

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Board of Education  
Upper Marlboro, Maryland

0101  
Policy No.

BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY

BASIC COMMITMENTS

Educational Equity

**Purpose**

The Board of Education for the Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS), "the system", is committed to educational equity within our schools and worksites in order to foster conditions that reduce disproportionality in student achievement and performance.

It is the intent of the Board of Education that the students and staff members throughout PGCPS work, learn, and interact in schools and worksites that affirm diverse backgrounds, acknowledge the disparity of opportunities for, both, the students and communities the system serves, as well as promote educational equity in achievement and performance.

It is the belief of the Board of Education that closing the achievement gap is not just about instruction; it is the way that we think about, understand, and believe in the potential and capabilities of our students, as well as their families and communities, and how we effectively interact with them.

The Board of Education recognizes that students who may have certain social identifiers, have experienced Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), and/or live in communities that lack certain performance index measures will need access to resources that other students do not need, or have access to, in order to get the full benefits of the system.

Both the Board of Education and the system shall, through all actions, prioritize educational equity by removing institutional barriers and ensuring that social identifiers, ACEs, and/or Community Performance Index measures are not obstacles to accessing educational opportunities and supports.

The Board of Education further affirms the right of all students to have equitable access to a quality education that promotes college and career readiness, social/emotional learning, and supports the holistic wellbeing of the student.

## **Definitions**

### *Educational Equity:*

In 2017, the Board of Education for the Prince George’s County Public Schools (PGCPS) launched the *2017-2018 Joint Task Force on Educational Equity* that, through its report (Appendix I), identified three core student demographics that have had historically significant gaps in academic achievement. These findings led to the following definition on educational equity, as related specifically to PGCPS:

“Educational equity in Prince George’s County Public Schools is having adequate and appropriate access for each student, regardless of socioeconomic status, language of origin, or special needs, to ensure a high-quality education that empowers all students and contributes to thriving communities.”

An equitable education, furthermore, constitutes providing access to essential academic, social, emotional, and economic resources, supports, and opportunities in order to progress and promote each student throughout their educational journey. It maximizes academic success for each student through rigorous instruction, with appropriate educational resources, so that our students shall achieve their highest potential, strengthen their social/emotional wellbeing, and ensure that their academic goals are achieved.

### *Social Identifiers:*

The demographic factors identified as, but not limited to, age, ability (cognitive, social/emotional, and physical), ethnicity/race, family structure, language, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and socioeconomics.

### *Adverse Childhood Experiences:*

Students who have encountered adverse childhood experiences have a higher probability of failing academically or dropping out of school. The term may be applied to students who face circumstances that could jeopardize their ability to complete school.

An adverse childhood experience involves, but is not limited to, the following:

- physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse, either direct or witnessed;
- mental illness of a household/family member;
- unplanned/unintended pregnancy;
- homelessness and/or frequent residential mobility;

- problematic drinking/alcoholic usage of a household/family member;
- illegal street/prescription drug use of a household/family member;
- divorce/separation of parents/guardians;
- domestic violence towards household/family members;
- incarceration/deportation of a household/family member; and/or the,
- death of a household/family member

*Community Performance Index:*

Prince George’s County Public Schools (PGCPS) serves a diverse grouping of communities, including many that are still handicapped by implemented public policies regarding housing, the environment, healthcare, economic vitality, and infrastructure that systemically prevented progression among many communities of color and/or poverty.

These generational public policies, and their unfortunate dampening on communal growth, have led to the disproportionate success throughout the county - a metric of success that can be measured and applied to the equitable allocation of educational resources. To measure a community’s growth potential and need for additional educational equity resources, a *Community Performance Index*, along with key topical, quantitative, and qualitative measurables must be established and taken into consideration.

Community Performance Index (CPI) measurables are, but is not limited to, the following:

- the quality, affordability, and residential longevity of housing options;
- the economic development and workforce availability;
- the accessibility and quality of fresh, nutritional food items;
- the reported violent crime rates of the community; and,
- the access to affordable and quality healthcare

These measurable metrics shall be used to provide a quality education to every PGCPS student, in an equitable manner.

