



Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.
State Superintendent of Schools

October 16, 2019

The Honorable Larry Hogan
State House
100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr.
Senate of Maryland
H-107, State House
100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The Honorable Adrienne A. Jones
Maryland House of Delegates
H-101, State House,
100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Maryland Public Charter School Annual Report (MSAR #10541)

Dear Governor Hogan, President Miller, and Speaker Jones:

The Maryland Public Charter School Program is governed by § 9-101 *et seq.* of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland. Specifically, § 9-111 of the Education Article requires the Maryland State Department of Education to report annually to the Maryland General Assembly regarding any updates or amendments made to a public charter school's policy by local school systems, and implementation of the Maryland Public Charter School Program. In addition to the requirements of the statute, the enclosed report provides the Governor and the Maryland General Assembly with a general overview of Maryland's Charter School Program.

If you have any questions regarding this report, please contact Tiffany Clark, Director of Government Relations, at tiffany.clark1@maryland.gov or by phone at 410-767-0090. Thank you for your continued support and interest in maintaining the highest quality of education for all students in Maryland public schools.

Best Regards,

Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.
State Superintendent of Schools

KBS/mg
Encl.

c: Sarah Albert



**Maryland's Public Charter Schools
Report to the Maryland General Assembly
Under Title 9, Subtitle 1 of the Education Article**

**Maryland State Department of Education
December 1, 2019**

**Larry Hogan
Governor**

**Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.
State Superintendent of Schools**



Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.
State Superintendent of Schools

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President, Maryland State Board of Education

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Background

The Maryland Public Charter School Program is governed by Title 9, Subtitle 1 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland. The statute requires the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to report annually to the Maryland General Assembly regarding any updates or amendments made to public charter school policies by local school systems, as well as the implementation of the Maryland Public Charter School Program on or before December 1 of each year.

In addition to the requirements of the statute, this report provides the Governor and the Maryland General Assembly with a general overview of Maryland's charter schools. The report includes:

- A summary of information about Maryland's Charter Schools, including enrollment and demographics;
- A review of existing local policies as required by § 9-110(a) and § 9-110(c)(1) and the availability of those policies on local school system websites as required by § 9-110(a)(3);
- A summary of technical assistance provided by the Office of School Innovation in the Division of Student Services, Academic Enrichment, and Educational Policy;
- An update on implementation of Education Article, Title 9; and
- An update on the Charter Schools Program grant awarded to the MSDE to support the growth of public charter schools.

Overview of Maryland's charter schools

History

The Maryland General Assembly enacted the Maryland Charter School Program in 2003, "to establish an alternative means within the existing public school system in order to provide innovative learning opportunities and creative educational approaches to improve the education of students." [§ 9-101 (b)].

The key provisions of the Maryland Charter School Law include:

- Local School Boards are the authorizers of public charter schools;
- Public Charter Schools comply with all State and local education laws and policies, unless waived;
- Employees of public charter schools are employees of the local school system;
- Charter schools receive an amount of public funding that is commensurate with the amount of funding expended on behalf of all public school students; and
- Charter schools are open to all students. Admission is by lottery. Weighted lotteries are permitted in some circumstances.

In the 2018-2019 school year, 49 public charter schools served 24,205 Maryland public school students (2.7 percent) in five local school systems within Maryland. There are 34 public charter schools in Baltimore City, nine public charter schools in Prince George’s County, three in Frederick County, two in Anne Arundel County, and one in St. Mary’s County. Figure 1 shows the number of charter schools and charter school enrollment by year. Figure 2 shows the total number of students in public charter schools relative to the enrollment of Maryland’s local school systems for 2018, the last year for which validated data is available.

In September 2019, two new public charter schools will open. Baltimore International Academy West will replicate a full language immersion program in Baltimore City. Watershed Public Charter School will open in Baltimore County, increasing to six the number of local school systems with operating public charter schools.

Figure 1. Maryland public charter school growth 2002 through 2021

Note: Monocacy Valley Public Charter School was approved by the Frederick County School Board in 2001, before passage in 2004 of Maryland’s Charter Law.

