

Maryland State Board of Education Testimony August 28,2018
Barbara Donick M.ED. Right to Read- Maryland

Right to Read- Maryland has been working diligently to improve teacher preparation in reading instruction as it specifically relates to reading skills acquisition for all. Reading is THE foundation of learning. Without the ability to read, opportunities for academic and occupational success are limited.

We are placing students in special education who do not have learning disabilities but are instead victims of ineffective instruction. Educating students in special education classes is far more expensive than in the general classroom. Baltimore County is now spending over one million dollars to train teachers in the foundations of reading instruction. These are professional development dollars that are being spent on teaching information that should have been provided in our colleges.

Members of Right to Read- Maryland have presented testimony to the Maryland State Board of Education and the Professional Standards Teacher Education Board. In 2018, HB493 and SB638 addressed the need for a foundations of reading test in the science of reading for the certification of certain teachers. These bills were sent to the Kirwan Commission for consideration. The Design Assumptions of the Kirwan on August 15,2018 stated “Teachers will be required to pass State-specific exams of teacher mastery of reading and content at least on par with the rigor of Massachusetts for elementary education...”

Dr. Steiner has often said that in order to insure that our institutes of higher education reform instruction, we should require a rigorous assessment in evidence-based reading instruction for certification. Because this would require a phase in period of this instruction at the colleges and universities, the Board might consider a provisional certificate for a certain period of time.

The mission of the Maryland State Board of Education is to provide leadership, set policy, and advocate for continuous improvement of Maryland’s educational system in order to assist every student to realize his or her potential and to ensure educator effectiveness. We respectfully request the leadership and guidance of the State Board to set regulations for certification in reading instruction to benefit all children and teachers in Maryland.

**Public Comment to the Maryland State Board of Education
August 28, 2018
Darren Hornbeck**

Good Morning, President Hartings, Vice President Iszard, and members of the Board. My name is Darren Hornbeck. I am a high school social studies teacher and professional development coordinator at Linganore High School in Frederick County. I am also a former Maryland Teacher of the Year. I appreciate the opportunity to offer my comments on the proposed revision to COMAR 13A.12.04.03 *Superintendents*. I stand firmly in opposition to the language presented to the Board on June 20th and currently being considered for publication because it removes the teaching experience requirement for those seeking to serve as a superintendent in the state of Maryland.

The role of a superintendent is to implement the academic vision and goals of the public school system. A superintendent's primary responsibility is to serve as an educational leader—one charged with overseeing and evaluating the curricular and instructional programming needs of their district; educator professional development needs, including the development of an effective in-service training program for all personnel; serve as a consultant and advisor to principals and teachers on substantive school based programmatic and instructional needs; and compliance with all local, state, and federal educational policies and statutes. Given this responsibility, it is critical that any candidate seeking a superintendency have the content and pedagogical knowledge as well as the significant hands-on classroom experience to carry out their most consequential role. Allowing someone to take on this role who lacks the proper training and practicum experience is nothing short of educational malpractice and can prove detrimental to the students and educators under their leadership.

As an educator and member of the Teacher Induction, Retention, and Advancement (or TIRA) Workgroup, my role was to provide my professional input on how best to improve the teaching profession such that it would attract high quality candidates; provide rigorous preservice training and practicum aimed at growing the state's pool of highly qualified educators; and implement best practices that provide ongoing development and growth of seasoned educators aimed at retaining them in our classrooms. If efforts such as these are critical for the entry-level positions within the education profession, why would we not demand even more for those who seek to lead said educators and the system in which they work?

In making the case for watering down the minimum qualifications for superintendent candidates, research has been cited in previous BOE meetings that claim to show no correlation between student performance and whether their superintendent had a formal and practical background in education (i.e. actual classroom experience). What was not mentioned was that said research was conducted by only one institution (Johns Hopkins); that it involved only a handful of state school systems; and that the study has yet to be replicated elsewhere or expanded to include additional school systems or states. While not impugning the study's findings, I believe it is premature to change an entire state's policy and precedent based upon a single study with such a limited scope.

I urge the Board to consider the importance of the practical and pedagogical qualifications of one of the highest-ranking individuals in our profession. The decisions made by a district superintendent will most assuredly impact the lives of our students, our communities, and our state well into the future. Thank you for your consideration and for your service to public education.

Antoinette Waters M.Ed
2506 Atrium Ct.
Bowie, MD 20716

Maryland State Board of Education
200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, MD 21201

Good Morning Members of the Board,

My name is Antoinette Waters M.Ed. and I am one parent of the many children that this state leaves behind. The September babies the "gap" children, . The gap that does not exist in DC nor Virginia, these two neighboring states remember the children in the "gap." Now why don't we all just move to the District of Columbia or Virginia you are probably wondering since they remember the children in the "gap." Well, I am a homeowner in the City of Bowie, and if you have ever been to Bowie you know how beautiful it is and understand how it has a sense of community in a time where many are thinking about themselves. You can not find that just anywhere. Maryland has a new Executive order to "start school after Labor Day". That means that school will start after September 1st, and on certain years it can be as late as September 8th. As a result we need to change our fifth birthday requirement to one that makes common sense. Three school districts in Maryland have waivers to begin before Labor Day; but there are another 21 that begin after September 1st. I know as a master educator, 15 year veteran teacher and curriculum writer who well aware of child development, that "*When the adult changes everything changes*". This is why we must fix kindergarten age requirement and change it to September 30th match our current policy.

