Maryland State Superintendent

Baltimore, Maryland

LEADERSHIP PROFILE REPORT

March, 2020

Introduction

This report presents the findings of the Leadership Profile Assessment conducted by Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates (HYA) in February of 2020, for the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) State Superintendent position. The data contained herein were obtained from input the HYA consultant received when meeting with individuals and groups in either individual interviews or focus group settings, and from the results of the online survey completed by stakeholders. The surveys, interviews, and focus group meetings were structured to gather input to assist the Maryland State Board of Education (State Board) in determining the primary characteristics desired in the new State Superintendent. Additionally, the stakeholder interviews and focus groups collected information regarding the strengths of the State and some of the challenges that it will be facing in the coming years. The online survey data is very consistent with the input of the focus groups.

Participation

The number of participants in interview and/or focus groups sessions, by stakeholder group, in the two methods of data gathering are listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Personal Interviews and/or Focus Groups</th>
<th>Online Survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maryland State Board of Education</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland Association of Boards</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland Association of Elementary and Secondary School Principals</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>NA</td>
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<tr>
<td>(MAESP and MASSP)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland State Education Association (MSEA)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educators: Public Prek-12; Higher Ed; Military Ed; Private Ed; Charter; Other</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community, Business &amp; Educational Organization Leaders</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Maryland State Board of Education members were individually interviewed. Consultants conducted numerous group meetings, community forums, phone interviews, and in person individual interviews, including current State Superintendent Dr. Karen Salmon, Governor Larry Hogan’s Chief of Staff, and Dr. William “Brit” Kirwan, Chair of the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education (Kirwan Commission); as well as with MSDE staff. Other groups that had individual meetings or focus groups were; PSSAM, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), MABE, MSEA, MAESP, MASSP, Maryland Parent Teacher Association (MDPTA), MSDE Division of Rehabilitation Services Staff, MSDE Juvenile Services Education System Staff, Maryland Independent Schools Association, and many others in the State.

Ten open-invitation community forums for the entire State of Maryland were held in five geographically diverse areas of Maryland in the late afternoon and evening.

- Alleghany High School
  Cumberland
  3:30 p.m. and 7 p.m.
- Westlake High School
  Huntington
  3:15 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.
- Laurel High School
  Laurel
  4:00 and 7:00 p.m.
- Easton High School
  Easton
  4:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.
- Mergenthaler Vocational Technical High School
  Baltimore
  3:30 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

The desired characteristics identified for the new Maryland State Superintendent of Schools can be found on page 7.

The responses provided by the individuals and focus groups during the interviews are listed in two places; 1) in the “Summary of Consistently-Reported Themes” listed beginning...
on page 9 of the report, and 2) a list of all responses from individual and focus group meetings, which begin on page 11. They are listed alphabetically with no attempt to prioritize them. A separate Appendix starting on page 43 was submitted from the Maryland Educators State Association (MSEA).

The 553 respondents to the on-line survey represent a cross sampling of the different groups engaged with the State Board. Employees were especially well represented with 80 attending meetings in person and another 343 completing the on-line survey. Maryland citizens with children in the schools also participated in meeting the consultant in person and another 118 responding to the on-line survey. These two groups, employees and citizens with students in the schools, account for over 73% of the respondents to the on-line survey. The on-line survey statistical sections and the open-ended comments amplify the findings and themes from the focus groups.

It should be emphasized that the data from the focus groups is not a scientific sampling, nor should they necessarily be viewed as representing the majority opinion of the respective groups to which they are attributed. Items are included if, in the consultants’ judgment, they warranted the State Board’s attention.

**Strengths of the State**
All respondents talked about the diversity of Maryland as a strength. One focus group member said, “Maryland represents and functions as a small United States, with diverse geography, diverse populations and culture”. This diversity includes extremes of socio-economic and the incredible contrast of rural western Maryland, to urban Baltimore and the I95 corridor to the oceans and beaches of the east.

The structure of education in Maryland, with only 24 Local Education Agencies (LEAs), allows for a collaborative and highly communicative culture to exist around the major educational issues. This small number of LEAs has allowed the most recent State Superintendents to visit and spend an entire day with each of the LEA Superintendents. All PSSAM members touted this as a strength and something they wanted to retain in the new State Superintendent. These one on one meetings also allow the MSDE and the State Superintendent to involve the stakeholders in the implementation of policy, assessment and feedback to the educational mission.

In 2016, the high rankings of Maryland’s education performance were often cited with pride and as a strength. Although these rankings were referenced again—the intensity was diminished by the Kirwan Commission’s recent educational statistics that refuted some of the prestige of the rankings. Diversity was also a strongly held and celebrated tenant of every participant, but this will also show up later in this report as a concern.

Maryland school districts and the MSDE were recognized for their devotion in attempting to have programs available to meet the needs of all children. There is great pride from all respondents in the commitment to the individual child and providing the opportunity to give individualized attention and resources to each student. The passions and excellence of
local administrators and the teaching staff were also frequently cited as incredible strengths.

Resources in Maryland are prioritized to serve education. While funding levels do not meet all of the needs, or even the future needs of the Kirwan Commission recommendations and implementation of the *Blueprint for Maryland’s Future*, all respondents said Maryland citizens support taxes and funding for a high-class education system. Maryland has one of the highest levels of citizens attainment of Bachelor’s Degrees and the state embraces and desires to have a strong public education available for all children.

Dr. Salmon and the MSDE staff were praised for leading the state through the accountability implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). This implementation was multi-year. Many states have struggled with accountability implementations, but Maryland educators saw value and thought Dr. Salmon provided outstanding leadership in this endeavor. The MSDE staff was also praised for being responsive and willing to work collaboratively with all the local LEAs.

Maryland is seen and viewed by many as a centrist state. The Governor is Republican and the legislature is democratic. Normal political discourse is common, but not at levels experienced in the Federal Government or in other state legislators. Many see the atmosphere in Annapolis as highly supportive of MSDE and local LEAs. All constituents and elected officials support education funding provided at the highest levels but many were also concerned about the tax impacts of higher funding for education.

Maryland has a long history of best practice in education. Many new initiatives about to move forward will certainly impact this history. A new State Superintendent will have the support of the State Board, the MSDE staff, and the constituents of Maryland behind any implementation that continues and enhances the excellence of the Maryland education system. The State has experienced excellence in education and wants it to continue.

**Challenges/Concerns/Issues Facing the State**
The topic dominating the conversations with all individuals and focus groups was the final report of the Kirwan Commission. The report was the result of a multiyear study providing recommendations for improving education in Maryland. The Commission was chaired by Dr. Brit Kirwan, Chancellor Emeritus of the University System of Maryland. The Commission’s report is now an evolving implementation plan through the MD Legislative process, now referred to as the *Blueprint for Maryland’s Future*.

The Kirwan Commission report is composed of six major policy areas:
- Expanding prekindergarten to all 4-year-olds, as well as to 3-year-olds from families in poverty.
- Increasing the standards to become a teacher and raising teacher salaries.
- Revamping high schools to offer students training for well-paying jobs right after graduation.
• Establishing more “community schools” with additional wrap around services for students and their families.
• Providing more support to special education students and schools with concentrations of families in poverty.
• Creating an accountability program, including a new state level Accountability Board, to ensure money for education goes where it’s supposed to go through grants to LEA’s.