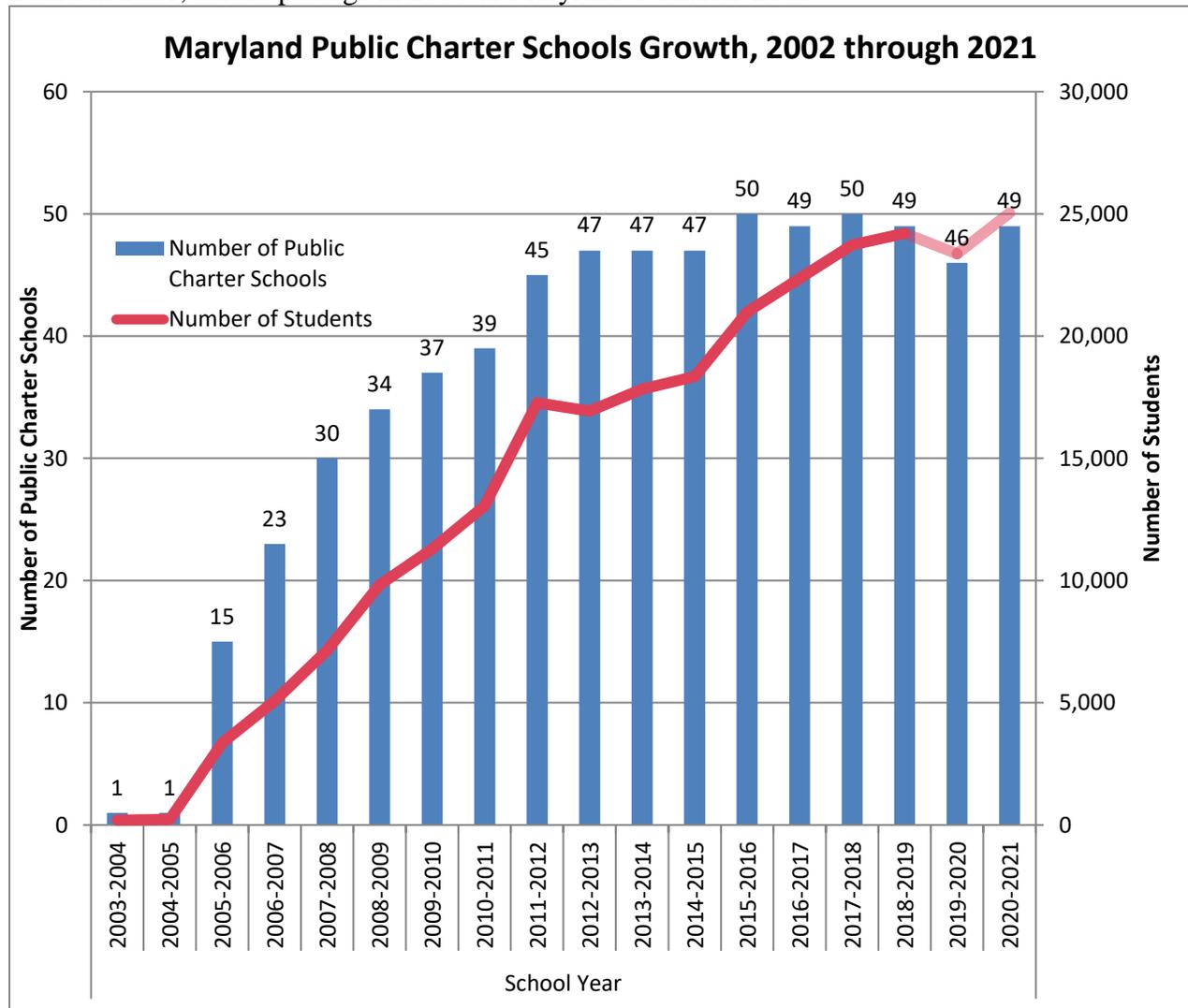
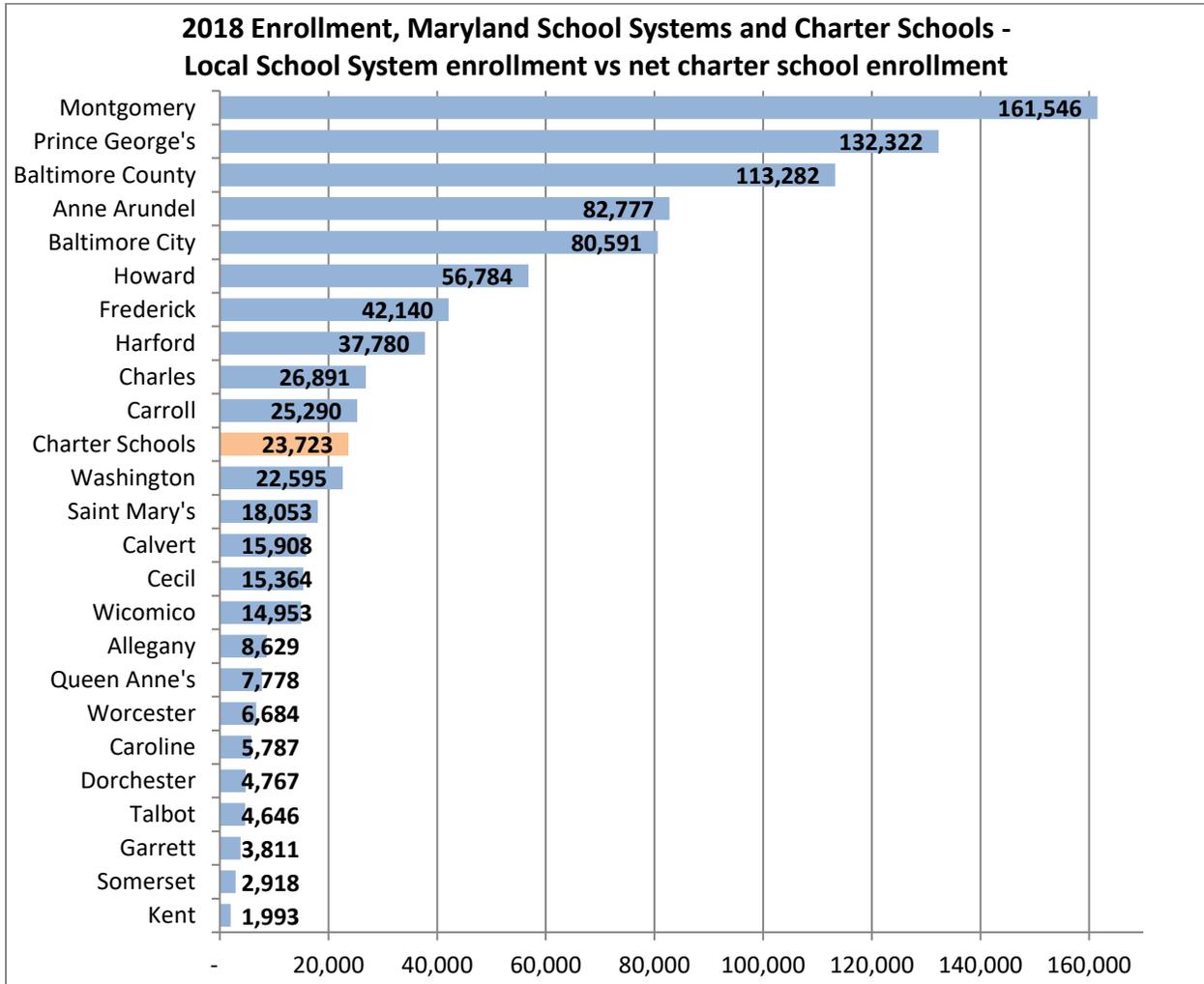