As educators we understand the effects of having a child stay home when all of or his/her peers are in school. This can be detrimental to their social and cognitive development. By high school which is when I see meet these "gap" children usually are bored in the classroom and have "checked out" mentally because their peer group is always one step ahead of them. Apart of the mission of the state Board is to assist every student to realize his or her potential and to promote students' physical, mental, social, and emotional well-being.

The state of Virginia has the exact same policy of "starting after Labor Day" they call it the "Kings Dominion/ Busch Gardens rule". They too have school districts in the western part of the state that begin prior to Labor Day because of the mountain weather. They too have countless

private schools. Yet they have a September 30th turn five policy because they are thinking of all children. If a state with 132 school districts, and countless private schools can think about servicing the needs of all children, we should too.

Adults change everything, as a result when one policy changes it causes a ripple effect. As public servants we are not given the choice to think of some and “may” think of others. We must therefore change the September 1st policy to reflect common sense.

Thank you for your consideration on this matter,
Antoinette Waters M.Ed.



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education

DATE: July 20, 2018
TO: Division Superintendents
FROM: James F. Lane, Superintendent of Public Instruction
SUBJECT: Student Enrollment Requirements – School Year 2018-2019

As you begin to prepare for the 2018-2019 school year, I want to take the opportunity to provide you with some general information and remind you about certain enrollment requirements. Please distribute this information as widely as possible throughout your school division to ensure that appropriate school division employees are aware of these requirements.

Compulsory Attendance

Section 22.1-254 of the *Code of Virginia* (the compulsory attendance law) provides:

... Except as otherwise provided in this article, every parent, guardian, or other person in the Commonwealth having control or charge of any child who will have reached the fifth birthday on or before September 30 of any school year and who has not passed the eighteenth birthday shall, during the period of each year the public schools are in session and for the same number of days and hours per day as the public schools, cause such child to attend a public school or a private, denominational, or parochial school or have such child taught by a tutor or teacher of qualifications prescribed by the Board of Education and approved by the division superintendent, or provide for home instruction of such child as described in § 22.1-254.1....

The compulsory attendance law permits a child to attend a private or public school or receive an education through certain alternatives to school attendance, such as home instruction, unless the child is excused from attendance by a local school board, as referenced in § 22.1-254 of the *Code of Virginia* (*Code*). Parents who wish to seek a religious exemption to compulsory attendance must petition the school board and show that, by reason of bona fide religious training or belief, the pupil, together with his parents, is conscientiously opposed to attendance at school. (§ 22.1-254.B.1 of the *Code*)

Please refer to the Department of Education's Guidelines for Home Instruction in Virginia (Word) for additional information on home instruction and other alternatives to school attendance.

Any child who will not have reached his sixth birthday on or before September 30 of each school year whose parent or guardian notifies the appropriate school board that he does not wish the child to attend school until the following year because the child, in the opinion of the parent or guardian, is not mentally, physically, or emotionally prepared to attend school, may delay the child's attendance for one year. (§ 22.1-254 of the *Code*)

Residency

Section 22.1-3 of the *Code* provides "[t]he public schools in each school division shall be free to each person of school age who resides within the school division..." Section 22.1-1 of the *Code* defines a person of school age to mean a person who will have reached his fifth birthday on or before September 30 of the school year and who has not reached twenty years of age on or before August 1 of the school year.

For the purposes of enrollment, the local school division determines whether a student meets the following residency requirements set out in the *Code*:

- The student is living with a natural parent or a parent by legal adoption.
- The student has a parent in the military and is living with a noncustodial parent or other person standing in loco parentis, not solely for school purposes, pursuant to a Special Power of Attorney executed under Title 10, United States Code, § 1044b, by the custodial parent.
- The student's parents are deceased, and the student is living in loco parentis with a person who resides in that locality.
- The student is living in the locality, not solely for school purposes, as an emancipated minor.
- The student is experiencing homelessness as described in § 22.1-3(A)(6) of the *Code*.
- The student is living with another person who resides in the school division, not solely for school purposes, and that individual: (a) is the court-appointed guardian, or has legal custody, of the person; or (b) is acting in loco parentis pursuant to placement of the person for adoption by a person or entity authorized to do so under § 63.2-1200 of the *Code*; or (c) is an adult relative providing temporary kinship care as that term is defined in § 63.2-100 of the *Code* when the student's parents are unable to care for him or her.

The school division may require one or both of the parents and the adult relative providing kinship care to submit certain documents and verifications in order to enroll the child. In addition, a school division may also require the parent or adult relative to obtain written verification from the department of social services where the parent or parents live, or from both that department and the department of social services where the kinship care provider lives, to show that the kinship care arrangement serves a legitimate purpose that is in the best interest of the child and is not solely for purposes of school enrollment.

Please see § 22.1-3 for more information regarding residency.

