



March 15, 2017

Mr. Andrew Smarick
Chairman
Maryland State Board of Education

Dear Mr. Smarick,

I write to ask if you and the Maryland State Board of Education would support the efforts of my research group, the Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO) at Stanford University, to secure a data sharing agreement with the Maryland Department of Education. I believe such an arrangement could provide unique benefits, as I explain below.

CREDO is an independent and non-partisan group whose mission is to provide policy makers and the public with rigorous analysis of the effectiveness of important education programs in US K-12 public education. For nearly 20 years, we have strived to make our work entirely fact-based and easily understood. Across the country, our work is cited as credible, dependable and constructive. We would like to bring that approach to Maryland and to forge a productive collaboration with the Department and the State Board of Education.

CREDO has 15 years' experience building strong partnerships with 30 other states to use their student-level data to deliver unparalleled breadth and depth of analysis. No other research team in the country has the ability to provide deep investigations of individual states as well as a pooled national view that supports comparisons across states. Our partner states have reported that both types of studies are valuable to them.

We are seeking longitudinal data on students in K-12 public schools as is permitted under the Family Education Records Privacy Act for research that aims to improve curriculum or instruction. The data we seek includes student records of demographics, eligibility for federally-mandated programs or services (i.e., lunch subsidies, special education or English Language Learner services), school enrollment information, and annual results on state-mandated achievement tests.

The purpose of securing student-level data is to a) conduct a statewide study of the performance of Maryland's charter schools and b) to incorporate Maryland education experience into our national studies on student outcomes, equity gaps, learning and achievement gaps and policy factors that influence student results. I am aware that prior work in Maryland about charter schools has not been able to utilize student-level data and therefore



had constraints on the work. Given the charter school landscape in Maryland, I believe CREDO can build on the prior foundation and provide enhanced insights into current and potential future policy options.

We have several foundations and other sources of funding that are interested in supporting this work, so the only costs to be borne by the state would be time; specifically, time to review and approve our data request, time to draw the appropriate data as outlined in the agreement, and time to review the findings prior to public release. For the latter, CREDO typically offers our partners' their choice as to format – we are happy to provide in-person briefings, web-conferences, conference calls or one-on-one's as best fits our partners' requirements. We are able to reimburse the Department for reasonable and detailed expenses related to preparing data pertinent to an agreement.

Our state education agency partners have maintained their agreements with us because we continue to producing policy-relevant analysis that is of interest and utility in policy discussions and decisions. I hope that you and your fellow Board members and the leadership of the Maryland Department of Education would find similar benefit from our work.

I would be happy to address any questions you or other board members have. I can be reached at macke@stanford.edu or by phone at 650-725-3431. I hope to hear from you at your convenience.

Best,

Margaret E. Raymond, Ph.D.
Director