*Holistic Academic Wellbeing and Social/Emotional Learning:*

In Prince George’s County Public Schools (PGCPS), our students’ academic success and wellbeing are strongly linked to high quality teaching and learning. A student’s level of wellbeing in school is indicated by their satisfaction with encounters at school, their engagement with learning inside and outside their classroom(s), and their social/emotional behavior. It is enhanced when evidence-informed practices are adopted by school-based leaders in partnership with the families and communities served by the school. Holistic academic wellbeing is a sustainable mindset, characterized by predominantly positive feelings and attitude, positive relationships in school, resilience, self-optimism, and a high level of satisfaction with learning experiences.



### *Cultural Proficiency:*

The intentional application of comprehended education-related cultural competence, which is the usage of cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and performance styles of diverse students with the goal of making education more understandable and appropriate through responsive instruction, curriculum, and learning environments.

### **Goals, Desired Outcomes, and Strategies**

The goals of educational equity within Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) are as follows:

1. Equitable educational outcomes for high academic achievement through opportunities in academic programs, activities, and supports, as well as rigorous courses of study;
2. Equal treatment of students and staff members by embracing, valuing, and respecting their differences;
3. Equitable distribution of resources to schools and programs to support the academic growth of students and professional development of staff members;
4. Shared accountability for all educational stakeholders responsible for every student having equitable access to a quality education, qualified staff members, a challenging curriculum, and appropriate academic supports;
5. Elimination of structural and institutional barriers to educational opportunities; and,
6. Eradication of discriminatory acts of hate, violence, insensitivity, and disrespect at schools and worksites throughout PGCPS.

The Board of Education recognizes that these are long term goals. As a result, in order to track the progression and sustaining of achievement of these goals, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is responsible for reporting progress towards meeting the goals to the Board on an annual basis through the PGCPS Equity Plan.

The following are the desired outcomes for the Board of Education in regards to educational equity within PGCPS, "the system":

1. Systemwide and individual school-based disaggregated data will be used to analyze trends, identify gaps, and produce systemic equitable solutions;
2. Achievement of all students will be raised while narrowing the gap between the lowest and the highest performing students, with a strategic focus on the aforementioned three identified core student demographics.;
3. Enriched educational experiences of all students through the exposure to staff members from many backgrounds reflecting the demographics of the community, thereby providing settings for education that promote an understanding of diversity, contributing to the quality of the exchange of ideas

- inherent in the educational setting, and assuring all students, upon graduation, are successful in a diverse local, national, and global community; and,
4. Our students' social identifiers, Adverse Childhood Experiences, and/or Community Performance Index (CPI) measurables shall be seen as a valued asset to the educational philosophy and actions of each individual school and the system as a whole.

Furthermore, in order to implement educationally equitable practices for students within the system, the Board of Education establishes the following strategies for PGCPS, in order to best achieve the goals and desired outcomes established in this Board Policy:

1. PGCPS shall foster welcoming learning environments where diverse cultures and experiences will be acknowledged, valued, and affirmed, as well as provide students with an equitable access to high quality, culturally diverse instruction, curriculum, materials, supports, and other educational resources that focus on the understanding and appreciation of culture, class, language, ethnicity, poverty, ability, as well their social identifiers, adverse childhood experiences, holistic academic wellbeing and social/emotional learning, and community's CPI measurables;
2. PGCPS shall endeavor to recruit, hire, support, develop, and retain a culturally proficient workforce that reflects the diversity of the student body and communities of each respective school and shall provide professional development to strengthen their knowledge and skills for eliminating multiple disparities in learning and opportunity gaps that lead to academic disparities;
3. PGCPS shall welcome and empower all families to engage in their child(ren)'s education, including the intentional involvement of stakeholders that reflect the system's demographics in order to better inform decisions made regarding the narrowing and elimination of achievement and opportunity gaps through academic course offerings and wraparound services;
4. PGCPS shall review and modify policies, procedures, and/or practices that may impede the equitable access of students to fair discipline, extracurricular activities, before and after school day and school year academic resources and services, as well as academic programs, including but not limited to, the system's Talented and Gifted, Honors, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Specialty Programs, and Public Charter Schools programs.
5. PGCPS shall direct that educational equity be addressed in the system's local Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Consolidation Plan and that the CEO shall designate an administrative staff member responsible for the facilitation, monitoring, and implementation of the systemic equity initiatives within the Local ESSA Consolidated Strategic Plan; and,
6. PGCPS shall consider a community's CPI measurables in all plans for new construction and/or renovation of existing facilities, as well as the distribution of physical and electronic academic supports for the weighted application of equitable access to twenty-first century learning environments.