Students with a Parent or Parents in the Military

Virginia is a member of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children (the Compact). The purpose of the Compact is to streamline the transfer of children of military families into Virginia public schools. Specifically, the Compact addresses the following: (1) education records and enrollment (Article IV), which contains provisions regarding record transfers, immunizations, and school entrance age; (2) placement and attendance (Article V), which contains provisions regarding course and program placement and special education services; (3) eligibility (Article VI), which addresses documentation requirements for enrollment; and (4) graduation (Article VII), which addresses how receiving school divisions will facilitate the on-time graduation of military transfer students. (§ 22.1-360 of the *Code*)

The *Code* includes specific provisions governing the enrollment of military children:

- A student of a military family is deemed a resident of a school division and cannot be denied admission or charged tuition if the student lives with a noncustodial parent or other person standing in loco parentis, not solely for school purposes, pursuant to a Special Power of Attorney executed under Title 10, United States Code, § 1044b, by the custodial parent. Such students may continue to attend school in the school division they attended while residing with the custodial parent without paying tuition, or they may attend school in the school division in which the noncustodial parent or other person resides without paying tuition. (§§ 22.1-3.1.A.3 and 22.1-360, Art. VI of the Code)
- Children of a person on active military duty may remain enrolled in a school division, free of charge, upon relocation to military housing in another Virginia school division, when their parents receive an order for such relocation. (§ 22.1-3.1.B.1 of the Code)
- **New in 2018:** Children of a person on active military duty may remain enrolled in a school division upon relocation outside of the school division, free of charge until the end of the school year, when their parents receive an order to relocate to a new duty station or be deployed. (§ 22.1-3.1.B.2 of the Code)
- **New in 2018:** Children of a person on active military duty may enroll in the school division of the child's intended residence, free of charge, once his parent is relocated pursuant to orders received. A permanent address must be established in the school division of the intended residence within 120 days, otherwise the school division may charge tuition. (§ 22.1-3.1.B.3 of the Code)
- **New in 2018:** School boards governing school divisions that contain a military installation or military housing must establish policies permitting students residing on a military installation or in military housing to enroll in any school within the school division, upon request of their parent if there is space available. (§ 22.1-7.2 of the Code)

For additional information about the enrollment of students of military families, please see [Military Families and Guidance Documents & Training Materials](#).

Students Experiencing Homelessness

School divisions must immediately enroll students experiencing homelessness and coordinate the provision of services to these students with relevant local social services agencies and other agencies and programs providing services to such students, and with other school divisions.

For more information regarding the enrollment of students experiencing homelessness, please see § 22.1-3 of the Code and visit [Project HOPE](#).

Students in Foster Care

A student who has been placed in a foster care placement by a local social services agency (as defined in § 63.2-100 of the Code) shall be immediately enrolled in school even if the placing social services agency is unable to produce the documents required for enrollment. In such cases, the person enrolling the student must provide a written statement that, to the best of his knowledge, sets forth the student's age and compliance with the requirements of § 22.1-3.2 of the Code and indicates that the student is in good health and free from communicable or contagious disease. (§ 22.1-3.4 of the Code)

Within 72 hours of placing a child of school age in a foster care placement, the local social services agency making such placement shall, in writing: (a) notify the principal of the school in which the student is to be enrolled and the superintendent of the relevant school division or his designee of such placement; and (b) inform the principal of the status of the parental rights.

Please refer to [Enrollment of Students in Foster Care](#) on the Virginia Department of Education's website for additional information regarding the enrollment of these students.

Birth Certificate

Except as provided in § 22.1-3.1 of the Code, no student shall be admitted for the first time to any public school in any school division in Virginia unless the person enrolling the student shall present, upon admission, a certified copy of the student's birth record. A photocopy of the child's birth certificate will not meet this requirement. If a certified copy of the child's birth certificate cannot be obtained, the person enrolling the child must submit a sworn statement setting forth the child's age and explaining the inability to present a certified copy.

Students in Foster Care. If the birth certificate is required for enrollment of the foster child and is not immediately available upon taking the child into custody, the placing social services agency shall obtain and produce or otherwise ensure compliance with such requirement for the foster child within 30 days after the child's enrollment. (§ 63.2-900.D of the Code)

A certified copy of a birth record for a person born in Virginia may be obtained from the Division of Vital Records and Health Statistics at the Virginia Department of Health. Refer to the [Division of Vital Statistics](#) website for information about that process.

Comprehensive Pre-school Physical Examination

Section 22.1-270 of the Code precludes the admission of students for the first time to any public kindergarten or elementary school in a school division unless the student furnishes, prior to admission, a report of a comprehensive physical examination from a qualified licensed physician, or a licensed nurse practitioner or a licensed physician assistant acting under the supervision of a licensed physician. The examination must be of the scope prescribed by the State Health Commissioner and must have been performed within 12 months before the date the student first enters the public school. In the alternative, students may provide records showing that they furnished such a report upon admission to another school or school division and provide the information that was contained in that report.

Religious Exemption. Section 22.1-270 of the Code includes an exemption from the physical examination for students whose parents object for religious reasons. Such physical examination is not required of any child whose parent objects on religious grounds and who shows no visual evidence of sickness, provided that the parent shall state in writing that, to the best of his knowledge, the child is in good health and free from any communicable or contagious disease.

Students with a Parent or Parents in the Military. Children of military parents must meet the physical examination requirements as the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children does not waive this requirement for them.

Students Experiencing Homelessness. Section 22.1-3.4 of the Code provides specific requirements for the immediate enrollment of children in foster care who do not have the requisite physical examination report. Students experiencing homelessness cannot be excluded from school attendance because the requisite health information required of other students cannot be provided. School divisions must immediately refer the student to the school division liaison to assist the student in obtaining the necessary physical examination.