As the Legislature addresses the details of implementing the Kirwan Commission’s recommendations, the most commonly identified issue is the source of funding needed to sustain a multiyear approach to these initiatives. Even more unsettling to current education leaders at the state level is the development of the locus of control and protocols of the new State Accountability Board. Does the new State Superintendent have to be accountable to both Board’s? Does the State Board of Education authority become diminished with the implementation of the new Accountability Board? These and many other questions remain unanswered as of today.

The new State Superintendent will immediately be immersed in these discussions and implementation plans. Many respondents think the success or failure of this implementation as well as the work of the MSDE will rely heavily on the new State Superintendent’s skill to navigate the practical and political challenges of the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future while working out the details for funding and implementation. Everyone needs to acknowledge the challenge this will be to the new State Superintendent.

MSDE staff self-identified working conditions as a challenge. Their comments were echoed by many outside non-MSDE staff. MSDE salaries are barely competitive, and it takes a long time to fill vacancies if they are filled at all. Procurement is a tedious and long governmental maze and the MSDE building is in need of renovation or updating. Many positions are converting to “contracted” workers resulting in various employee classifications in the same work environment receiving differentiated salaries and benefits for completing the same work. Technology is dated and not much improved since 2016. Enterprise data systems and technology infrastructure do not meet the current and future needs of the MSDE. Staff parking and even going out for a quick bite to eat is a challenge because of the location. If Maryland wants to attract, retain, and develop a strong and vibrant MSDE staff, many of these conditions, especially competitive salaries, need to be addressed. While all of these issues cannot be solved in the short term, employees need to feel there is a plan for solving them in the longer term.

Student performance is mixed. Maryland has some of the highest achieving schools and students in the nation. But there are many areas of student academic performance in need of improvement. Urban school student achievement is very low compared to the rest of Maryland. The Kirwan Commission especially highlighted statistical student data areas in need of improvement. The new State Superintendent will have to task the MSDE and the LEAs to go beyond the current ESSA program to meet the needs of underperforming students.
Poverty in rural and urban sections of Maryland work against student achievement. Good programs are in place but increased wrap around or complete school/community programs are needed to support these students. Likewise, there needs to be consistent and equitable support for these programs. The emotional and social needs of students was noted by many as an area of focus that needed more resources throughout the state of Maryland.

Not far behind the concern for the implementation of the Kirwan Commission recommendations was the topic of Maryland politics. Every group indicated the demands of the State Superintendent were complicated by the need to navigate the political tenets of Maryland. The State Superintendent is in effect “on call” to Annapolis. Sitting on the Governor’s cabinet is a tremendous advantage, but instant access to the State Superintendent is a custom now expected by legislators and numerous commissions and associations. Attending to all the prescribed meetings and responsibilities of politics of the State Superintendent position leaves little time for strategic and critical work with the MSDE staff. Maryland may want to consider an evaluation of the responsibilities of the State Superintendent as well as the structure of the organizational chart to determine when the responsibilities can be modified and modernized. A number of groups indicated the need for strong deputy state superintendent position(s).

The challenges for the new State Superintendent are large and daunting. However, the State Board and the MSDE staff are committed to supporting a great leader. Likewise, constituents of Maryland want this position to succeed and will support the new leader. The success of the new State Superintendent will be linked to his/her ability to build support channels desired by so many of the respondents.

**Desired Characteristics**
Challenges referenced in this report lead to the most frequent response concerning desired characteristics to be political savvy. Many feel a deep awareness of and experience with maneuvering within the political landscape is an important skill set. Establishing relationships rapidly in a positive manner with all the elected officials in Annapolis is important.

Vacancies and leaves of absence in the MSDE Communications Department have exacerbated a desire for the new leader to be a prominent spokesperson and promoter of Maryland state education. Many feel the ability to communicate a vision in an accessible manner to every citizen of Maryland is critical to the success of education in Maryland.

Many feel that deep experience as a classroom teacher, school administrator, and with deep public-school central office experience is also critical for success. A sitting or former superintendent in a large complex setting was most frequently desired.

Maryland knowledge and experience were desired by some—but not universal. Many felt there needed to be a new “set of eyes” to look at existing programs and equitably redeploy
or organize resources. This fresh look may be an even more important skill because of the expectations of implementing the Kirwan Commission recommendations into the existing MSDE structure. There were few if any requests for a non-educational leader.

The candidate should also be able to focus on attracting, selecting, developing and retaining staff. This focus on staff also includes setting high expectations for staff and ensuring accountability. Many of the issues cited in the challenges by respondents need to be addressed at the MSDE staff level. A track record of leading a complex organization through difficult challenges while recognizing the difference between departments and silos would be an asset.

The new State Superintendent must also understand and be able to communicate a vision for education that embraces and utilizes technology. If Maryland education is to be increasingly successful, the technology infrastructure of MSDE, as well as coordinated systems and innovative practices need to be championed by the new leader.

In summary, the survey responses, along with information secured through focus groups, interviews, and community meetings, indicate the need for an experienced visionary leader with the professional energy needed to guide Maryland through this critical juncture of educational reform. Above all, the new State Superintendent needs to be an alliance builder in addressing the complex educational, social, and mental health needs of all Maryland children.

HYA cannot promise to find a candidate who possesses all of the characteristics desired by respondents. However, HYA and the Board intend to meet the challenge of finding an individual who possesses most of the skills and character traits required to address the concerns expressed by the constituent groups. We will seek a new State Superintendent who can work with the Maryland State Board of Education to provide the leadership needed to fulfill these desired characteristics and skills.

The consultants would like to thank all the participants who attended focus group meetings or completed the online survey. Also, we would like to thank all of the MSDE staff members who assisted with our meetings. We thank all MSDE employees for their efforts in facilitating our time in the MSDE.

Respectfully submitted,

Brad Draeger
Dwight Pfennig
Ed McCormick
Summary of Consistently-Reported Themes

Strengths

- Higher education in state is nationally ranked and recognized
- Location and size—Maryland has 24 Local Education Agencies (LEA’s)
- Maryland citizens unanimously support a strong public educational program
- Maryland is geographically diverse with mountains, rural farmland, urban centers, and ocean beaches
- Maryland State Board of Education governance and decorum has been improving
- Maryland supports and commits funding to education
- MSDE staff is committed and works collaboratively with LEA’s
- Passionate education employees, support staff, teachers and administrators in every LEA
- Schools and staff have increased services to meet the needs of all children
- State Superintendents have provided strong leadership