## **Administrative Charge**

The Board of Education directs the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to develop action plans with clear accountability metrics, as well as, administrative procedures to implement the goals, desired outcomes, and strategies outlined throughout this policy. The CEO is also charged with proposing the necessary allocation of Capital Improvement and Operating budgetary funds and the hiring and professional development of the necessary staff members to implement said goals, desired outcomes, and strategies.

### *Administrative Equity Plan*

The Board of Education recognizes that the Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) administration is multi-faceted with several dozen departments that, together, orchestrate the operation of one of the nation's largest and most diverse public school systems. The Board of Education also recognizes that, regardless of the level of interaction with students, school-based staff members, and the communities served by our schools, all PGCPS staff members and departments shall be singularly focused on the goal of educational equity.

It is with this outlined focus that the Board of Education requires the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to have each of the members of his/her Executive Cabinet produce an Administrative Equity Plan (AEP) for each of the departments that they are tasked with overseeing. Departmental AEPs shall include, but are not limited to, the following information:

1. The mission and staffing of the department;
2. The applicative definition of educational equity and its relation to the work conducted by the department;
3. The goals of the department to close systematically identified achievement gaps, through departmental actions, in an equitable manner and strategies to achieve the goals identified.

The CEO shall then use the departmental AEPs collected as a comprehensive guide to formulate the PGCPS Equity Plan, which shall be a required submission to the full Board by the start of each Academic Year, as identified by the Board-approved academic calendar, with a formal vote of affirmation by the Board of Education required no later than October 1st of the same Academic Year.

### *Establishment of the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion*

The Board of Education hereby charges the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to establish and maintain an administrative office dedicated to the implementation of the Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) Equity Plan, led by an individual who has administratively identified credentials to promote educational equity and to engage key internal and external stakeholders on all matters relating to educational equity for

PGCPS. The established office shall be named the Office of Educational Equity (OEE). The CEO may also staff the aforementioned office with the appropriately qualified staff members who will serve under the direction and leadership of the CEO's designee to lead the OEE.

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2/25/00

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5/12/03

Policy Reviewed – No Revisions Required  
11/9/04

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4/20/06

Policy Amended  
8/16/06

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3/27/14

Policy Adopted and Dissolved Policy 0102 and Policy 0103  
4/25/19

# APPENDIX I





# Greater Expectations, Greater Opportunities: The Right to an Excellent Education

Report of the 2017-2018 Joint Task Force on  
Educational Equity for Prince George's County Public Schools

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## TASK FORCE MEMBERS

K. Alexander Wallace, Co-Chair  
District 7, Board of Education

Christian Rhodes, Co-Chair  
Chief of Strategic and External Affairs,  
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Carolyn Boston  
Vice Chair, District 6, Board of Education

Dinora A. Hernandez, Esq.  
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Nora Morales  
Diversity Officer, PGCPS

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Tomas Rivera  
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Gladys Whitehead, Ph.D.  
Executive Director of Curriculum and  
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Executive Director, Board of Education,  
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## INTRODUCTION

In our quest for a better society, the sole equalizing tool for success is the access to a fulfilling, vibrant, and meaningful education. In Prince George's County, we humbly and eagerly accepted our role in achieving this quest many years ago with the passage of our Strategic Plan – "The Promise of Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS)."

