report and determine feasibility of implementation.

Expanded Learning Opportunities

The length of the school day and calendar year were based on the needs of an agricultural society in the 19th century. In light of the increased rigor and expanded curriculum students are expected to master, Maryland school systems have explored various ways to expand student learning opportunities. Calendar and scheduling decisions are the prevue of Maryland's 24 local school systems and should remain so. The systems, with financial and technical support from the state, may wish to study programs in other states and explore possible methods to expand students' learning opportunities. In addition, an expanded school schedule may provide time for teachers to participate in collegial planning and learning opportunities at their school.

Program Examples

- **Massachusetts 2020-** a program, in which the state of Massachusetts is participating which will provide schools with grants to fund Expanded Learning Time Initiative. (www.Massachusetts2020.org)
- **National Association for Year Round Schools** (http://www.nayre.org/)

Recommendation: The Governor should support exploration of expanded learning opportunities. The Office of the Governor should work with local school systems, employee representatives and the Maryland State Department of Education to examine the best direction to take at this point in time.

The Classroom Teacher and Building Administrator as Professional and Leader

The State of Maryland needs to focus its resources at the individual building and classroom level, for that is where the most important educational activity takes place. Recognizing that each school, classroom and student presents some very individual needs and strengths, the adults with the greatest continuous impact on students need time and other resources that will help them appropriately address our students' educational needs.

Recommendations: In conjunction with the Maryland General Assembly, employee representatives, MSDE and local school systems must fully implement the professional development recommendations found in the Maryland Teacher Professional Development Standards found at

. The most important resources required are both related to time. Using current student data, educators in each building need time to plan for and execute a PD program that is designed to address the academic issues presented by the students in their charge. Secondly, the PD program should be made available in a timely manner so that the needs of today's students can be addressed tomorrow.

- **The Maryland State Department of Education should provide, in conjunction with other stakeholder groups, for the development of specific Leadership Development for educators, both those who wish to remain in the classroom and those who seek a position as a building administrator.**

Alternative Testing

Although often perceived as cost effective, current standardized testing limits the amount of knowledge students, parents, and teachers gain about the performance of each student and often results in inappropriate tracking of students (those who test as low-performing and are placed accordingly). The degree of assessment of the quality and extent of an individual student's learning and the ability to more closely monitor her/his progress are jeopardized in the use of standardized assessments and classroom assessments that rely on multiple choice tests. An individual student's educational/experiential background, strengths and weaknesses, and learning style/s are overlooked in the majority of current assessments.

Alternative forms of assessments, referred to as "performance-based" assessments, rely on "authentic" assessments of a student's performance (knowledge and skill driven) and can be designed to parallel the instructional objectives and outcomes and learning activities in every subject across the curriculum. By using "real-life" problems and stimulating creative, thoughtful and varied solutions to them, and by increasing opportunities for students to work in pairs and in groups, these assessments help prepare our students to enter the economy and environment of the twenty-first century. Performance based assessments encourage greater teacher observation and create more opportunities for active student involvement in both the learning and assessment process, allowing for closer and more accurate monitoring of achievement, and the subsequent creation of more opportunities for greater mastery of content and skills.

The current emphasis on the use of differentiated instruction in the classrooms needs to be supported with differentiated assessments, achievable by using a wider variety of alternative assessments. Importantly, alternative assessments more appropriately meet the needs of students with learning differences and LEP students.

Program Examples

The National Capital Language Resource Center (for foreign language learning), in order to more actively engage the student in the learning and assessment processes, encourages the use of checklists to track a student's progress on delineated tasks and requirements and of rubrics to measure the quality of performance on a variety of criteria discussed with the teacher and understood by the student. (info@nclrc.org)

Recommendation: Maryland Public Schools must work to include alternative testing assessments of students within each classroom, school, and district. The Office of the Governor should work with the Maryland State Department of Education and local school systems to examine the program example identified in this report and the extensive work being done on this issue to determine the feasibility of implementation in Maryland.

Higher Education Preparation

It is important to ensure that the instruction students are receiving in school will prepare them for their higher education coursework. Currently, an increasing number of students are enrolled in remedial classes at the higher education level. Pre-k through 12 education must work with higher education to close the gap in instruction that currently exists. With these two groups working together, we will reduce the number of students requiring this remedial coursework.

Recommendation: Maryland State Department of Education must examine the tools that determine placement in higher education courses and ensure that the Pre-K through 12 curriculum is aligned with Higher Education expectations.

Preparing Students for Life

Research has shown that students need a well-balanced curriculum, which includes regular instruction in art, music, physical education, drama, social studies, and science. During this time of high-stakes testing, programs are instituted causing administrators and teachers to focus on the subjects being tested rather than address the needs of the individual student, who may learn to read while singing the lyrics to a song, or who may learn history through dramatic interpretation. These opportunities for creative thinking and learning are falling to the wayside and being replaced with double math and reading instruction to prepare for state tests.

One content area of great concern is social studies, particularly geography. Students need an understanding of where they are in the world…literally. They need to have time in the day to study maps and globes and learn about other countries around the world. This not only plays a big role in a balanced curriculum but also in preparing students to be productive citizens in society.

Program Examples

North Carolina Standard Course Study system focuses on the importance and value of delivering a well-rounded education, which includes all areas of the Standard Course of Study (http://ncpublicschools.org)

Recommendations: The Maryland State Department of Education must ensure that there is a balanced curriculum for all students. The Office of the Governor, in conjunction with the State Board of Education and the Maryland State Department of Education should examine and assess the degree to which a balanced curriculum is being provided to all students.

