



Mr. Anthony South
Executive Director
Maryland State Board of Education
200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, MD 21201

RE: Letter of opposition in response to the request by Anne Arundel County Executive Leopold for a Maintenance of Effort (MOE) Waiver from the Maryland State Board of Education.

Dear Mr. South and Members of the Maryland State Board of Education,

According to Maryland State Law, Section 5-202d, school districts are required to be funded at the level of the previous year, plus any additional enrollment as an addition on a per-pupil cost basis. The intent of the Maintenance of Effort law is to help diminish the harm to school systems during an economic downturn. County Executive Leopold's request for the waiver in FY2010 demonstrates a desire to expose the school system to the harsh economic climate. In FY2009, school system funding suffered substantial cuts and has already done its share towards balancing the existing budget. If the proposed MOE Waiver for FY2010 is approved, cuts made to the already thinned FY2009 budget will be felt exponentially in 2010 and therefore the children, teachers and schools will bare a disproportionate share of the budget cuts.

Clearly, the State of Maryland is committed to maintaining excellence in its public school system as shown by its levels of past and proposed monetary investments in education. These investments have recently resulted in several accolades for Maryland's public school system; a number one ranking by Education Week, best in the nation by the College Board report for student AP achievement and first in the nation for having the highest percentage of seniors who had taken at least one AP exam. During these difficult times, even Governor O'Malley's FY 2010 budget demonstrates a commitment to educational excellence and supports the progress of Maryland's children, teachers, and parents by fully funding the Thornton Bridge to Excellence Plan and proposing a \$68.3 million increase in spending over FY 2009. Governor O'Malley recently addressed the State Board of Education in which he expressed his desire to build the best public school system in the world. He ended his address with a quote from President Kennedy: *"Our progress as a nation can be no swifter than our progress in education."*

Permitting Anne Arundel County to utilize the MOE Waiver sends an incongruous message from the State Board of Education that perhaps education and progress is only a priority in our State during a strong economy. Denying the Waiver will solidify and hold steadfast the Waiver's purpose of providing protection to our schools and children from further harm during already detrimental economic times. It is the money spent on education today that will enable our children to grow up to become successful, taxpaying adults tomorrow. The Maryland State Board of Education should not balance the budget to the detriment of our children's education and progress as a nation. Therefore, the MOE waiver request should be denied.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,

Anne Arundel County Down syndrome Connection
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