While this promise to our students, families, and key stakeholders was well-intended, it is clear that more work remains to be done. For evidence, we need only look to shortcomings in the allocation of academic and social services for students, the diversity of our staff and their development as professionals, the engagement and inclusion of all families and the funding of core programs and school-level budgets. For better and for worse, these reflect our system-wide values.

With the hope of making PGCPS a model educational equity, the Board of Education's Committee on Board Development and Governance established in April 2017 a task force to examine gaps in student achievement and recommend strategies to move our system toward our strategic plan goals.

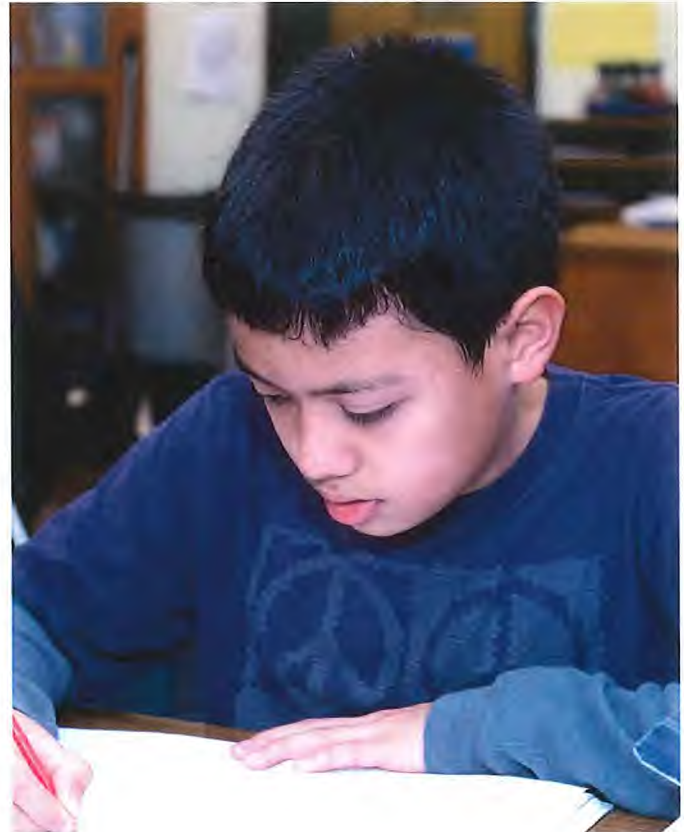
Over a one-year course, the Joint Task Force on Educational Equity for PGCPS discussed areas related to educational equity and their potential benefits to our system. While our recommendations are backed by academic research, the task force recognizes the ever-changing landscape of education. This document should be fluid to fit the needs of PGCPS.

It should also be noted that this task force ran its course alongside the statewide Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education, commonly known as the Kirwan Commission. In January 2018, the Commission released its preliminary report recommendations. Many of the Kirwan Commission

recommendations – from early childhood education and community schools to diverse staff recruitment and weighted funding for specified student groups – are reflected in our own recommendations.

On behalf of the task force members, we submit this report acknowledging that we must be balanced, not equal, in our allocation of human, academic, and financial resources; we must understand that equity must be approached in an urgent manner. In many cases, accountability is a stronger factor of equitable academic success than money.

We look forward to our stakeholders' input and consideration as we continue this important discussion around educational equity with our system.





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Background

The Joint Task Force on Educational Equity for Prince George’s County Public Schools was established in April 2017 by the Board of Education’s Standing Committee on Board Development and Governance. The 10-member task force was to include an equal number of Board Members and Administration staff, appointed by the Board Chair and Chief Executive Officer, respectively.