Challenges/Concerns/Issues

- Changing educational priorities as a result of the Kirwan Commission and the Blueprint for Education will challenge the Superintendent, MSBE, MSDE and local LEA’s
- Diversity—race, socio-economic, cultural, and ethnicity—all provide Maryland with strength but also the challenge of meeting the needs of all students
- Maryland’s size and governmental structure increase the political complexity of the State Superintendent’s role
- MSBE and the new Accountability Board roles in governance, responsibility and collaboration will be key components of the new Superintendent’s tenure
- MSDE finance and procurement were cited as a challenge.
- MSDE staff vacancies, salaries and working conditions are current challenges in need of a long-range improvement plan to recruit and retain high quality employees
- State Superintendent responsibilities include numerous committees and assignments and detract from time strategic and operational issues at MSDE
- Teacher and other staff shortages and staff retention remain an ongoing challenge for education quality
- Technology at the MSDE level is behind the LEA’s and needs immediate improvement

 Desired Characteristics

- Ability to analyze existing programs and reallocate resources
- Accessible, approachable and visible
- Cares about students
- Coalition builder—inspires through vision and can communicate and be the Maryland pinnacle spokesperson for promoting Maryland public education
- Educationally experienced preferably in Maryland
- Excellent communication skills
- Fresh set of eyes and existing practices
- High integrity, honesty and ethics
- Political skills are the most sought attribute
- Servant leader
- Possess teacher, school administrator and District superintendent experience. (preferred)
- Demonstrate technology experience that includes all aspects; enterprise/business systems, infrastructure, instructional technology and preparing Maryland to transform to digital disruption for improving education
- Transparent to a fault
- Visionary
Summary of All Comments from Focus Group Meetings

The structure of the focus groups was open, allowing for participants to build upon each other’s comments. Participants were asked to respond to the following questions.

- What do Maryland citizens value regarding their schools? What strengths do they desire to retain and build upon?
- What are the issues the State of Maryland Schools currently face, and, as importantly will be facing in the next three to five years?
- What are the personal and professional characteristics you expect a Maryland State Superintendent to possess?

Maryland State Board of Education Members (12 Participants)
February 12, 2020 through March 1, 2020
Interviews conducted via phone and in-person

Strengths

- Administrators and teachers who support our children
- Dealing with Students in trauma. Evolving resources are now becoming available, but needs expansion
- ESEA: Karen Salmon took horrible legislation and crafted it into a workable solution
- ESSA Star-Ranking system forced MSDE to be better
- Generally doing “OK”
- Great schools for those students who are struggling
- High degree of ethics and kindness in many programs
- Karen Salmon, great leader, legislators would not let her great ideas move forward
- Local control in MD is very strong
- Local education partners are very good and provide value to the local LEA’s
- Maryland values its children and education
- MSDE is very strong, good team, very professional, constructively critical
- One of the wealthiest States in the Country
- Potential to do a lot better
- Primary focus is on children
- Report cards on schools give great guidance for how to do better
- Staff is very responsive to the MSDE Board
- State education department is well managed
- Strong leadership in Maryland
- Student representative to MSDE is very strong
- Systems work well together: prison system (education); childcare; literacy, etc.
- Under the current system/leadership the department has been managed well
- Value a school/system/district sensitive to low learners. Parents/Teachers concerned that their kids achieve despite disabilities; ELL; and poverty
• Value educators who don’t coddle our children, but hold them to a high standard
• Value public education
• Value schools that are genuine and accept parent input as best can be managed
• Willingness to aim for the stars

Challenges/Concerns/Issues
• Challenge of completing background checks keeps teachers/staff out of classrooms too long
• Children exiting schools are unprepared for success. There is a cost for not addressing this issue
• Closing the achievement gap - 60% of students not ready for workforce
• Concern about finding someone willing to take on the challenge(s)
• Constraints placed on the position and department by politics
• Conversion to 5G and technology 4.0
• Develop a world class education system
• Developing core character traits in students
• Devote more attention to Gifted and Talented programs/priorities
• Digital disruption. Does MSDE have the resources to incorporate automation and digital expertise for IT educational infrastructure of Maryland education.
• Don’t build an empire - get people to want to work for you
• Dr. Salmon assembled the MSDE team and retaining this team of talent will be a challenge
• Educators need to stop feeling sorry for our children
• ESSA Star rankings have forced Maryland to be better
• Get “up to speed” on pressing issues quickly
• Getting appropriate Medicaid funds to the department/systems/schools to provide childcare assistance or improvement in programs
• How larger schools/district respond to problems and key issues
• If businesses move the quality of life in Maryland will change
• Inaccuracies in previous state test score reporting has created an inflated picture of Maryland students
• Issues continue to escalate decrease in kindness; faceless communications; substance abuse
• Juggling Kirwan recommendations and ESSA mandates
• Kids are often in a cycle of poverty that they can’t get out of
• Kirwan Commission is functioned at a research level. It is not always at a practical or pragmatic level. Technology, IT, and developing infrastructure are absent in the Commission’s work.
• Kirwan is focused on inputs not outcomes
• Kirwan Commission findings – will they work
• Kirwan is complicated
• Legislators are taking an interest in accountability and overseeing MSDE
• Let local divisions focus on one area of the Kirwan report rather than focusing on all five
• Lowering standards is a fraud. Our kids won’t make it
• Maintain a leadership role in education
• Make every day count for every student in these large schools/systems
• Making sure there is accountability over inputs, more than outcomes for local Boards and the State Board
• Many diverse groups are represented on the Board. The new superintendent must understand their agenda’s and mold them into strategies that serve all children.
• MD has had some LEA superintendents that needed accountability and guidance and Dr. Salmon stood her ground. The new superintendent will have to do it.
• MSDE has not always been perceived as representing the constituents
• Need for a bold push forward for accountability and rigor
• Need for flexibility for plans to do something differently for children of poverty, boys, IEP’s, etc.
• Not doing “OK” in the current environment
• Physical location of MSDE and lack of security in downtown Baltimore work against the MSDE.
• Procurement process is an impediment
• Provide training in methodologies that teach children in a way they learn
• Rapid transition of the workplace (jobs may not exist)
• Rebuilding/Building collaborative relationships with legislators
• Return to character education that emphasizes respect, trust and honesty
• Rigorous look at the scope of the work of the department
• School report cards/score cards need to be visible. They are only used to highlight successes and challenges
• School system goals are not designed to move that fast
• Schools/Districts need to emphasize analytical, communication, and interpersonal skills
• Schools/Systems may be too bug (cities and large counties)
• Separate accountability Boards will be a challenge
• Smaller schools/district may be better
• Spending money has not proven to work in the past
• Standards have been lowered which may cost students their future
• State Board members need to get out of their comfort zone
• State Board needs to get out of its comfort zone
• State is relied upon too heavily
• State Superintendent cannot be invisible
• Students need access to digital learning opportunities
• Students need to be prepared as problem solvers
• Systems need to be re-structured - not just refinanced/financed. Throwing money at issues doesn’t solve them
• Teacher training needs to be stronger – needs to be a better relationship (regarding teacher training) between MSDE and institutions
• Teacher unions influence too much legislation
Telecommuting must be maintained

The new State Superintendent will need to be able to successfully navigate the increased role of the legislature through the activities of the Kirwan Commission in order to implement reasonable reforms in a timely manner.

