J.H. Snider's presentation before the
Maryland Department of Education's Board of Education,
Nancy S. Grasmick State Education Building,
200 West Baltimore Street, 7th Floor Board Room, Baltimore, MD,
August 22, 2017

My name is J.H. Snider, and I am the president of iSolon.org. I am a former school board member and have published dozens of op-eds on education politics and policy in publications including *Education Week*, *The Washington Post*, and *Hechinger Report*.

Last January, I testified before this body concerning public access to K12 compensation data for Maryland public schools. I am here today to provide an update on the concerns I raised at that time.

I am submitting three subsequent op-eds to that testimony that I published on related subjects in the *Washington Post*, *Washington Examiner*, and *Hechinger Report*. I believe that most of you have already seen the *Washington Post* op-ed.

- Snider, J.H., Seek equal pay for equal work? Don't become a K-12 teacher, *Hechinger Report*, June 29, 2017.
- Snider, J.H., America's $1 million per year K12 public school teachers, *Washington Examiner*, April 27, 2017.
- Snider, J.H., Maryland should be truthful in reporting teacher pay, *Washington Post*, February 17, 2017.

I am also submitting my subsequent Public Information Act correspondence seeking K12 compensation data from MSDE (see K12Transparency.org). That correspondence was primarily conducted indirectly via Maryland's Public Information Act Ombudsman.

During the past year, I have sought the following three types of compensation data from MSDE:

1) The raw individual level data related to salary, including the salary-related data necessary to analyze the recruitment and retention of staff.

2) The detailed methodologies, preferably in the form of mathematical equations, used to generate MSDE's much-publicized salary-related statistics, most notably average salaries.

3) The specific salary-related fields that MSDE claims are exempt from public disclosure under Maryland's Public Information Act. This includes the specific legal claim used to exempt each requested field.

My assessment is that I have been dismally unsuccessful in receiving this information in response to my Public Information Act requests. I recognize that your staff and some of you may disagree with that assessment.

Now for a few key points on the rationales used to deny my requests:

On the raw salary data: After many months of my seeking the salary information, with some later help from Maryland's Public Information Act Ombudsman, MSDE claimed it was exempt under the licensing exemption, as many LEA employees are licensed. This was a creative but nevertheless pathetic legal rationalization for withholding salary data. In the end, even MSDE's staff sought to soften the claim to make it more credible.

On the salary averages: MSDE claimed it's not its responsibility to generate the average salary statistics and accompanying methodologies. It delegates that task to the local LEAs and chooses to trust whatever numbers the individual LEAs come up with. Moreover, because the different LEAs use different methodologies, the claim has been made that it would be too cumbersome for MSDE to post them. I beg to disagree. If MSDE publishes those numbers on its website and thereby gives them its imprimatur, it should clearly disclose the methodologies, including the exact mathematical format used to add the various fields and records, as well as the precise fields and field definitions used as the variables within the equations.

On the field by field legal exemptions from public disclosure: MSDE's strategy appears to be to provide as little information as possible about the legal reasoning behind each field's claimed exemption.

In conclusion, K12 public school compensation constitutes about 80% of local LEA operating budgets. The information that the press, public, and public officials have about this 80% of the budget is shockingly and disgracefully poor. Much of the required information for the public and public officials to do their own compensation analyses is nominally but not meaningfully public. And the published statistics generated from the closely held individual level data are incomplete at best and highly misleading at worst. The public deserves to understand how its government agents are paid with its tax dollars. To a remarkable degree, MSDE's policies have made that difficult if not impossible to do.
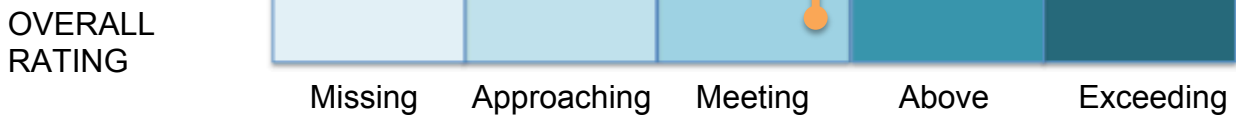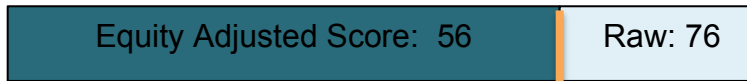
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SCORECARD – ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
Maryland State Department of Education