#### Board Members

K. Alexander Wallace, District 7  
Carolyn Boston, Board Vice Chair, District 6  
Lupi Quinteros-Grady, District 2  
Dinora A. Hernandez, District 3  
David Murray, District 1

#### Administration Staff Members

Christian Rhodes, Chief, Strategic and External Affairs  
Nora Morales, Diversity Officer  
Gladys Whitehead, Ph.D., Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction

Tomas Rivera, Diversity Recruitment Executive Coordinator  
Lisa Price, PMP, CGPM, BSP, Performance Officer (April 2017-June 2017)

### Our Task and Findings

The charge for the task force was to “recommend changes to and/or the development of Board policy and Administrative procedures that would incorporate equity into the Strategic Plan.” After consultation at the June 2017 Board of Education retreat, three main pillars of educational equity were established:

#### Educational Equity and Our People

- A diverse, culturally responsive, strategically allocated, supported and developed workforce
- Intentional, unapologetic, and equitable family and community engagement with an emphasis on providing wraparound services

#### Educational Equity and Our Academic Resources

- Equitable access to and appropriate allocation of high-quality instructional staff, programs, services and materials

### OUR STUDENTS

7% White, Asian or Other

31% Hispanic

62% African American

### STUDENT NEEDS

11% Special Education

16% English Language Learners

64% FARMs



### Educational Equity and Our Budgetary Resource Allocation

- Funding our schools, staff and programs with an equity lens

## Defining Educational Equity in Prince George's County Public Schools

The members of the task force first defined what an equitable education meant to our school system, recognizing the existing achievement levels and gaps:

*“Educational equity in Prince George’s County Public Schools is having adequate and appropriate access for each student, regardless of socioeconomic status, language of origin, or special needs, to ensure a high-quality education that empowers all students and contributes to thriving communities.”*

Through this definition, the task force began its work of examining educational equity gaps and drafting recommendations with presentations from business, nonprofit and research partners that shed light on removing barriers to a high-quality education:

- Kajeet – Digital Divide and the Technological Gap
- The Literacy Lab – in-classroom PreK-3 tutoring and Male Mentorship
- The Hanover Group – Evaluating research previously conducted for PGCPs on topics such as budget allocations, staffing and academic program quality

There were also presentations by Lisa Price, PGCPs Performance Officer, and Tomas Rivera, Diversity Recruitment Executive Coordinator, on baseline data to guide the task force’s work and the work of the Human Resources Department and the recommendations of the Diverse Workforce Task Force.





## RECOMMENDATIONS

### ■ Educational Equity and Our People

**Recommendation #1:** The Administration shall establish criteria to provide high-needs schools with additional resources and positions (i.e., social workers, parental engagement assistants, English for Speakers of Other Languages teachers, etc.) that will be classified as Locked+ positions. These additional resources and/or positions will help to bridge achievement gaps and address the unique school needs.

- The Administration shall determine the criteria by which schools may receive additional supports.
- The Administration shall, in consultation with the school community, establish a core set of needed positions and/or resources that will increase student achievement.



The Board of Education shall establish a Strategic Staffing Policy to increase the proportion of high-performing staff and National Board Certified Teachers within high-needs schools, high-staff turnover schools, or schools that historically have been staffed disproportionately by provisionally-certified, out-of-field, underperforming staff. In addition, we recognize that a component of a high-performing workforce requires equitable investment in professional development strategies that contribute to excellence in instruction and teacher retention. The Board of Education shall also properly monitor data regarding student access to effective teachers and administrators.

**Recommendation #2:** As our student demographics grow more culturally diverse, our workforce must diversify and become more culturally competent. The Administration is charged with formulating partnerships with minority-serving institutions of higher education, local colleges and universities, and professional organizations that cultivate culturally competent educators.

The Board of Education shall advocate for:

- Statutes that require higher education institutions to offer courses to address culturally responsive leadership and instructional practices, Growth Mindset, English Language Learners and families, and effective family engagement.
- Scholarship funding to encourage males to pursue early childhood, primary, and intermediate level education.
- Full funding for the Teaching Fellows in Maryland scholarship created in 2014 by the Maryland General Assembly.
- Mandatory employee training in cultural proficiency.