Two Boards of accountability for new Superintendent—bill presented on Friday—passed on a Monday—Governor will veto it—Legislature will override it—but budget will still be the final part of any implementation

Understand and implement the Kirwan Commission recommendations

While getting to the top not necessary, the needle of student achievement needs to be moved

Working with kids who are ELL and are children of poverty

**Desired Characteristics**

- A competent progressive with experience
- A county Superintendent leader helpful but not essential
- Ability to understand and address childcare issues
- Able to forge partnerships
- Able to galvanize the 24 districts around a common cause (same page)
- Able to lead a statewide discussion on significant changes
- Able to provide a political message that sets the philosophy of the department
- An industry expert – understands education thoroughly
- Ascending individual able to grow with the demands
- Candidate from Maryland who understands context and has relationships
- Charismatic
- Clinician
- Collaborative leadership style
- Consummate politician
- Demonstrate an appetite for building alliances
- Demonstrate superior leadership skills
- Diplomacy needed to manage constituents but able to lead to their vision with confidence and conviction
- Energetic and dynamic leader
- Experience as a teacher and school administrator
- Experience with disruption and being able to create an IT area of expertise
- Experienced as a superintendent
- Extraordinary leadership skills: political savvy; inclusiveness; diversity of thought; understanding of best practices; takes prudent risks.
- Find a “Unicorn” – understands no one person can do it all (others may have to leave to make room for leaders)
- Great communication skills
- Has a “heart for boys” and addresses the gender gap problem
- Have an appetite for building alliances
- Hold self and staff accountable
- Is visible – gets out of the office in Baltimore
• Judiciously deal with Kirwan connections
• Likeable
• Links change to outcomes
• Must be a consummate politician
• Must build on the notion that MSDE can provide technical assistance to legislators to help them make more practical (better) decisions (background check system a good example)
• Must exhibit real leadership in order to get anything done (cannot be just a “paper pusher”)
• Must understand and be supportive of the Kirwan report
• Need to be “up to speed” on ESSA requirements
• New blood from outside the state should be considered
• New Superintendent needs to be visible
• Not a “wimp.” Stands up for kids and parents
• Not a paper creator, or a paper pusher
• Not just concerned about keeping up with trends/fads
• Politically agile
• Someone who can “Keep the trains running” while lifting the system
• Someone who cares about all children learning
• Someone who has really done something in the past
• Someone willing to serve in Maryland for several years, longevity
• Someone with progressive, competent experience in a similar position
• Stirs up the parent for educational causes
• Strong Superintendent. Someone who is not angry; won’t lose their cool but can stay strong even when facing significant opposition.
• Systems change person
• Thinks out-of-the-box to make things different
• Understands how to build relationships with legislators
• Understands the “big picture” through several perspectives
• Understands the need for political schmoozing that advocates for children
• Utilizes a collaborative approach
• Very good management skills
• Visible in the field
• Visionary, change agent

Maryland Association of Boards of Education (4 Participants)
February 13, 2020 through February 28, 2020

Strengths
• Maryland values education and is a very wealthy state
• MD is #2 has the highest percentage of master’s degrees in populace
• Only 24 LEA’s – very manageable

Challenges/Concerns/Issues
• Accountability has been lacking in MSDE and probably resulted in Blueprint report
• Achievement gap is present in many different areas
• Charter and charter funding formula
• Climate of MSDE: parking privileges, what’s moving and what’s being blocked, is it toxic?
• Facility issues (maintenance, capacity, renovation). Many facilities in Baltimore County don’t have potable water
• Funding will be an issue for Kirwan and other MSDE initiatives
• Independence of state superintend has eroded--Governor and other appointments have made impact on this loss of independence.
• Loyalty should not stifle other voices in MSDE
• MSDE does not have enough staff and the staff is aging and retiring. New blood and new ideas are needed
• Profound enslavement - relationship between Blacks and whites - funding, positions, black tax, general presumption is black and brown children can’t learn
• Smallest district is Kent at 2,000 - huge student populations - incredible diversity
• Staff needs better support and backing
• State Board is not always receiving all the information from stakeholder and advisory councils—input on the star system was not presented to the State Board

Desired Characteristics
• Backbone needed in Board meetings to stand up to challenges at Board meetings
• Bring people along
• Charismatic and inspirational leader—extraordinary interpersonal skills
• Cultural competency is very important
• Deep experience
• Equity policies: everyone loves it until it impacts them
• Experience at the local division superintendent
• Experience with working elected officials
• Need to examine current climate of MSDE and make improvements for morale and efficacy
• Open to ideas
• Push where you can
• Stamina: state superintendent needs to be in all schools and serve
• Strong understanding of academics and social emotional practices
• Understands the diversity of MD the eastern shore and the western rural parts. Accepts no cookie cutter approaches
• Vision, forward thinking

Maryland Association of Elementary and Secondary School Principals Members (5 Participants)

Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates
Maryland State Board of Education Profile Report
March 12, 2020

**Strengths**
- Diversity of student population and communities is very rich
- Geographic diversity - mountains to oceans
- Proximity to culture and great cities, Baltimore, DC, Annapolis, etc.
- School administrators are very passionate about their leadership
- Small number of school districts (24 districts) with a strong reputation

**Challenges/Concerns/Issues**
- Asbestos and lead issues still need to be addressed
- Board Members may have financial interests that may be in conflict of their role on the board
- Diversity is also a challenge. Tiny districts to large districts, many urban populations are struggling
- English language learners: how do we support sanctuary for students in current political environment?
- Equity
- Facilities are not equitable. Appropriate spaces for each child are not present at the current time and a funding stream is needed
- Kirwan
- Legislatures are reactionary and political balance is not needed
- MSDE needs to be consistent but many need flexibility
- MSDE superintendent must have a plan for an exploding ESOL population
- One size set of regulations will not fit all 24 divisions. There will be some issues
- Practitioners’ voices are being drowned out by legislatures and MSDE
- Principal/Teacher evaluation. MSDE has representation, but committee member input is not always included
- Schools and students can become victims of MSDE/Legislature actions because implementation is obfuscated, late and not always executable with current resources.
- Schools need more support - cost neutral supports could remove ineffective programs and move the funds to programs that work
- Student information sharing from district to district needs clarification
- Suspension/disciplinary policy from legislature was not supported by MSDE
- Teacher shortage in all teaching certifications
- Testing program, PISA, is now being added with no testing being taken away
- Trauma informed practices needs improvement effected students need wrap around services. Current support for students not successful in their neighborhood schools. Social emotional learning training is critical for teachers
- Universal Pre-K training is needed for administrators who inherit or house universal Pre-K
- Vision is needed for alternative education - 1-star school for life - measure progress and growth in different ways
• Working with MSDE Board Members - very diverse opinions - decisions made at the Board level are not always in the best interest of students
• Wrap around services are needed

Desired Characteristics
• Challenge the status quo, break out of current molds
• Collaborative leader for MSDE
• Grit and backbone
• Likes students & likes education
• Need to understand education with superintendent experience
• No micromanagement needed
• Not afraid to speak politically
• Passion needs to be modeled
• School administration experience
• Student centered - all decisions impact students
• Understands innovation is critical to MD future success
• Visionary
• We need a different set of eyes

Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (8 Participants)
February 12, 2020