Figure 2. Enrollment of Maryland local school systems and Maryland charter schools



Renewal and Applications

During the 2018-2019 school year, 14 public charter schools completed a contract renewal review with their local board of education. Five charter schools were not renewed. Nine charter schools were renewed.

In addition, six applications for new charter schools were reviewed in the 2018-2019 school year. Two schools were approved to operate in Baltimore City. One school was approved in Prince George’s County. One applicant withdrew and two of the applicants are waiting a final decision.

Table 1. 2018-2019 Maryland public charter school renewal reviews and outcomes.

Local School System	Applications		Renewals	
	Applicants	Outcome	Applicants	Outcome
Anne Arundel County			1	1: 5-year renewal
Baltimore City	1 new school 1 conversion	2 approved	10	2: 5-year renewal 3: 3-year renewal 4: non-renewal 1: 2-year renewal
	3 expansion of enrollment caps at existing schools 1 expansion to add grade levels	3 approved 1 declined		
Charles County	1 new school	Pending		
Prince George’s County	2 new schools	1 approved 1 withdrawn	2	1: Charter revoked 1: 3-year renewal
St. Mary’s County			1	1: 5-year renewal
Wicomico County	1 new school	Pending		

Demographics

Maryland’s public charter schools serve a diverse array of students. Table 2 provides the percentage of students attending public charter schools who are eligible for Free and Reduced Price Meals (FARMS) and the percentage of students with disabilities (SWD). Cumulatively, for each grade band, the percentage of students in public charter schools who are eligible for FARMS is greater than that of the State. In Baltimore City, the percent of students eligible for FARMS and the percent of SWD are comparable. Outside of Baltimore City, a lower percentage of students eligible for FARMS or who have disabilities attend charter schools than traditional schools in the local school system.