Students in Foster Care. If the report of a comprehensive physical examination is not immediately available upon taking the child into custody, the placing social services agency shall obtain and produce or otherwise ensure compliance with such requirements for the foster child within 30 days after the child's enrollment. (§ 63.2-900.D of the Code)

Please note that while the report of the comprehensive physical examination must contain the elements prescribed by the State Health Commissioner, state law does not require it to be on the [School Entrance Health Form, MCH 213G](#) (PDF) in order to be accepted by the local school board. Therefore, school divisions cannot deny enrollment to a student who provides the necessary report on a different form, as long as that form is attached to a MCH 213G. For more information, please refer to [Superintendent's Memorandum #103-12](#), issued on April 20, 2012.

Immunizations

Pursuant to § 22.1-271.2 of the Code, no student shall be admitted by a school if his parent does not submit documentary proof of immunization to the admitting official unless, at the time of admission, the student is exempted from immunization pursuant to subsection C, or the student is a homeless child or youth as defined in § 22.1-3 of the Code. If a student does not have documentary proof of immunization, the school shall notify the student or his parent: (i) that it has no documentary proof of immunization for the student; (ii) that it may not admit the student without proof unless the student is exempted pursuant to subsection C, including any homeless child or youth as defined in § 22.1-3 of the Code; (iii) that the student may be immunized and receive certification by a licensed physician, licensed nurse practitioner, registered nurse, or an employee of a local health department; and (iv) how to contact the local health department to learn where and when it performs these services. Documentation indicating that the child has received the required immunizations must be provided.

Any child whose immunizations are incomplete may be admitted conditionally if the parent or guardian provides documentation, at the time of enrollment, that the child has received at least one dose of the required immunizations and has a written schedule for completing the remaining doses within 90 days. If the student requires more than two doses of hepatitis B vaccine, the conditional enrollment period shall be 180 calendar days.

Religious Exemption. No certificate of immunization shall be required for a student's school admission if the student or his parent submits an affidavit to the admitting official stating that the administration of immunizing agents conflicts with the student's religious tenets or practices; or the school has written certification from a licensed physician, licensed nurse practitioner, or a local health department that one or more of the required immunizations may be detrimental to the student's health, indicating the specific nature and probable duration of the medical condition or circumstance that contraindicates immunization.

Students with a Parent or Parents in the Military. Children of military families without documentation of immunizations should be immediately enrolled and shall have up to 30 days from the date of enrollment to obtain any immunizations required by the receiving state. (§ 22.1-360 of the Code)

Students Experiencing Homelessness. Students experiencing homelessness cannot be excluded from school attendance because the requisite immunization information required of other students cannot be provided. School divisions must immediately refer the student to the school division liaison to assist the student in obtaining the necessary proof of completion of immunizations.

Students in Foster Care. If the proof of immunization is not immediately available upon taking the child into custody, the placing social services agency shall obtain and produce or otherwise ensure compliance with such requirements for the foster child within 30 days after the child's enrollment. (§ 63.2-900.D of the Code)

Please review the [School and Day Care Minimum Immunization Requirements](#) (available on the website for the Virginia Department of Health) for a list of the required immunizations.

Expulsion Statement

When a student is registered, the parent must provide a sworn statement or affirmation indicating whether the child has been expelled from attending a private school or another public school in Virginia or a school in another state for an offense involving weapons, alcohol or drugs, or for willful infliction of injury to another person. In addition, the parent must provide a sworn statement or affirmation indicating whether the student has been found guilty of or adjudicated delinquent for any offense listed in subsection G of § 16.1-260 of the Code or any substantially similar offense under the laws of any state, the District of Columbia, or the United States or its territories. (§ 22.1-3.2 of the Code)

Transfer Students

Section 22.1-253.13.4 of the Code (Standard 4 of the Standards of Quality) requires local school boards to make provisions for students who transfer between public secondary schools and from nonpublic schools or from home instruction as outlined in the [Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia](#) (SOA). The SOA, at [8VAC 20-131-60](#) provides:

... Students transferring in grades kindergarten through 8 from Virginia public schools or nonpublic schools accredited by one of the approved accrediting constituent members of the [Virginia Council for Private Education](#) (VCPE) shall be given recognition for all grade-level work completed. The academic record of students transferring from all other schools shall be evaluated to determine appropriate grade placement in accordance with policies adopted by the local school board.... ([8VAC20-131-60.A](#) of the SOA)

... A secondary school shall accept credits toward graduation received from Virginia nonpublic schools accredited by one of the approved accrediting constituent members of the VCPE.... ([8VAC20-131-60.D](#) of the SOA)

All school divisions should have policies regarding the transfer process.

Students from Other Countries

Generally, students who are 18 and 19 and who are transferring from high schools in other countries should be counseled on all options. However, they are still eligible for enrollment as a person of school age as provided in the Code unless they have a comparable diploma from a high school located in a foreign country. If a receiving school division has questions about a student's diploma or transcript, the receiving school division should research the issues to determine what kind of diploma the student has and to determine whether it is comparable to Virginia's diploma requirements. In addition, students who are from other countries and who have special education needs may be eligible for special education and related services through age 21 if they have not graduated with a comparable diploma from a high school located in a foreign country. If an English Learner is enrolled in a Virginia public school and turns 22 during the school year, that student may continue through the end of that school year.