Strengths
• Collaborative state for local districts engaging with the State Superintendent
• Diversity is a strength - uniquely positioned to meet the needs of the students
• Equity - Districts are working hard to improve equity access for all students and equity is already at a very high level in Maryland

Challenges/Concerns/Issues:
• Discipline restrictions—no suspensions for elementary students—hamstrings local districts options
• ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act) challenge -- 2nd year of implementation—sometimes it seems like the decisions are already made and local input is not included
• Huge waves of legislation wash over MSDE and Districts—magnitude of effect awareness is needed by State Superintendent
• Maryland teacher shortage—includes all school personnel—even support positions
• MSDE resources are limited and missing—complete overhaul is probably needed
• MSDE web site of lessons for behavioral issues—not really the resources Districts need
• PSSAM advocacy cannot be the only advocacy for students—MSDE must be a voice for students
• Rebuild MSDE—fill vacancies
• Students are coming to school with many behavioral issues—managing student behavior—no funding is available for the resources these students need
• Two Boards in MD future—MSDE and Accountability Board—how will this work—especially financially

Desired Characteristics
• Aware of all LEA’s – ability to develop a relationship with all the diverse state school districts
• Capable of large-scale visions, planning and implementation of statewide initiatives
• Good communicator
• Great people skills—ability to build consensus
• Navigate political relationships
• Needs superintendent experience
• Someone who visits each district every year.

Maryland State Education Association (7 Participants)
February 19, 2020

Strengths
• Maryland is a state that attracts and retains citizens for its public schools and economic growth
• Responsiveness to all students
• Unique differences in all the counties
• Value of diversity throughout the state

Challenges/Concerns/Issues
• Accountability conflicts when schools fall into different categories
• Affiliates need to be supported by MSDE
• Behavior policies must be addressed throughout the state
• Communication(s) from MSDE must improve. It’s not as good as it has been in the past
• Do not remove past practices that have worked
• Higher education needs to connect better with teachers and MSDE
• How to find resources to support philosophies of importance
• Incentives to retain teachers in Maryland need to be explored (people leave because they do not feel empowered
• Legislature may take control from State Board and State Superintendent because they’re viewed as not respected
• MSDE not working with MSEA on how to recruit teachers
• No acknowledgement (State Board and MSDE) of traumatic events accompanying increased rigor and other expectations
• Overlapping bureaucracies between ESSA and Kirwan
• Preparing students for jobs and having teachers qualified to teach them
• Professional Standards Board is not respected and doesn’t work with the State Superintendent or State Board
• Program initiatives are not given enough time to work
• Resources/Training not provided for dealing with student trauma
• Restore respect in the State Superintendent position and “rudderless” operations of MSDE
• Should be emphasis on teacher training and professional development
• State Board can be an impediment to public schools
• State Board is private school and voucher driven
• State Board must consider the unheard voices
• State guidelines do not support proactive approach to discipline and mental health
• Students having equal opportunities throughout the state
• There is less support for teachers than in the past

Desired Characteristics
• Able to explain a vision to legislators and practitioners
• Advocate for sound mental health programs/practices
• Knows how to reach unheard voices
• Must have an educational background
• Put restorative practices into place
• Should have been a practitioner from the field of education
• Shows evidence of being respected and operating with transparency
• Someone who is well respected which will be needed for implementing Kirwan
• Speaks to sound practice of pedagogy
• Understands that the State Board could be an impediment to Public Schools
• Understands the differences between urban, suburban and rural districts
• Values diversity and values public schools

(MSEA also submitted a two-page document outlining the Characteristics desired for a state superintendent. The document is located at the end of the Leadership Profile Report as ADDENDUM #1)
Community Organization/Business Organization/Educational Organization Leaders (12) - Disability Rights of Maryland (1); Arc of Maryland (1); Casa de Maryland (1); Greater Urban League of Baltimore (1); Maryland Coalition for Financial Literacy (2); Maryland Business Roundtable (1); Maryland Chamber of Commerce (1); Executive Director of Interagency Commission on School Construction (1); Maryland State Family Child Care Association (1); Maryland State Child Care Association (1); Maryland Association of Community Colleges (1)
February 12, 2020 through March 2, 2020

Strengths
- A much smaller footprint to initiate change at the school district level
- Current State Superintendent is strong
- Great topography
- Jobs
- Maryland has been at the top in testing
- Maryland is a pro education State
- MSDE asks for input on policies and for review of existing policies
- MSDE prepares high quality training materials and services
- Overall wealth
- Size of districts; 26 districts by constitutional design
- Some agencies are successful with outdoor programs focusing on social emotional growth
- State-wide CTE programs are very good
- Strong MSDE connections with the business community
- The Business community offers strong apprenticeship programs
- Well established political/educational community

Challenges/Concerns/Issues
- Aid with classroom management issues and removing those who disrupt opportunities for others
- Business community wants to increase P-Tech partnerships
- Classrooms models and effective teacher coaching needs to take place
- Close the achievement gap – Whites vs Black/Brown
- Continuing and/or expanding teacher-business emersion programs
- Develop/ Integrate a PreK to 4-year college program
- Diverse families need to be met on an even playing field
- Family Child Care issues may be overlooked by bureaucratic issues at MSDE
- Giving proper attention to the state-wide urban-rural divide
- Having enough teachers for specialized programs is not financially feasible
- High tax structure
- Improving the salary of State Education employees
- Improving the salary of the State Superintendent
- Income inequity between state and local districts
- Infusion or career and technical into academic courses
• Issues of testing
• Kirwan may not permit the State Superintendent and/or MSDE the same level of authority
• Kirwan push for achievement may make our kids grow up too fast
• Lack of coordination between divisions
• Legislation precluding development of implementation of sound discipline practices below 2nd grade.
• Managing autonomy of 24 school districts
• Managing the size and wealth difference between districts
• Maryland Blueprint for Educational Success (Kirwan report) Implementation
• Money
• More emphasis is needed for teachers on “brain development”
• Need for a data system capable of handling all MSDE financial issues
• Needs to “move the cheese” at MSDE
• Overcome a State system that pays less than local districts
• Parents need to be more engaged
• Providing proper attention to school discipline issues
• Remote counties may not be up to par with teaching staff or program implementation
• Some people at MSDE favor friends when providing resources and/or assistance
• State Policy and politics not matching up in Maryland
• Subsidies for parents are slow in coming. The families most in need wait the longest
• Teacher Shortage
• Teachers need to be culturally competent with proper training
• There are technical problems with MSDE data collection
• There needs to be a review of play-based programs for Pre-K
• There needs to be a systemic “deeper dive” (other than test scores) on state progress
• Under 50% of students are ready for Pre-K