Table 2. Percentage of students eligible for Free and Reduced Price Meals and percentage of students with disabilities for public charter schools and all schools, 2018.

Percent Students Eligible for Free and Reduced Price Meals and Students with Disabilities, 2018								
	All		Elementary		Middle		High	
	FARMS	SWD	FARMS	SWD	FARMS	SWD	FARMS	SWD
Maryland All Schools	43%	12%	47%	12%	42%	12%	36%	11%
Maryland Charter Schools	43%	10%	49%	11%	44%	11%	41%	17%
Anne Arundel All Schools	33%	9%	37%	10%	33%	10%	28%	8%
Anne Arundel Charter Schools	23%	7%	23%	12%	25%	7%	18%	0%
Baltimore City All Schools	56%	15%	59%	13%	56%	18%	50%	17%
Baltimore City Charter Schools	51%	13%	56%	13%	53%	15%	51%	26%
Frederick All Schools	27%	11%	31%	11%	26%	10%	22%	10%
Frederick Charter Schools	14%	9%	16%	12%	14%	4%		
Prince George's All Schools	64%	11%	68%	11%	64%	11%	56%	11%
Prince George's Charter Schools	40%	6%	46%	5%	37%	5%	28%	3%
Saint Mary's All Schools	33%	10%	37%	10%	32%	11%	26%	9%
Saint Mary's Charter Schools	9%	9%	9%	8%	10%	10%		

Performance

Table 3 lists the percentage of students scoring 4 or 5 (out of 5 levels) on the 2018 administration of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Assessments in fourth and eighth grades for public charter schools compared to the local school systems.

Table 3. Percent students scoring 4 and 5 for public charter and all other public schools, Math and English, 2018 Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)

PARCC 2018, PERCENT SCORING 4 OR 5					
School Type	4th English	8th English	4th Math	8th Math	Algebra
Anne Arundel County Charter	34.2	48.6	36.8	8.8	46.8
Anne Arundel County Non-charter	49.8	43.4	41.3	11.4	45.4
Baltimore City Charter	19.9	19.7	14.6	11.4	8.5
Baltimore City Non-charter	15.5	16.4	14.7	4.6	8.8
Frederick County Charter	46.6	73.7	35.0	45.7	96.7
Frederick Non-charter	53.1	51.0	53.3	36.5	54.1
Prince George's County Charter	32.9	43.5	17.5	11.1	20.4
Prince George's County Non-charter	29.7	30.0	18.5	7.2	11.6
Chesapeake Charter School	64.1	79.5	61.5	33.3	100.0
St. Mary's Schools Non-charter	46.6	43.9	45.3	21.3	44.6
All Maryland Schools	43.1	41.3	38.8	15.9	31.2
Charter average is greater than school system average AND state average					
Charter average is greater than school system average					

Table 4 lists graduation rates for public charter schools serving high school students and the rates for the local school systems.

Table 4. Charter school high school graduation rates, 2015 to 2018

Maryland High School Graduation Rate, 2015 -2018 (4 year cohort)					
Charter Schools and Local School Systems (Maryland Report Card)					
Local School System	SCHOOL NAME	2015 GRAD RATE	2016 GRAD RATE	2017 GRAD RATE	2018 GRAD RATE
Anne Arundel	Chesapeake Science Point	>95%	>95%	>95%	>95%
Anne Arundel	All Anne Arundel Schools	88%	89.10%	88.50%	89.20%
Baltimore City	ConneXions	72.50%	78%	70.50%	63.20%
Baltimore City	Independence School Local I	80%	66.70%	63.60%	65%
Baltimore City	City Neighbors High School	85.70%	94.30%	89.30%	87.10%
Baltimore City	Coppin Academy	94.10%	93.30%	91.60%	91.50%
Baltimore City	Balt. Leadership Yg. Women	NA	>95%	>95%	88.90%
Baltimore City	Green Street Academy	NA	NA	NA	81.40%
Baltimore City	All Baltimore City Schools	69.00%	70.70%	70.70%	72.20%
Prince George's	Chesa. Math and IT			94.20%	>95%
Prince George's	All Prince George's Schools			82.70%	78.50%
State	All MD Charter Schools	86.80%	90%	88.10%	84.80%
State	All Maryland Schools	87%	87.60%	87.70%	87.1%
Charter graduation rate is greater than school system average AND state average					
Charter graduation rate is greater than school system average					

Additional data is provided in the appendix. The table in the appendix provides the percentage of students in charter schools scoring 4 or 5 on the PARCC assessments for math, English/language arts, and Algebra I. Data is provided for the All Students group and for selected Student Groups.

