

# MARYLANDERS CAN'T AFFORD KIRWAN'S MYTHS

*A Dose of Reality: Kirwan Is Expensive, Ineffective, Misguided*

MYTH	REALITY
Maryland's schools are underfunded	Per pupil, Maryland spends 22% more than the national average (as of 2017, the latest year for which nationwide <b>data</b> are available)
Maryland's teachers are underpaid	Per pupil, Maryland teachers are paid 28% more than the national average
Maryland's poorest jurisdictions are inadequately funded and unfairly treated by current school funding formulas	Per pupil, Baltimore City <b>spends</b> 10% more than the state average and gets 79% of its budget from federal/state sources; Prince George's County spends 5% more than average and gets 64% of its budget from federal/state sources.
The Kirwan reform plan ("Blueprint for Maryland's Future") would "cost <b>\$4 billion</b> over ten years"	Kirwan's estimated costs total <b>\$32 billion</b> over ten years, rising to \$4 billion <i>per year</i> by the plan's tenth year. And that's optimistic, reflecting billions in hoped-for "savings" and "offsets" unlikely to eventuate.
The Kirwan Commission's spending recommendations are new ideas.	In 2002, the <b>Thornton Commission</b> recommended hiking state aid to education by 60% to create a "Bridge to Excellence" in schools. Billions in spending later, Maryland students' test scores have been virtually <b>flat</b> – yet Kirwan advocates say again that more money is the key to "excellence."
The Kirwan recommendations can be implemented without significantly <b>raising taxes</b> .	The 2020 Maryland General Assembly is considering a <b>51% increase</b> in the sales tax burden – a highly regressive tax – as well as possible <b>income, estate, and digital</b> tax hikes to come up with the money for Kirwan
The Kirwan reforms would not impose heavy financial burdens on Maryland's local jurisdictions.	About 1/3 of Kirwan's eventual costs will fall on localities; the most cash-strapped ( <b>Baltimore City, Prince George's County, others</b> ) simply can't afford Kirwan without major increases in local tax rates.
The Kirwan recommendations are necessary to reduce <b>education inequality</b> and opportunity gaps in Maryland.	Kirwan ignores <b>school choice</b> , which is the key to empowering poorer parents and addressing education inequality.
The Kirwan reform would certainly improve student outcomes.	Thornton's payoff was almost imperceptible; Kirwan would continue Maryland's legacy of <b>high spending and poor student outcomes</b> by limiting parental choice and encouraging education bureaucracy to grow.
Kirwan would make Maryland's education system more transparent and accountable.	There's very little <b>accountability</b> in Kirwan: annual spending for "Governance and Accountability" is <i>less than one-tenth of one percent</i> of the plan's budget (per <b>Kirwan Exhibit 5.1</b> ).
Kirwan recommends expanding pre-K programs; universal pre-K is very popular, and it would improve student outcomes.	<b>Studies</b> show that pre-K does not improve student outcomes beyond kindergarten. Survey shows that <b>over 70% of Marylanders</b> do not want to expand pre-K at the expense of other spending priorities.
The Kirwan proposal is very <b>popular</b> .	Polls that show support for Kirwan often <b>fail to disclose the taxpayers' cost</b> of the plan; when costs are mentioned, the majority of Marylanders turn thumbs down.