EQUITY ADJUSTED SCORE

MEETING
Expectations
Tier 3

Wonderful Kids Elementary School
4530 Landover Road, Hyattsville, MD 20754
Prince George's County Public Schools

Equity Adjusted Score: 56 | Raw: 76

LAST YEAR:

Similar schools:

DISTRICT AVE:

STATE AVE:

OVERALL RATING

Missing | Approaching | Meeting | Above | Exceeding

INDICATOR	MEASURES	ALL STUDENTS	Improvement	EQUITY GAP
Academic Achievement	Performance Composite: 20%	15 of 20	⬆	12%
Academic Other	Growth: 25%	20 of 25	⬆	4%
	Credit for completion of a well-rounded curriculum: 10%	5 of 10	⬇	1%
Academic Progress ELP	Progress in Achieving English Language Proficiency: 10%	8 of 10	➡	0%
School Quality	Chronic Absenteeism: 15%	10 of 15	⬆	11%
	School Climate Survey: 10%	9 of 10	➡	0%
	Opportunities/Access to a well-rounded curriculum: 10%	9 of 10	⬇	0%
Equity Adjustments: MET +1 to +20 / NEUTRAL +0 / NOT MET -1 to -20			➡	NOT MET -20

SCORECARD – ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
Maryland State Department of Education

Wonderful Kids Elementary School
4530 Landover Road, Hyattsville, MD 20754
Prince George's County Public Schools

★★★ **MEETING** expectations

Equity Adjusted Score: 56/100
Raw Unadjusted Score: 76/100
Equity Deduction: minus 1 ★

LAST YEAR: ★★★

Similar schools: ★★

DISTRICT AVE: ★★★

STATE AVE: ★★★

Scoring Legend:
★ Missing expectations
★★ Approaching expectations
★★★ Meeting expectations
★★★★ Above expectations
★★★★★ Exceeding expectations

INDICATOR	MEASURES	ALL STUDENTS	Improvement	EQUITY GAP
Academic Achievement	Performance Composite: 20%	15 of 20	⬆	12%
Academic Other	Growth: 25%	20 of 25	⬆	4%
	Credit for completion of a well-rounded curriculum: 10%	5 of 10	⬇	1%
Academic Progress ELP	Progress in Achieving English Language Proficiency: 10%	8 of 10	➡	0%
School Quality	Chronic Absenteeism: 15%	10 of 15	⬆	11%
	School Climate Survey: 10%	9 of 10	➡	0%
	Opportunities/Access to a well-rounded curriculum: 10%	9 of 10	⬇	0%
Equity Adjustments: NOT MET reduces star level by one			➡	**NOT MET**

SCORECARD – ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Maryland State Department of Education

Wonderful Kids Elementary School

4530 Landover Road, Hyattsville, MD 20754
Prince George's County Public Schools

MEETING expectations

Equity Adjusted Score:	56/100
Raw Unadjusted Score:	76/100
Equity Deduction:	minus 20

LAST YEAR   SIMILAR DEMOGRAPHIC SCHOOLS   DISTRICT AVE   STATE AVE

SCORING LEGEND:

🟥 Below 🟧 Missing 🟨 Approaching 🟩 Meeting 🟩 Above 🟩 Exceeding 🟩 Outstanding

INDICATOR	MEASURES	ALL STUDENTS	Improvement	EQUITY GAP
Academic Achievement	Performance Composite: 20%	15 of 20	⬆	12%
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SCORECARD – ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Maryland State Department of Education