

September 29, 2016

Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education Holds First Meeting

On September 29, 2016 the “Kirwan” Commission held its first meeting. Commission Chair, William E. “Brit” Kirwan, opened the meeting by emphasizing that this was a rare opportunity to be on such a commission, and that although the charge is very broad, the task at hand is essentially to make recommendations on how to make our schools better, and that we owe it to students to develop a system that is as good as the best in the world. The 23 Commission members in attendance introduced themselves and offered brief remarks on their priorities for the Commission work.

MABE President-elect Donna Brightman spoke to her support for pursuing the goals of greater funding adequacy and equity, as well as the need for local school system flexibility and recognition of local board control over education policy.

The Commission received the following presentations:

- Overview of Education Policy Landscape in Maryland Since 2002
 - Dr. Karen B. Salmon, State Superintendent of Schools, Maryland State Department of Education
- Overview of Education Funding in Maryland
 - John W. Rohrer, Coordinator – Fiscal and Policy Analysis, Department of Legislative Services; Rachel H. Hise, Education Workgroup Leader, Department of Legislative Services; Erika S. Schissler, Education Workgroup Leader, Department of Legislative Services
- Summary of the Adequacy Study and Consultant Studies
 - Kristy L. Michel, Chief Operating Officer and Deputy Superintendent for Finance and Administration, Maryland State Department of Education

[Link to All Presentations](#)

During the presentations, Commission members raised several questions concerning the consultants' adequacy studies, the history and operation of Maryland's school finance system, and issues such as educational technology, career and technology education, and alignment of the high school diploma and college readiness standards.

Chairman Kirwan indicated that the Commission would not be making any substantive recommendations in its interim report to the General Assembly this December, but would include a summary of the Commission's work to date and the work plan for 2017. He was clear about the heavy workload beginning in mid-April, following the legislative session, for the Commission to complete its work in the following eight months.

The Commission's next meeting will be held on Monday, October 31, 2016; 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., at 120 House Office Building (House Appropriations Committee Room), 6 Bladen Street, Annapolis, Maryland.

For more information, contact MABE's Director of Governmental Relations, John R. Woolums, Esq., at jwoolums@mabe.org or 410-841-5414.