Questions have arisen regarding a local school board's authority to inquire into a prospective student's citizenship or visa status and to bar enrollment to those students who reside within the school division but do not hold a student visa. School divisions are not permitted to inquire into a prospective student's citizenship or visa status in order to enroll that student in school. Pursuant to a decision by the United States Supreme Court, *Plyler v. Doe*, 457 U.S. 202 (1982), school divisions are required to accept students who meet residency requirements under § 22.1-3 of the Code and may not deny a free public education to undocumented school-age children who reside within their jurisdiction because they do not hold valid United States citizenship or a student visa.

On May 8, 2014, the United States Department of Education (USED), in conjunction with the United States Department of Justice (USDOJ), issued an [advisory letter](#) (PDF) reminding educational agencies that, under federal law, state and local educational agencies are required to provide all children with equal access to public education at the elementary and secondary levels. In the advisory letter, USED and USDOJ indicated that they had become aware of student enrollment practices that may discourage or lead to the exclusion of students based on their or their parents' or guardians' citizenship or immigration status. The letter of May 8, 2014 replaced the [advisory letter](#) (PDF) previously issued May 6, 2011 and was written in response to inquiries the Department received about the May 6, 2011 letter. The guidance in the May 8, 2014 letter is applicable to the 2018-2019 school year.

Here are highlights from the May 8, 2014 advisory letter:

- A school division should review the list of documents that can be used to establish residency and ensure that any required documents would not unlawfully bar or

- discourage a student who is undocumented or whose parents are undocumented from enrolling in or attending school.
- As with residency requirements, rules vary among states and school divisions as to what documents students may use to show that they fall within state or district mandated minimum and maximum age requirements, and jurisdictions typically accept a variety of documents for this purpose. A school division may not bar a student from enrolling in its schools because he or she lacks a birth certificate or has records that indicate a foreign place of birth, such as a foreign birth certificate.
- School divisions have federal obligations, and in some instances, state obligations to report certain data, such as the race and ethnicity of their student populations. While the USED requires divisions to collect and report such information, divisions cannot use the acquired data to discriminate against students; nor should a parent's or guardian's refusal to respond to a request for this data lead to a denial of the child's enrollment.

To ensure compliance, please read the [advisory letter](#) (PDF) of May 8, 2014 very carefully.

For additional guidance regarding school division responsibilities and actions with regard to students and immigration, please refer to [Superintendent's Memorandum #059-17](#), issued on March 1, 2017.

Social Security Numbers

The Department of Education and local school boards are prohibited from requiring any student enrolled in a public school or receiving home instruction, or his parent, to provide the student's federal social security number. (§ [22.1-287.03](#) of the Code)

Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Age in Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance

All school divisions must comply with [34 CFR PART 110](#) (Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Age in Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance). In addition, [Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#) prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin by recipients of federal funds, and refusal by a school division to enroll qualified students on the basis of race, color, or national origin is a violation of this prohibition against discrimination.

Please contact the Office of Policy at (804) 225-2092, or by email at policy@doe.virginia.gov, if you have any questions.

JFL/ZLR/bj

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Mayor Muriel Bowser

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Office of the State Superintendent of Education

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Office of the State Superintendent of Education

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Hanseul Kang
State Superintendent of Education

The District provides free high quality pre-Kindergarten education services in its public schools, public charter schools, and publicly-funded community-based organizations for children three years of age on or before September 30 of the upcoming school year, or four years of age, and children who become five years of age after September 30 of the upcoming school year and who reside in the District pursuant to Pre-k Enhancement and Expansion Amendment Act of 2008, effective July 18, 2008 (D.C. Law 17-202; D.C. Official Code §§ 38-271.01(6) and (7) (2012 Repl. & 2015 Supp.)).

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Service Location:
GIS Address: 810 1st Street NE
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INTRODUCTION

The support available for teachers who struggle with behaviour is woeful. They are constantly bombarded with training that is focused on 'progress, pleasing Ofsted and analysing data. They are trained in reinvented, rehashed pedagogy and hammered by performance and forever shifting standards. Ask any teacher what the gap in their training is and the answer is managing behaviour. Teachers don't need the scattergun approach of a thousand funky strategies or the frankly insulting suggestion of lines and running around the playground from politicians who want to look tough. Teachers need training in managing behaviours that cannot be solved with simplistic checklists or the odd half hour lecture. They need effective training that is frequently updated and that addresses the real problems in some of our schools, not to be patronised, ignored and told that their only purpose is results.

The unrelenting drive for exam results has blunted pastoral care in many schools. Mix this with the increasing emphasis of a 'them' and 'us' culture and high stakes everything, and you have a dangerous cocktail. As children are reduced to 'units of progress', many head teachers are forced to hide behaviour issues from inspectors and classroom teachers are left to drown. In some schools pastoral care is reduced to voluntary acts of love from individual teachers who care too much to teach by numbers. The funding and status of pastoral care was thrown out of the window when the bean counters arrived. Now, anything that is not measurable in results is worthless. Only recently I witnessed a PE teacher saving the life of a child in a swimming pool, a teaching assistant talking down a child with violent intent and a teacher counselling a child whose father had just been incarcerated. Performance manage that.

However, the tide is turning on the behaviour debate. The 'punishment brigade' are losing the argument, and as they do so they are finding themselves isolated. And the world is turning: children are less tolerant of

WHEN THE ADULTS BEHAVE, EVERYTHING CHANGES

nasty adults and parents demand more than just detention, meetings and exclusion.

