

LARRY HOGAN
Governor

BOYD K. RUTHERFORD
Lieutenant Governor



DAVID R. BRINKLEY
Secretary

MARC L. NICOLE
Deputy Secretary

October 29, 2019

Dr. William E. "Brit" Kirwan, Chair
Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education
c/o Office of Policy Analysis
Department of Legislative Services
90 State Circle Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chairman Kirwan:

As Governor Hogan's designee on the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education, he has asked me to respond to your recent letter.

It has been a great honor to serve on this commission with members who share the goal of transforming Maryland's schools into world-class institutions of learning for all students—no matter where they live or what their socio-economic background is. The governor shares this goal and has made education his top priority. He has provided historically high education funding five years in a row, created a lockbox to require an additional \$4.4 billion investment into our schools, and proposed \$2 billion—the largest investment in Maryland history—for school construction. In addition, the governor supports many of the Commission's recommendations, allowed SB 1030 — The Blueprint for Maryland's Future to become law despite its lack of much needed accountability measures, and released \$255 million of first year implementation funding.

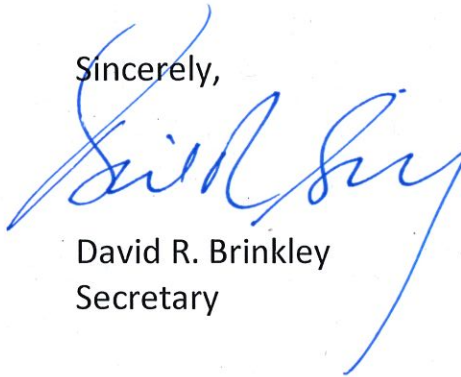
Regrettably, even after more than three years of hearings and meetings, there is still no clear plan for how to fulfill the massive financial obligation required for these initiatives. According to the Department of Legislative Services, the State will face a budget shortfall of \$5 billion between FY21 and FY24. This does not even take into account the spending levels required by the Commission's recommendations, which would push our deficit to \$18.7 billion.

Governor Hogan has been clear and consistent that there will be no massive tax increases to pay for the Commission's recommendations. In fact, he is just one of numerous elected officials across the state who have expressed serious misgivings about the costs of these proposals and the potential for tax increases. As the Commission nears the conclusion of our work, I will continue to press for more openness and transparency with regards to how the State and the counties can possibly afford this price tag.

Moreover, I will continue to fight over the next few weeks to make sure that the Commission implements strict, commonsense accountability measures that will go hand-in-hand with any policy changes or funding formula revisions. Maryland students deserve a great education, but Maryland taxpayers also deserve to know that their taxes are being spent where they are supposed to be spent—and aren't simply being thrown at the problem over and over again but expecting different results.

Resolving these questions should be the sole focus of the Commission's deliberations in its final meetings. I look forward to continuing to discuss these matters on the governor's behalf.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David R. Brinkley", is written over the typed name and title. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

David R. Brinkley
Secretary