



LARRY HOGAN  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MARYLAND  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

August 4, 2017

Andy Smarick  
President, Maryland State Board of Education  
208 Columbia Lane  
Stevensville, MD 21666

Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.  
State Superintendent of Schools  
Maryland State Department of Education  
200 W. Baltimore Street  
P. O. Box 1029  
Baltimore, MD 21201-2595

Dear Board President Smarick and Superintendent Salmon:

I have reviewed the second draft of the Maryland Consolidated State Plan created by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and the State Board of Education (State Board) in accordance with the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

ESSA was designed to provide flexibility to states to choose their own goals and create their own accountability systems, so long as they are designed to close achievement gaps and promote strong student performance. As I have said numerous times, Maryland students and families are depending on us to create a plan that builds on the school accountability already established in Maryland and to provide immediate support and resources to our lowest performing school districts.

Unfortunately, most of the nationally accepted recommendations for meaningful reform are now prohibited by deeply misguided legislation that put partisan politics and protecting the status quo over educational progress for our students who are most in need. The misleadingly titled "Protect Our Schools Act" (Chapter 29 of the Acts of 2017) bars most well-known and nationally recognized interventions in persistently failing schools. To make matters much worse, the law identified no other evidence-based intervention strategies that are working in other states.

I stand by the recommendations that I made on the first draft plan, which I have enclosed. There needs to be equity and access to the best possible education for all Maryland children, because every child deserves the ability to receive a world-class education, regardless of where they happen to live. Specifically, I remain focused on three areas: (1) school accountability, (2) identification of and intervention in failing schools, and (3) innovation.

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Draft Plan, and I thank the members of the State Board and MSDE for their hard work to create the best plan possible under the difficult circumstances imposed by the legislature. I remain committed to doing everything within my power, along with the State Board and MSDE, to develop innovative strategies to benefit all of Maryland's students.

Sincerely,

Larry Hogan  
Governor

cc: Boyd Rutherford, Lt. Governor  
Sam Malhotra, Chief of Staff  
Tiffany Robinson, Deputy Chief of Staff

Enclosure:  
February 13, 2017 ESSA Response Letter  
November 30, 2016 Letter Outlining ESSA Goals