**Desired Characteristics**
• A local superintendent
• Able to build sound relationships with all educational groups
• Able to maintain a great relationship with the Legislature
• Aware of issues of kids in lower income neighborhoods
• Be open to all stakeholders and delivery systems
• Be professional: “Let us do our work!”
• Break down the silos of MSDE
• Cognizant of not just political will, but best practice as well
• Established successes in building trust
• Experienced Superintendent
• Expertise in classroom management and discipline
• Financial expertise
• Great listener who collects all perspectives
• Idea of equity, should not be based on zip code
• Knowledgeable of all aspect of early childhood education
• Maryland experience good but not essential
• Not from business background. Must understand education
• Ongoing quality of being connected to the community
• Open to innovative programs
• Open to meeting with business partners
• Overall skills to develop a strategic leadership team
• Political savvy
• Practical experience as principal
• Should have experience/background in early childhood education as well as all other aspects of education
• Someone who understands all the work of MSDE
• Successfully work with Labor Unions
• Understands parent engagement
• Understands the relationship between workforce development and youth apprenticeships
• Understands you cannot separate Special Education from regular education
• Very skillful at managing diversity gaps in Maryland economy
• Visionary leader with very good management skills
• Works well with local Boards, superintendents, and parents

Elected/Appointed Officials (4 Participants) – Governor’s Office (2); Secretary, Maryland Higher Education Commission (1); Interagency Commission on School Construction (1) February 12, 2020 through March 2, 2020

Strengths
• A highly diversified State
• A rich history of supporting education
• Apprenticeship programs are increasing
• Dual enrollment is rapidly growing
• Education in Maryland is almost religious in terms of the reverence and appreciation
• Higher education dependent on solid k-12 state-wide education program
• Maryland economy is tops
• Maryland in the forefront of lowest poverty and unemployment rates
• Maryland is a wealthy State
• Maryland is a wealthy state, but you must convince the public that more taxes are needed for education
• There is a good relationship between higher ed and the State Superintendent

Challenges/Concerns/Issues
• A passionate legislature wanting prescriptive solutions
• Citizens are very sensitive to their taxes
• Closing the gap between districts; resources, achievement
• Decrease in teachers (27%) a major concern
• Hiring educators who are not just technocrats
• How to manage the expectation that “everyone should go to college” versus finding true career paths for all students
• Implement the Kirwan report recommendations
• Kirwan report is asking for more money. Citizens will be reluctant to support the additional taxes needed
• Lack of skilled labor. Construction is getting more expensive because of the lack of labor
• Mandates of the K-12 system
• Navigate the political landscape of Maryland
• Need for higher salary for State Superintendent
• Understand local control as it relates to Oversight of 24 school jurisdictions
• Why is MD training for skilled labor?

Desired Characteristics
• Able to implement a system to ensure accountability
• Communication skills to deal with a prescriptive system
• Consummate team builder
• Empower IAC members to be involved in organization management, including budget requests, staffing, legislative hearings, etc.
• Exhibits optimism and inspiration that will assist in building a strong team
• Experience in a diverse school district
• Experience in a large school district
• Expertise with Federal programs dealing with mental/physical disabilities
• Facilitate subcommittees so that members can increase their level of information and discussion on topics prior to acting
• Familiar with High Tech, Career and Technical Programs
• Focus on transparency and accountability
• Foster ownership by leaders within the agency
• Foster the development of the Interagency Commission as an independent agency
• Have willingness and vision to integrate and tie resources of MSDE to those from the Maryland Department of Planning and the IAC to track student migration from one LEA to another
• Increase interagency support and communication channels
• Lead overall vision and mission of the IAC in coordination with other Commission members but empower Executive Director and staff to handle the day-to-day operations
• Management leadership in dealing with a variety of budget demands
• More closely tie together the work of the IAC and the MSDE School Facilities Branch
• Must be able to navigate the legislative process
• Politically savvy
• Proven Leader
• Proven track record in dealing with issues of Equity
• Provide MSDE administrative support in HR, Field, and IT but also allow IAC access to perform processes autonomously when it makes more sense for processes to be administered by technical experts or where MSDE lacks enough capacity to meet the organization’s needs
• Thick-skinned
• Value an openness to Charter Schools
General Public/ General Public Focus Groups (31 Participants)
February 12 and 13, 2020
Locations: Mergenthaler Vocational High School (Baltimore); Easton High School (Easton); Laurel High School (Laurel); Allegany High School (Cumberland); Westlake High School (Waldorf)

Strengths
- CTE Programs need to be expanded so they are equitably available for all students
- Dual enrollment programs are excellent where they exist
- Fabulous natural resources
- Great teachers
- High expectations
- High focus on students
- Strong fine arts (music) programs in many of the schools
- Teachers are of high quality
- Teachers are well prepared with good resources
- There are progressive things happening in Maryland and we need a leader to keep the good things on track.
- There is strong support for teachers in many schools
- Value strong academic teachers who have classroom management skills

Challenges/Concerns/Issues
- Achieving greater accountability
- Closing the achievement gap
- Closing the socio-economic gap
- CTE Programs cannot continue to “skim” the best students from sending schools
- Cultural competency skills need to be emphasized
- Difference in Maryland county school districts is difficult to understand why they are not at the same level of competency
- Discipline in schools a major problem:
- Dual enrollment should be equitably available for all students
- Early childhood education is critical to the family and student engagement in the public schools
- Ensure that Kirwan Commission mandates for universal pre-K are implemented with fidelity
- Even though Maryland is not a large state, the diversity of the regions is significant. The new State Superintendent will need to understand the nuances of the regions and meet the needs of the various groups. Deep Creek (Garrett County) is very different from the Eastern Shore.
- Family engagement in education is the key to student success. It must start in the early years
- Get “up to speed” on pressing issues quickly
• Home schooling and private schooling is being used by parents with poor perceptions of the public schools based on behavior of children in the public schools
• How to involve families in the educational process
• Implementing a quality universal pre-K program across the state
• It’s hard to find out how high schools are performing; perceptions and reputations are working against the public schools
• Kirwan push on early childhood is very good, but the devil is in the details and the curriculum. Will students’ needs be addressed on the social emotional level in the Kirwan plan?
• Manage the gap between Large and Small districts, regional differences
• Meeting the needs of students through various learning technique
• Middle schools In Prince Georges County have discipline issues. Many parents avoid the middle schools
• More resources needed for families and family engagement
• Must understand the intricacies of the recommendations of the Kirwan Commission and keep the best interests of the local schools in mind when implementing the required changes. Ideally, the new State Superintendent will be given the opportunity to be a part of the Kirwan Commission Working Group. It is essential that the local boards, through the State Superintendent, have a seat at the table.
• Need for the state to work with districts
• Need to collaborate with colleges for effective teacher programs
• Pre-K expansion
• Pre-K programs should be made universal
• Preparing teachers properly for the challenges they will face
• Pre-school teachers at child-care centers frequently go to higher salary public schools and this leads to fast turnover at the childcare centers
• Provide more flexibility to local districts
• Racism is still prevalent. People stereotype and make assumption about perceived abilities of students based on race and ethnicity
• Relax reporting to Baltimore
• Review hiring practices to ensure more highly qualified candidate are selected
• Social emotional learning is critical, and the assessment process seems to override these needs of the students
• State Board members are pro-charter schools. The new State Superintendent will need to advocate for the regular public schools who have lost funding to charters.
• Statewide equity
• Students complain about the rigidity of academics and the assessments that don’t address learning through play in the elementary years
• Tech programs that meet the needs of the community will result in entrepreneurial businesses taxable revenue and better income for the community
• The demographic makeup of the teaching ranks does not accurately reflect that of the student population. The new State Superintendent should develop and implement programs that result in a more diverse pool of teachers.
• The need to get Pre-K programs accredited expeditiously so they begin to serve students
• The new State Superintendent will need to advocate for the local districts in the legislature and with the Governor.
• The new State Superintendent will need to be able to successfully navigate the increased role of the legislature through the activities of the Kirwan Commission in order to implement reasonable reforms in a timely manner.
• There is lack of support for teachers in some schools
• There should be more multiple paths to student success in school
• There should be reasonable and consistent policies/rules for student participation in extra-curricular activities across the state
• There should be state mandated after school activities
• Too much time is spent on assessment and the assessments are not helpful to the child’s development
• Understanding the Kirwan report
• Unfunded mandates
• Will the 2020 census undercount immigrant families? Again, family engagement is the key to an accurate census count

