



## *The Senate of Maryland*

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

August 8, 2017

Andrew R. Smarick, President  
Maryland State Board of Education  
200 West Baltimore St.  
Baltimore, MD 21201

Dear Mr. Smarick,

As you know, I'm interested in increasing the focus of our public schools on the 75 per cent of Maryland young people who, according to the Kirwan Commission's consultants, do not earn a community college degree within four years or a four year college degree within six years of graduation from high school. They need the skills to earn family-supporting wages and salaries and a "college for all" strategy clearly fails them.

This year the legislature passed and the governor signed SB 317 which:

- sets the state goal for 45 percent of high school graduates, by 2025, earning an industry-recognized skills credential, completing a CTE skills program, or completing an apprenticeship;
- requires these measures of occupational skills proficiency be treated in the state's accountability plan as equivalent to earning a 3 on AP exams.

Reviewing the draft ESSA plan, I'm concerned that the occupational skills attainment measures are minimized compared to mere high school graduation. The latter is 15% of the standard and skills are just a part of "other academic" standards which are just 10% of the whole standard.

I urge you to:

- reduce the high school graduation standard to 5%, since it has little to do with either college or occupational preparation; few employers or colleges value it more than actual measures of proficiency and skills;
- divide the "other academic" standard into two categories of 10% each;
- college prep including USM admission requirements, AP test results, early college courses, and other college prep measures;
- skills prep including CTE completion, industry-recognized skills certifications,

apprenticeships, ASVAB results and other skills prep measures.

Thanks for your consideration of strengthening performance standards and promoting robust career prep. Let me know if you have questions or if there are other ways I can help.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim", written in a cursive style.

Senator Jim Rosapepe

cc:

Board members, Maryland State Board of Education

Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D. and Mary L. Gable, Maryland State Department of Education

Governor Lawrence J. Hogan, Jr.

Kelly M. Schulz, Secretary of Labor, Licensing, & Regulation

Louis M. Dubin, Chair, Governor's Workforce Development Board (GWDB)

Delegate Cory McCray