



March 1, 2021

The Honorable Larry Hogan  
Governor of Maryland  
State House  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: COVID-19 Slide

Dear Governor Hogan:

As you know, many of our schoolchildren have struggled academically due to COVID-19 closures of in-person learning opportunities. The projections of the average academic growth trajectory by grade and for mathematics and reading have been significantly hindered. In a typical year, average academic growth varies across the academic year and generally declines from the last day of school through the summer, with steeper declines in mathematics than in reading.

While there may be some disagreement about the magnitude of summer learning loss, three trends are consistent across seasonal learning research findings: 1) achievement typically slows or declines over the summer months, 2) declines tend to be steeper for math than for reading, and 3) the extent of loss increases in the upper grades. Understanding that many children in the state have been without in-person learning for what will amount to a full calendar year, the need to intervene and provide additional supports to our students is paramount.

Accordingly, the Education Subcommittee of the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) Legislative Committee proposes that the State create the COVID Slide Education Initiative (CSEI) to help Local Education Agencies (LEAs) address the impacts of the "COVID Slide." Counties are acutely aware that the students suffering the most from a lack of in-person learning include our Special Education students and those who have English as a Second Language (ESL). In addition, students entering Kindergarten, 4th grade, 6th grade, and 9th grade, should also receive special attention based on the crucial learning benchmarks they should have mastered in the prior school year.

This CSEI would provide funds to LEAs that create specialized and focused summer programs to address the learning loss for youth that need the assistance within the previously mentioned cohorts. It is our hope that LEAs and local governments will be able to leverage the State investment to recruit private or non-profit entities to also invest in this endeavor.

The COVID-19 crisis is a call to action for practitioners and policy makers alike. Today's students are increasingly diverse, and the pandemic has taken a toll on all students' connections, communities, and relationships. Once schools are back in session, Maryland's students must be prepared to thrive and be successful, but because of learning loss and unless we intervene, many of them will likely be behind academically. Addressing this critical need now benefits our students, families, and schools – a rising tide lifts all boats.

Thank you for your consideration

Sincerely,



Craig Rice  
Council Member, Montgomery County  
Chair, MACo Education Subcommittee



Jack Wilson  
Commissioner, Queen Anne's County  
Vice Chair, MACo Education Subcommittee

CC: The Honorable Bill Ferguson, President, Maryland State Senate

The Honorable Adrienne Jones, Speaker, Maryland House of Delegates