**Recommendation #3:** Expand the “grow your own” educator program to include a weighted job application for PGCPs alumni.

### ■ Educational Equity and Our Academic Resources

**Recommendation #1:** Establish a Community Schools Board Policy/Administrative Procedure that follows a nationally recognized and implemented framework.



**Recommendation #2:** Establish a policy that defines digital equity in education which identifies how to close the educational digital divide in PGCPs. The policy will develop and implement a plan to address the digital divide as it relates to access to educational technologies with an emphasis on students from families with economic challenges. The goal is to ensure that students have access to adequate technology in school and at home.

**Recommendation #3:** Conduct an equity analysis of speciality programs, charter schools, and lottery admissions to use in the formulation of recommendations to improve equity, such as weighted criteria for student applications from certain demographics.

**Recommendation #4:** Enhance our before/after school and summer enrichment programs to increase learning opportunities for at-risk students.

**Recommendation #5:** Consider the consolidation and strategic location of Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs to create magnet CTE high schools across the county. This may require the establishment of Career and Technology Academies (CAT Academies), similar to the work conducted by Anne Arundel County Public Schools, for the Northern and Southern regions of the county.

**Recommendation #6:** Examine the viability of extending the school day and academic year in consultation with labor partners, similar to the efforts accomplished by the District of Columbia Public Schools.

**Recommendation #7:** Advocate for funding and partnerships to increase the supply of licensed childcare providers in strategically identified areas throughout the county.

**Recommendation #8:** Study the viability of distance learning, as well as collaboration with regional higher education partners, to increase the number of eligible students in dual enrollment programs by eliminating financial and logistical challenges.

**Recommendation #9:** Support the administration of Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) tests to English Language Learners in their native language.

**Recommendation #10:** Advocate against citizenship requirements for Career and Technical Education program state-based licenses. Many immigrant students matriculate through Career and Technical Education programs in planning to gain industry certifications and licenses, unaware of the citizenship requirement.

**Recommendation #11:** Study the feasibility of an expedited graduation track for over-age/under-credited students (students who enroll into the system two or more years above their grade-level age range).





## Educational Equity and Our Budgetary Resource Allocation

**Recommendation #1:** The Board of Education should charge the administration to study and develop recommendations to enhance, change, or replace the current Student-Based Budget model to support the district's Equity Plan.

**Recommendation #2:** The Administration should create a funding system for schools that receive an administrative established percentage of English Language Learners throughout the school year, during non-traditional registration periods.

**Recommendation #3:** The Administration shall, on an annual basis, conduct an administrative review and analysis of the equitable funding of certain student

demographics and related academic achievement and how those identified demographics have improved in academic achievement due to the funding allocation.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR UNIDENTIFIED PILLAR

Through the course of the presentations, discussions, and formulation of the aforementioned recommendations, there were a few substantive recommendations that were put forth and discussed that fell outside of the three identified pillars. The following recommendations are largely administrative, but are woven into the core of our work under the three identified pillars.

**Recommendation #1:** Rewrite and consolidate Board Policies and Administrative Procedures on Equity and Culturally Responsive Schools and Central Offices. In the policy, define characteristics of what an "at-risk" student is and what "adverse childhood experiences" (ACEs) are.

**Recommendation #2:** Establish an administrative position to develop and oversee the implementation of the school system's equity plan and regulate and critique submitted Equity Implementation Plans for all relative administrative departments. The Administration should rename the Office of Diversity to the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

**Recommendation #3:** Departmental managers shall be charged with developing Equity Implementation Plans (EIPs), under the approved Board of Education definition for educational equity, to be submitted to the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

**Recommendation #4:** Advocate for funding in the fiscal year 2020 budget to partner with a research firm that can further analyze educational equity in PGCPs and assist with the rollout of the task force recommendations.





*"All this will not be finished in the first one hundred days. Nor will it be finished in the first one thousand days, nor in the life of this administration, nor even perhaps in our lifetime on this planet. But let us begin."*

John F. Kennedy  
President of the United States of America, 1961

## **PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION**

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