Twenty years ago nobody thought twice about Mr Wright holding Robert against the wall by his tie with his feet dangling. Now he would be arrested. Even 10 years ago the idea that you could eliminate detention in schools with restorative practice was sneered at. Today, a story about a school in Baltimore that has replaced detention with meditation is looked at with genuine interest and intrigue.¹ The direction of travel is clear. In another 20 years will we look back at isolation booths, detentions and exclusions with the same horror that we look back at beating children with canes?

The appalling lack of respect for teachers is stirred by greedy politicians, arrogant inspectors and the ugly opinions of those who would sell out teachers before breakfast for a slither of dirty self-promotion. The esteem in which we hold our teachers is reflected in the eyes of every child and in the behaviour in every classroom. Our teachers deserve respect. They deserve our admiration. They deserve our investment. Our teachers have a right to be better prepared and better trained to deal with the increasingly severe problems that are parked at their door.

The idea that behaviour management is simply about learning a set of techniques that emerge from a teacher's 'toolkit' is a dangerous one. Outstanding management of behaviour and relationships is simply not skills led. Neither is it imported with 'magic' behaviour systems, bought with data tracking software or instantly achieved by calling a school an academy. In behaviour management, culture eats strategy for breakfast. Getting the culture right is pivotal. With the right culture the strategies that are used become less important. The culture is set by the way that the adults behave.

¹ D Bloom, Instead of Detention, These Students Get Meditation, *CNN* (8 November 2016) Available at: <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/11/04/health/meditation-in-schools-baltimore/>

Chapter 1

VISIBLE CONSISTENCY, VISIBLE KINDNESS

Let's stop waiting for the magic behaviour solution. It isn't coming. The answer lies in the ability of adults to deliver behaviour policy and practice that is simple, highly effective and utterly consistent. The consistency that is required to create rapid seismic improvements in behaviour is one that is worth fighting for. It is the kind of consistency that great parents have. You get the same response from each, the same boundaries, the same mantras. You could not put a cigarette paper between their rehearsed responses. Their consistency is palpable, planned, safe.

In teaching there is a rampant desire for consistency. Teachers and support professionals repeatedly clamour for it, leaders get cross about it and learners need it to feel safe. Yet for most staff teams it is a desperate plea from the principal at the beginning of the year to check for planners, a big push on punctuality or a one day purge on jewellery/hats/thought crimes. It is a series of grand gestures that are ultimately futile. Phrases like 'zero tolerance' are bandied about, huge rises in confrontations are immediately ignited and within a few days most have decided that it is all too much hassle.

The consistency that is needed to bring an organisation from chaos to calm is the same as is required to go from good to great. This is not a restrictive consistency that limits flair and patronises poor communities, but a solid base on which to build authentic, exciting behaviour practice. It is a consistency routed in kindness, not in the machismo of zero tolerance.

As teachers we are grown from different seeds. Our philosophies have been nurtured in different directions. In a staff meeting 150 teachers

WHEN THE ADULTS CHANGE, EVERYTHING CHANGES

might resolve to be consistent: 'Yes! We must all be more consistent!' Everyone then leaves with their own idea of what that consistency means.

Overworked teachers look at initiatives, quite rightly, through a very sharp lens. The key question is, 'Are we still going to be doing this in six months' time?' If the answer is no, then they nod in the right places, fill in the right paperwork and carry on as usual. If the answer is yes, then they will shift, adapt and, with support, buy into the changes with heart and soul.

THIS IS HOW WE DO IT HERE

The best schools have a sign above the door regardless of what context they are working in, which says, 'This is how we do it here.' When you walk through the doors of that school, the expectations of behaviour are different from those outside. The behaviours that you use in the community or the behaviours that you use with your parents might well work out there, but when you walk through that door, that is how they do it there. The best schools have absolute consistency. I don't care whether the system they use is behaviourist or whether the system they use is extremely old-fashioned, the critical difference is that people sign up to it and teachers act with one voice and one message: 'This is how we do it here.'

You can find those beacons of hope in the communities in most poverty, and you also find that the best independent schools do exactly the same thing, such as, 'This is the Harrow way,' or whatever it might be. It is, 'When you walk through the door, this is how we do it here.' The best teachers have the same sign above their door. What works is consistency, not trying to tackle all behaviour at once but deciding which behaviours are to be taught. It is not relying on the parents to teach it, but saying, 'You need these behaviours to be a successful learner in this school. We are not going to hide them. We are going to teach you them. We will teach the staff how to do it.' I see that evidence every day in schools that are moving forward in the hardest

circumstances. It is not necessarily an issue of resources. It is an issue of commitment and focus for the school and of absolute consistency.

PAUL DIX, HOUSE OF COMMONS EDUCATION SELECT COMMITTEE,
BEHAVIOUR AND DISCIPLINE IN SCHOOLS, 17 NOVEMBER 2010¹

In schools where behaviour is breaking down you can find consistency, but it is a perverse consistency. In some teacher lounges there is a siege mentality. Battered by the relentless barrage of poor behaviour they naturally hunker down and protect one another. In these places cheap instant coffee meets universal despair.