In addition to the subjects cited above, the following issues should be addressed:

Educational programs that help develop the whole child are recognized as being important component of the total Pre-K to 12 educational experience. In the crush of attention on the academic subjects that are assessed as part of state and national accountability systems, many of

these topics have been de-emphasized or eliminated. Such topics that are particularly important today are presented below.

Civic Literacy

Students must actively understand the role and functions of government, and their role and responsibilities as citizens. Additionally, students must realize the value of community service and involvement and benefit from participating in community activities.

Related Programs

Quality youth development programs have the following characteristics:

- school and community based programs;
- comprehensive and positive that
- unites the home, school and community
- based on life skill development and character education,
- civic values,
- drug prevention, and
- service-learning education.
- economic and financial literacy development

Examples:

- Lion's Club International Programs, Lion's Quest (www.lions-quest.org.)
- Maryland Center for Character Education Annual Awards

Practical Life Skills

Graduates should be prepared to become independent adults by

- accepting financial responsibility for oneself and one's family,
- understanding the economy, the job market, mortgage rates, or the price of consumer goods, etc.
- developing employable skills and attitudes,

Graduates should have well developed communication and related technology skills.

Related Programs: Quality programs should provide up-to-date information and develop skills deemed necessary by the business community.

Examples:
- National Council for Economic Education, "Economics America" Program, www.ncee.net
- Maryland Council on Economic Education's Annual Poster Contest
- UNICEF program, (www.unicef.org/lifeskills/index.html)

International Literacy

The workplace is increasingly requiring that employees be able to function in an international and multicultural society with respect for the languages, customs, and religions of other ethnicities, within the United States, as well as internationally. The **Maryland State Department Of Education COMAR Regulation 13A.04.05** requires all local school systems to infuse "Education That Is Multicultural" into instruction, curriculum, staff development, instructional resources, and school climate. Multiculturalism is defined as "a continuous integrated, multidisciplinary process for educating all students about diversity and commonality." The acquisition of a foreign language should be encouraged at the elementary as well as middle and high school level as yet another skill necessary in today's workplace.

Related Programs: Quality programs create international learning partnerships; incorporate cultures into the classroom and provide international current events. Programs that provide support to

Examples:
- **Global Learning "Project Harmony"**
  (www.globalschoolnet.org) (www.projectharmony.com)
- **"Culturally Responsive Teaching"-** (www.nea.org/crt.)
- **CNN Student News** (http://www.cnn.com/EDUCATION/)

Critical Literacy and Adaptability

While our world is increasingly dependent on technology and robotics to perform basic tasks,

employers are looking for graduates who can think for themselves as well as work as part of a team. They will be demanding employees who can analyze a problem and find creative and innovative solutions. Our students must be given many opportunities to think independently, as well as to work cooperatively with others, to solve problems. They want and need people who can "think outside the box." In addition to high levels of academic achievement, our schools must provide many opportunities for students to be creative and innovative in order for them to be successful in the future.

In a world of ever changing technology and mass communications, students must be provided with experiences in which they have to adapt to change and change to adapt.

Technology Skills

Recent advancements in technology have provided new and essential tools for creative and innovative classroom instruction. The lack of appropriate wiring and other technical, electrical upgrades in many schools, limits staff and student accessibility to instructional and informational technology.

Related Programs

- Maryland Public Schools should develop and obtain funding to implement a detailed Information Technology Plan and align it, closely, with the National Education Technology Standards.
- Maryland Public Schools must incorporate E-Learning opportunities, such as Blackboard and WebCT, into its foundation and ensure that it becomes a vehicle to provide students access to information. In Escondido Union School District, e-learning boosted exam scores by as much as 30 points through the development of interactive student homework, review sessions with live instructors, and access to video of classes with links to on-line reference material, pictures, charts, and graphs that were discussed in class.
- Invest in digital learning classrooms that operate Smart Boards and document the resulting cost of savings, and assess impact on student learning

- In Henrico County Public Schools (Richmond, VA), every middle and high school student and faculty member is equipped with a wireless ibook (http://www.apple.com/education).

Recommendation: The Office of the Governor should work with the Maryland State Department of Education to examine the following educational issues and determine how best to infuse or enhance them in the current Maryland Statewide Voluntary Curriculum.

- **Technological skill development**
- **Preparation for civic responsibilities and community participation**
- **Practical life skill development**
- **International Literacy**
- **Promote independent thinking skills, critical analysis, creativity, and innovative problem solving, as well as the ability to evolve, change and adapt.**

Conclusion

The O'Malley/Brown Administration has a unique opportunity to advance the education of ALL of Maryland's children and to ensure that they are held to national and internationally competitive achievement standards and have access to high quality facilities, instructional and administrative personnel, instructional resources and safe learning environments. It should use the public platform that is singularly available to the Governor and his Administration to collaboratively reinforce, and where necessary, redefine visionary educational priorities and implementation mechanisms to ensure that all students succeed. The Governor should facilitate the enhanced coordination and restructuring, where required, of local, State and Federal educational support and accountability systems. To support these general initiatives, the Governor and his Administration should mobilize the sustained integrated and substantive involvement of parents, the business community, civic, political, religious and educational organizations in coordinated activities to advance the education of Maryland's children.