



everychild.one voice.®

5 Central Avenue
Glen Burnie, MD 21061
Phone: (410) 760-6221
(800) 707-7972
Fax: (410) 760-6344
www.mdpta.org

August 9, 2017

Mr. Andrew Smarick
President Maryland State Board of Education
200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Dear Mr. Smarick,

Maryland PTA is comprised of families, students, teachers, administrators, and business and community leaders devoted to the educational success of children in Maryland. As the state's oldest and largest child advocacy organization, Maryland PTA is a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families, schools and communities and a strong advocate for public education. Our mission is to advocate on behalf of children and youth in schools, in the community, and before government bodies and other organizations that make decisions impacting children.

Hence, it is with great enthusiasm to contribute to Maryland State Department of Education's (MSDE) second draft of Maryland's Consolidated State Plan (Plan) in accordance with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) because Maryland PTA reflects the voice of parents, teachers and students alike as stakeholders. Because the purpose of ESSA is to provide all students the opportunity to receive a fair, equitable, and high-quality education, and to close educational achievement gaps, Maryland PTA believes that the second draft of the Plan can better reflect such a purpose by incorporating an untapped perspective of teachers, input from teacher-exit surveys (exit survey being a term used broadly as the survey can be provided to any teacher who transfers, gets promoted, moves or otherwise doesn't have a contract renewed).

Because Maryland PTA believes that teacher retention is a relevant gauge that helps drive the success of all public primary and secondary schools and thus, its students, Maryland PTA also supports including the use of teacher turnover rates as an indicator of school performance. The stability of teachers as reflected in teacher turnover rates has a direct relationship to the quality of the school. Just as the success of employees of any business can be measured by the retention of management, the success of students and school quality can also be measured by teacher turnover rates. However, local boards of education are not consistently capturing the reason why Maryland teachers are either leaving the profession altogether, transferring to another school, or resigning. Getting an honest assessment from teachers on why they are not staying at a school reflect a central component of what may help failing schools. Teachers as well as principals who either retire, resign or otherwise don't stay may leave a void in instruction and disrupt continuity that is essential for student academic success.

The Maryland State Department of Education is tasked with identifying public schools for comprehensive support and improvement and upon that identification the local board of education must develop and implement a comprehensive plan to improve student outcomes at the school. Such a plan cannot be comprehensive without weighing the voice of the teachers as well as former teachers which ultimately includes certified, uncertified as well as tenured and non-

tenured teachers. As the federal bill title eludes, Every Student Succeeds Act, students' success is dependent upon many things but most immediate is teacher success and parental engagement.

Maryland PTA applauds MSDE obtaining input on what to consider in ESSA's new accountability system. This is an opportunity to fully utilize the State's autonomy of designing what is best for Maryland public school students but we must be vigilant in creating a long-term approach when collecting data and consider an overlooked indicator such teacher turnover rates. The success of every student is clearly imbedded within the success of teachers. Yet, school climate surveys are missing a vital component about why teachers are leaving. Exiting certified as well as uncertified teachers and tenured as well as non-tenured teachers have a unique perspective that we have yet to use to resolve gaps in achievement, improved academic performance and increased parent and family engagement. For better or for worse, the required use of an exit survey of a teacher who no longer works at a specific school will help schools, parents, teachers, local boards of education, and MSDE address how to make schools become the ideal learning institution for which it is intended.

Just as high school graduation rates are one of the indicators of the required state accountability plan, the turnover rates of teachers are just as equally important when evaluating the 5% lowest performing schools and schools with a high school graduation rate of less than 67%. While teacher retention is relatively simple to evaluate, the Maryland PTA recognizes that such a mechanism to understand the reasons behind teacher retention has yet to be universally determined. Nonetheless, we recognize that one potential tool that may prove useful but that is lacking in consistent design, implementation and use are exit surveys of either retiring, resigning transitioning or non-renewed teachers. Maryland PTA is more than happy to assist with the survey design and content.

We know why schools perform well but to understand the reasons why schools don't perform well may go beyond traditional thoughts or what is publicly expressed. By considering a source of information that isn't typically used lies a strategic opportunity to start with the end in mind and fully address schools that need improvement. Again, Maryland PTA urges the ESSA draft to reflect the need to capture teacher (and perhaps principal) turnover rates as an indicator of school performance and to use teacher (and perhaps principal) exit surveys to collect data from their perspective on why they are leaving. Maryland PTA appreciates the continued inclusion of parents, teachers and students in this very significant, overlooked and underutilized approach to help every student succeed.

Included is an addendum on a variety of references regarding teacher turnover rates and teacher exit surveys.

Respectfully submitted,



Latisha Corey
President, Maryland PTA

cc: Dr. Karen Salmon, Maryland State Superintendent of Schools
Ms. Mary Gable, Assistant State Superintendent, Division of Student Family and School Support
Maryland State Board of Education via Executive Director, Miya Simpson
Senator Carter-Conway, Chair Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee
Senator Paul Pinsky, Chair, Education Subcommittee, Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee
Delegate Anne Kaiser, Chair, House Ways and Means Committee
Delegate Eric Luedke, Chair, Education Subcommittee, House Ways and Means Committee

ADDENDUM

Teachers Quit Principals, Not Schools

March 13, 2017/ Shawnta Barnes

<http://www.indy.education/blog/2017/3/13/teachers-quit-principals-not-schools>

A Model Exit Questionnaire for Teachers in Virginia

January 6, 2017

www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/superintendents_memos/2017/001-17.shtml

Targeted Teacher Turnover Boosts Teacher Quality, Student Achievement

January 26, 2016

<https://news.virginia.edu/content/study-targeted-teacher-turnover-boosts-teacher-quality-student-achievement>

How Teacher Turnover Harms Student Achievement

American Educational Research Journal

First Published February 1, 2013 Research Article

<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.3102/0002831212463813>

Matthew Ronfeldt, Susanna Loeb, James Wyckoff