On the first day of my first full time post as a qualified teacher, the deputy head teacher sat down next to me in the staffroom. His opening gambit was an interesting one: 'Paul, I can see that you are very enthusiastic, it is lovely to see. But a word to the wise – don't bother!' I was completely taken aback and asked him to explain. 'You see Paul, I've been here 30 years and it's the same problem: it is *those* kids, living with *those* families on *that* estate. You'll never change that.' Fortunately I have a habit of ignoring such advice and a determination to prove it wrong.

If you don't shape a visible positive consistency between the adults, then you open the door to them breeding their own negative consistency. There are horrific models of practice where the consistency is not kind but bullying. It is often a highly aggressive system with tally charts in the staffroom of 'how many children I have made cry', lashings of punishment and adult hostility that is just plain abusive. This is consistency for control and force. The frustration is that it is not only cruel, it is completely unnecessary.

It is not just the frailty of human beings that corrupts the consistency, but also the chaos of initiatives and constant curriculum change that works against it. In schools, initiative overload is more than groovy management speak, it is a way of life. A great idea is quashed by a thousand apparently better ones, a shift in practice is subsumed by inspection priorities and there is a lot of, 'Oh well, that's good enough.' Nothing is constant and few things are refined until they are truly excellent.

¹ See <https://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/201011/cmselect/cmeduc/uc516-iv/uc51601.htm>

WHEN THE ADULTS DEMAND, EVERYTHING CHANGES

The foundation of every school must be excellent behaviour. We should be keeping the focus on a visible culture of impeccable conduct, and making the consistency palpable, audible and highly visible. Every single day. Small, persistent and visible shifts in adult behaviour have an incredible effect on children's behaviour. The message is: don't be distracted by temporary distractions; get behaviour right first. Innovative teaching and learning cannot be built on inconsistent behaviour practice.

Shaping, refining and adapting the consistency is the challenge. Moving away from a thousand good and worthy ideas in a dusty policy document and refining it down to simple consistencies that are workable. Slimming down the rules to three is an important step. Simplification of policy is essential in building consistency. When you get to Chapter 10 and realise that your behaviour policy sucks your first act should be to delete the chaos of rules and allow yourself just three. Three rules are easily remembered by all so that everyone uses them all the time. The rules begin to fall from the mouths of all adults and consistency tightens. At the same time you will want to strip back the sea of punishments and remove the bureaucratic chaos that sucks teaching time away. The best schools have a behaviour plan that is based on tight agreements, simply framed and relentlessly pursued.

MEETING AND GREETING

Let's start with the simplest consistency: how learners enter a classroom. A quick straw poll among your colleagues will reveal that even this most basic routine is inconsistent. Some will prefer their classes to line up outside, others want them straight in, some want equipment out, others want it stored away, some want learners standing behind chairs, others want them to get to work immediately. At the first hurdle there is contradiction and confusion.

It is easy to make something confusing out of something that should be straightforward. In a school where learners move from class to class, the demand for the child to recall the individual preferences of each adult without fail should be completely unnecessary. In settings where punishment is king, the anxiety of forgetting and being punished can easily shift the focus away from the learning.

VISIBLE CONSISTENCY, VISIBLE KINDNESS

The simplest things work best. At the start of the day or at the start of the lesson, stand at the door and shake hands with your learners – like you might do if someone knocked at your front door at home. I am sure you wouldn't sit on the sofa and scream, 'Let yourself in.' You would engage in a well-mannered social routine. Moreover, you would make your guest feel welcome with a small kindness or generous word.

Imagine for a moment that this consistency alone was followed to the letter by every adult for the next school year. Every morning there are senior leaders on the gate, team leaders strategically placed around the site and teachers at every door, with every adult shaking hands, welcoming and demonstrating a visible enthusiasm. As you stand at the door of your room with a learning support assistant you look down the corridor and see every member of staff doing the same. Imagine that there had never been a day when anyone lost their focus, nor a routine out of place or a door that is unwelcoming. What would the effect be on the learners, the environment, the behaviour in corridors? What would the ripples be out into the community? Would parents start talking about the meet and greet? Would other schools/local officials/MPs come and see your consistency in perfect form? Would the learners be more punctual to lessons, the adults feel more supported and smaller people feel safer?

FANTASTIC WALKING

In the UK most primary schools are architecturally challenged. Many are built from a 1970s blueprint that had clearly bypassed the aesthetics department on its way to the architect. Walking up to one school in the north of England reminded me of a thousand other schools, but inside it was anything but ordinary. Touring around the school with the excellent head teacher, I noticed a 6-year-old walking towards us in the corridor. He was walking very tall, head up, chin up, chest out with a purposeful stride and his hands clasped tightly behind his back. It immediately struck me as odd but I thought it best not to mention it. Probably just a slightly eccentric 6-year-old playing a game.

As we turned another corner we came across a class of 9-year-olds snaking through the school on their way to a PE lesson. Every child held the same posture: hands behind their back, chest out, walking tall and

proud. Realising that this was an organised routine I asked the head teacher what it was about. 'Oh, that is *fantastic walking*,' she proclaimed proudly. 'Fantastic walking?' I replied. 'Is this one of those cult schools I hear so much about?' 'No, no, no,' she explained. 'It is what we do – it is how we walk around our school. When I took over as head there was a lot of pushing and shoving, boisterous behaviour, particularly in the corridors. Small children were collateral damage in times of mass movement and everyone was going into lessons a bit frazzled.' (At that moment three members of staff came out of the teacher lounge, modelling perfect fantastic walking!)