Desired Characteristics
• Able to close the gap between intentions and results
• Able to earn respect statewide
• Accept the hard work of the districts
• Already know the State
• An innovative educational leader
• Be an educator first, politician second
• Be willing to stay in Maryland for several years – longevity
• Can assist the State Board in creating goals to improve the state
• Champion of public schools
• Classroom experience
• Clear vision for employees and Districts
• Collaborative leadership style
• Continue the equity focus
• Empowerment to their employees
• Engage in all schools with all teachers. Listen and learn from them
• Experience as a teacher and school administrator
• Experience in educational leadership
• Great sense of humor
• Has a sense of community
• Understands the history of Maryland
• Has been an educational practitioner
• Can teach. The new State Superintendent should TEACH the members of the legislature, the public, and the Governor about what is best for the children we serve.
• Highly visible in the local districts
• Hold self and staff accountable
• Include unstructured instructional time, learning by play
• Innovative with great communication skills
• Leadership that is inclusive
• Listen to local agencies
• Maintains a strong stance on anti-bullying (the system too often defends the bully)
• Motives must be pure (for the children)
• Must be strong but kind. “He/she must be able to read to a kindergarten class and then go yell at the Governor.”
• PASSIONATE! For all students PreK to career pathways
• Possess a core set of values
• Receptive to technical education that sets up students for success
• Respect for local schools and local control
• Should be approachable and collaborative
• Someone willing to serve in Maryland for several years, longevity
• Strong Superintendent. Someone who is not angry; won’t lose their cool but can stay strong even when facing significant opposition.
• Supports the “Blueprint for Maryland’s Future”
• Understand issues in education from birth to grade 12 (and beyond)
• Understand the business side of education but have a background in teaching and learning.
• Understands developmental aspects of early educators and students
• Visible in the field
• Visionary, with a strategic approach
• Willing to assemble a community advisory group
• Willing to support childcare providers and programs
• Willing to talk to teachers at the district level
Maryland State Department of Education Staff (80 Participants)
February 12, 2020

Strengths
- Autism programs are very strong magnet to out of state parents
- Autonomy for individual superintendents
- Birth to 21 model is in place and unique
- Childcare is in the MSDE - very strong - prenatal is included - early care leads to less behavioral issues
- Community and advocacy organizations are plentiful
- Excellence in education - Kirwan wants to maintain that excellence
- Family engagement is a strength
- Great hospital system
- Hard working and highly qualified staff
- Location in a cultural center and geographic
- Maryland higher education program is strong
- Maryland is a small USA (geography, diversity, etc.)
- MD 24 districts is very manageable
- MD values education
- Military bases
- MSDE employee knowledge and experience is deep and should be tapped
- MSDE staff
- Passionate
- School libraries are nationally recognized
- Steamed crabs and the Ravens
- Very diverse state

Challenges/Concerns/Issues
- Ability to be proactive with legislators
- Ability to reallocate resources
- Access to health care
- Assess the culture and the environment. Things that look broken may not be and vice versa
- Be present in the state
- Blueprint is primed for a transformational leader
- Break down silos
- Classifications are becoming an issue for type of work
- Communication department is clustered because of people on leave and an acting director
- Concentrated poverty is a challenge
- Contractual positions are impacting the MSDE and new strategies need to be developed
- Deployment and planning need better preparation in every area
• Dip in Maryland achievement and rankings
• Duplication of work. There are very similar functions in many departments
• Equity of budgeting
• ESOL increasing populations
• Facilities are aging (i.e. lead, asbestos, HVAC)
• Family engagement is a challenge
• Health and well-being of students
• Impact of homelessness
• Inspector General
• Kirwan looming - huge challenge
• Kirwan will increase the workload; hiring process; grants
• Maryland is challenged with addressing equity. There is disproportionality in resources and services
• Migrant workers
• MSDE needs a larger presence and reputation in the community
• MSDE needs to promote its mission and purpose
• MSDE State Sup role is too large. Some responsibilities need to be re-assigned
• Parking is allocated by seniority
• Pay disparity
• Procurement is slow and cumbersome
• Procurement, IT, are weak
• Programs in progress - please sustain continuity
• Promotional and training opportunities for MSDE staff
• Reorganizing the MSDE - CFO and COO is not a good combination
• Retaining teachers in Maryland
• Rural access technology providers - especially for disabilities
• See schools as hub of communities not just a daytime warehouse
• Slow to fill MSDE positions - vacancy targets
• Solid strategic plan is needed to guide MSDE staff
• Support staff to help staff retention - telecommuting should be an option
• Teacher preparation programs are not matching the skills sets needed
• Technology in MSDE is lower than the technology in the classroom in the districts
• Training and recruitment are needed
• Turnover - key MSDE positions - low hanging fruit in procurement and finance
• Understanding of divisional operations is not well known amongst MSDE employees
• Vouchers and charter schools
• Workforce challenges - critical field shortages throughout MD
• Workload is inhibitor to Kirwan

Desired Characteristics
• Approachable
• Comfortable when speaking to public and staff
- Diplomatic - able to keep issues calm
- Experience in managing a challenging public
- Involved in all schools
- Must be supportive of staff
- Respects the staff and their opinions on varying issues
- Strong enough to reel in the Board
- Understands the job functions of the Central Office

Maryland State Department of Education Division and Department Leadership (22 Participants)
February 20, 2020

Strengths
- Coordination of MSDE, DORS and local school systems has improved.
- Diversity of Maryland: rural, suburban, urban, lowlands, highlands many different types of LEA’s
- LEA’s work together - communication is excellent
- Maryland data is strong. Math, reading and graduation performance is high
- MSDE gets to see and has contacts in the entire state as a strength

Challenges/Concerns/Issues
- Blended learning not taking off
- Complicated political structure and the learning curve is steep
- Counseling staff turnover because of caseload
- Different data systems, IEP, SIS are not universal and create a challenge
- DORS is shifting to youth-oriented clients, career paths, apprenticeships.
- Employment transition services are growing at a very fast rate
- Kirwan adds to the political complexity
- Kirwan will impact workloads of the entire MSDE entity
- Mental health issues in schools needs a focus
- Misalignment because of autonomy especially in high school course requirements
- MSDE is not allowed to advocate for employees during legislation
- MSDE needs a plan for the whole child
- Multiple programs – DORS staffing is at critically low levels
- No tuition reimbursement for MSDE employees
- Policies affecting juvenile services need more flexibility
- Salary at MSDE is not competitive to County districts,
- School libraries are waning. One district removed all the media specialists
- Set clear strategic plans with measured metrics
- Staffing: meeting position authorizations should be timely - higher levels of staffing are needed
- Strong county systems with autonomy
- Students with IEPS (35,000) with needs - only 150 counselors creates high ratios
• Superintendent needs to have a deep understanding of DORS services and programs
• Superintendent serves on too many Boards—no focus
• Teacher shortage: recruitment and incentives for retention are critical
• Technology is a challenge throughout MSDE
• Technology training for instructional support
• Varying credit requirements, 21, 23 and 26, make it a challenge
• Will Kirwan focus allow room for other initiatives and programs—will existing programs suffer from Kirwan focus and implementation

**Desired Characteristics**

• Ability to stand up to different audiences
• Ability to walk a tightrope
• Ability to work with a variety of people
• Advocate for MSDE employees—professional development
• Be data driven and know how to use and analyze data
• Big picture while knowing the small details
• Broad understanding of the politics of the state – can’t survive without it
• Creative
• Credibility with experience in teaching and learning
• Flexibility
• Good communicator—express needs of MSDE
• Good thinker
• Innovator
• Model and be present/visible to staff
• Needs to be invested in all MSDE positions
• Problem solves
• Strategic
• Strong communicator – in crisis, etc.
• Strong leadership skills
• Willing to employ people who challenge the status quo
Maryland State Board of Education  
State Superintendent of Schools  
Desired Characteristics

The Maryland State Board of Education (State Board) is currently seeking a dynamic, innovative, transformational, and courageous change agent to build upon Maryland’s educational successes and advance the State’s position as a leader in preparing students for career and college readiness and global competitiveness in the 21st century. The successful candidate will have a unique opportunity to make historic improvements in student performance and to leave a lasting legacy in the State of Maryland and on the Nation. The State Superintendent also works closely with the Governor, the General Assembly, local school superintendents, the education community, teachers, students, and families.

The individual selected will focus upon the following professional priorities:

- Deliver a strategic plan to drive change, innovation, and creativity necessary to advance educational outcomes.
- Support and advance educational equity policy and practices statewide.
- Drive the implementation of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Consolidated State Plan and equip students with the skills necessary for college and career readiness.
- Support the implementation of recommendations outlined by the Kirwan Commission on Innovation and Excellence and the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future.
- Strengthen student achievement by ensuring high quality standards, teaching, and curricula in every classroom.
- Develop and implement a digital plan to inform more efficient operations, enhance student experiences, and prepare students to operate in a digital world.
- Form strategic relationships with various stakeholders in the private and public, government and nonprofit, parent, student, and education sectors to blend traditional approaches, such as promulgating regulations, with new strategic influence approaches, such as leveraging Maryland’s new report card to drive improved student performance.
- Use entrepreneurial principles to inspire others to view an expansive horizon about the role of education in a rapidly evolving world.

The successful candidate will satisfy Maryland’s minimum statutory requirements for this position (Md. Code Annotated §2-302). The State Superintendent shall:

1. Be an experienced and competent educator;
2. Be a graduate of an accredited college or university;
3. Have at least 2 years of special academic and professional graduate preparation in an accredited college or university; and
4. Have at least 7 years of experience in teaching and administration.

With regard to leadership experiences and accomplishments, the successful candidate will:

- Demonstrate an astute ability to maneuver successfully in a large and complex political environment to complement and benefit the complex work of the Maryland State Department of Education.
- Demonstrate the ability to lead in narrowing student achievement gaps.
• Demonstrate technology experience that includes all aspects: enterprise/business systems, infrastructure, instructional technology, and preparing Maryland to transform to digital disruption for improving education.

• Demonstrate exceptional communication skills designed to build alliances within and outside government, and gain support of the public and those providing educational services in schools.

• Demonstrate the ability to attract, recruit, develop, and retain a high-quality workforce at the Maryland State Department of Education thus setting a standard for administrator and teacher recruitment and retention.
Appendix 1

Desired Characteristics for a state superintendent
Submitted by the Maryland State Education Association

Work Experience
A state superintendent should be steeped in public school experience at all levels. Candidates should be respected for their knowledge of pedagogy, curriculum, diversity, human resources, collaboration, board operations, school finance, and the legislative process.

Required
• Employment: Extensive public-school work experience: teaching, building-level administration, and leading a major school and/or state system in a unionized environment.

Strongly Desired
• Environment: Experience working with diverse student populations (socio-economic, race, rural/suburban/urban).
• Leadership: State-level leadership positions, either in professional associations (e.g., AASA) or positions (state commissioner or superintendent of education.)

Relations with key stakeholders, including public school unions
A state superintendent must be willing and able to collaborate with stakeholders in the labor, management (governance and administrative), parent, business, and legislative communities. This collaboration involves personal action as well as an articulated expectation for developing working relationships among stakeholders at the state and local levels. Meaningful collaboration creates support for decisions, improved implementation, and utilization of a variety of voices.

Required
Collaboration: Demonstrated ability to sustain meaningful collaborative relationships with labor. Able to gain support of classroom educators and their union leadership for education reform efforts.

Strongly Desired
Local collaboration: Places a high priority on collaboration at the local level and is able to articulate how this expectation will be communicated, monitored, and realized.
Appendix 1

Relentless focus on leadership for 21st Century schools
A state superintendent should understand the complexities of managing school systems during a time of rapid change and international communications and competition.

Required
• **Education programs:** Demonstrated ability to advance Maryland’s efforts to implement programs and initiatives outlined in, but not limited to, the Blueprint for Maryland’s future.
• **Teacher preparation, evaluation and development:** Focuses on developing high-quality educators, with an emphasis on recruitment and retention. Able to explore the quality of teacher preparation institutions and implement improvements working with the Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board. Experience in supervision and evaluation that promotes professional growth. Strong command of pedagogy. Fosters collaboration with local districts to monitor alignment between standards, curriculum, assessments, and professional development.
• **Use of student data:** Demonstrated experience using longitudinal data, from multiple sources, not solely assessment data, to inform and enhance education outcomes.
• **Grant writing:** Established track-record in grant writing. Knows when pursuing grants is not in the best interests of the state or the school systems (e.g., when they are insufficient to cover costs, when programs are not sustainable, or when they conflict with the delivery of a quality public education).
• **Equity:** Demonstrated in advocating and addressing the needs of all students throughout a diverse public education system. Able to advocate for the needs of diverse learners, including the recruitment and retention of a diverse teaching force.

Strongly Desired
• **Organizational Development and Systems Change:** Experience managing change in complex systems.

Personal
A state superintendent must be **passionate** about all students succeeding. Must be focused on the success of Maryland’s public schools. He or she should be driven by students and value the importance of stakeholders representing the education community instead of his/her own political or career advancement.