She knew that something had to be done, so she taught everyone fantastic walking – with love, humour and a sense of pride in our school. The children took to it immediately, and the staff too. Even parents crossing the line between the street and the school yard struck the pose. When staff went to visit other schools that didn't have fantastic walking they felt that something was missing. On returning, they would always comment on how inconsistent other schools felt. Their relief in being back in fantastic walking land was obvious.

In this school the visible consistency made everyone feel safe. It is done with kindness and consent. The adult model was constant, consistent, predictable. This doesn't mean that fantastic walking is right for your school or class, but the question is clear: what are the visible consistencies in your setting? What could they be? Are they embedded with love or punishment?

Of course, you could choose to apply the same principle of consistency to a more aggressive and punitive system. You might distribute lunchtime detentions for children who are seen running or pushing in the corridor. You could plaster your school with 'no running' posters and create extra capacity for lunchtime detentions by digging a cellar to house the offenders. After weeks of punishment, explosive confrontations and broken trust the children may behave well in the corridors – when the adults are watching.

But why crush behaviours with punishment when you can grow them with love? Visible consistency with visible kindness allows exceptional behaviour to flourish.

NOBODY GETS TO SEE THE HEAD WITHOUT A TOUR!

'Just confirming the meeting with the head tomorrow – 11 a.m., is that right?'

'Oh yes. Well, 11 a.m. for the meeting but it is 10.30 a.m. for the tour.'

'Tour?'

'Yes, nobody gets to see the head without a tour.'

This was my introduction to a school for excluded children. I had spoken at a conference and casually mentioned over lunch that I was interested in school governance. Before I had taken another mouthful I had been invited to see the school, and forms were miraculously produced. A school where nobody gets to see the head without a tour was going to be interesting.

I arrived at the school expecting to be greeted by the head, or perhaps his PA or maybe a deputy, but on signing in I was presented with two learners, aged 12 and 15. They explained that they would be conducting the tour and proceeded to lead the best tour of a school I have ever had. They were polite, informative and never indiscreet. I was utterly impressed. We then had a drink in the head's office, they swiped all the biscuits and it was 15 minutes before the boss arrived.

That was my first experience of The Bridge School in Fulham. Shortly afterwards a multi-academy trust was formed and I found myself as the chair of three newly converted alternative provision academies for excluded children – the Tri Borough Alternative Provision (TBAP) Trust. Three years later I am still in the same chair, but at the time of writing (things are moving fast!) there are now nine alternative provision and special academies, a teaching school for alternative provision and the UK's first 16–19 alternative provision academy teaching International Baccalaureate post-16.

That first interaction with the school gave me a clear view of their core values, and I really liked them. In many schools children run

errands or sit at a table in reception looking desperately bored, doodling on a geography worksheet.

Perhaps 'nobody gets to see the head without a tour' is the first and most obvious visible consistency that a school needs.

The much repeated Haim Ginott quotation about the conduct of the individual teacher is startlingly accurate: 'I have come to a frightening conclusion. I am the decisive element in the classroom.'² This passage is an essential daily read, perhaps on the way into work. What is missing in many schools, however, is a focus on the consistency between the team of adults. Many would accept that their own behaviour is pivotal. It is a tougher challenge to convince everyone to adjust their behaviour, to align it with the behaviour of others, to modify teaching routines and well-worn rituals. Behaviour management is a team sport. It needs a team discipline, ethos and look. To get the behaviour you want there can be no gaps between the adults on what matters. It is this consistency that is most important.

Imagine a world where behaviour policy and practice was consistent across all schools. Where there was a commonality of approach. Where everyone had the same training, the same starting points, the same agreed basics. A set of uniform pillars on which each school and each teacher can build authentic practice. Consistency in initial teacher training would give teachers moving into their first post the best chance of a great start. Currently there is no consistency between training providers or between schools. We are all dealing with the same issues and yet there are 1,001 variations in training, policy and practice.

Less focus on the toolkit of 'strategies' in teacher training would certainly help. The rush in initial teacher training to collect strategies and compile a uniquely individual set of tricks removes the focus from where it needs to be: the team, agreed adult behaviour and common values.

2 H. G. Ginott, *Teacher and Child: A Book for Parents and Teachers* (New York: Macmillan, 1972), p. 15.

**IF THE QUICKEST WAY FOR A PUPIL TO ACHIEVE CELEBRITY IN YOUR SCHOOL
IS BY BEING THE WORST BEHAVED, YOU HAVE A CULTURE PROBLEM.**

You can buy in the best behaviour tracking software, introduce 24/7 detentions or scream 'NO EXCUSES' as often as you want – but ultimately the solution lies with the behaviour of the adults. It is the only behaviour over which we have absolute control.

In *When the Adults Change, Everything Changes*, Paul Dix upends the debate on behaviour management in schools and offers effective strategies that serve to end the search for change in children and turn the focus back on the adults.

Packed with anecdotal case studies, scripted interventions and tried-and-tested approaches, this book is suitable for teachers and school leaders – in any setting – who are looking to upgrade their classroom or school behaviour plan.

**THIS BOOK IS A MUST-READ FOR ANYONE WHO
WORKS WITH CHILDREN OR YOUNG PEOPLE.**

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Paul Dix gets it. After reading this book, you will too.

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