Review of existing local policies [9-110(a)] [9-110(c)(1)]

The State law requires that each local school system adopt a charter schools policy, post the policy to the local school system website, and provide the policy to the MSDE. In addition, each local school system is to name a charter school liaison.

After passage of the Maryland Charter Law in 2003, each local school system adopted a charter school policy. In a review of every local school system policy, the MSDE found that all had adapted the model policy. Each charter school policy contains the key elements of the model

policy including a definition of a public charter school, eligibility requirements for operators of charter schools, an overview of the local school system process for evaluation of applications to operate charter schools, and the process for earning a renewal of the charter. In most cases, the initial term of a charter contract is five years and renewal terms are three or five years. In two counties, the initial terms are three and four years. To date, no initial contract terms are longer than five years.

Table 5 is a summary for each local school system and their adherence to the requirements of the law. The MSDE reviews websites annually.

Table 5. Local school system charter school policies

Local School System	Charter Policy on Website	Date of Approval or most recent revision	Charter Liaison identified
1. Allegany County	✓	10/13/2011	✓
2. Anne Arundel county	✓	5/5/2010	✓
3. Baltimore City	✓	11/13/2012	✓
4. Baltimore County	✓	6/10/2014	✓
5. Calvert County	✓	6/3/2013	✓
6. Carroll County	✓	11/14/2012	✓
7. Caroline County	✓	2008	✓
8. Cecil County	✓	10/9/2008	✓
9. Charles County	✓	9/9/2003	✓
10. Dorchester County	✓	8/16/2008	✓
11. Frederick County	✓	11/9/2011	✓
12. Garrett County	✓	12/12/2017	✓
13. Harford County	✓	8/9/2010	✓
14. Howard County	✓	7/1/2016	✓
15. Kent County	✓	10/6/2004	✓
16. Montgomery County	✓	2/2/2015	✓
17. Prince George's County	✓	4/29/2010	✓
18. Queen Anne's County	✓	2/6/2013	✓
19. Somerset County	✓	11/18/2008	✓
20. St. Mary's County	✓	5/25/2010	✓
21. Talbot County	✓	2/13/2013	✓
22. Washington County	✓	11/4/2014	✓
23. Wicomico County	✓	11/13/2012	✓
24. Worcester County	✓	10/1/2003	✓

Technical assistance provided as required by [9-110(b)(2)(i)]

The MSDE regularly responds to requests for information and technical assistance from local school systems, charter school operators, and the public. Inquiries include questions from potential operators seeking guidance on the application process and parents seeking information about charter school enrollment.

The Director for the Office of School Innovations at MSDE meets regularly with the local school system charter liaisons. Attendance includes representatives from local school systems with and without operating charter schools. The meetings provide a forum for collaborative review of aspects of the charter law and challenges that arise in overseeing charter schools. This stakeholder group has provided input into the development of standards by which a local school board will determine a charter school “eligible” for additional operational flexibility, in accordance with § 9-104.1.

As part of the Charter Schools Program Grant of the U.S. Department of Education described below, the MSDE contracted with SchoolsWorks, Inc. to review policies and practices of Maryland’s local school systems with operating charter schools, interview local school system staff, and propose and implement technical assistance for all local school systems staff with responsibility for authorizing public charter schools. In the 2018-2019 school year, School Works implemented five sessions for local school system staff. Two of the sessions were in person workshops and three were held as webinars. Topics included:

- Authorizing 101
- Charter Application Process
- Performance Contracting
- Renewal and Revocation
- Ongoing Oversight and Monitoring

U.S Department of Education Charter Schools Program Grant

In September 2017, the MSDE was awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of Education (USED) Charter Schools Program. The award was \$17,222,222 over five years through September 30, 2022. In September 2019, USED awarded an additional \$6,121,650 to Maryland’s Charter Schools Program, bringing the total awarded to the program to \$23,343,872.

There are three areas of activities that are underway.

Subgrants: Ninety percent of the funding will be awarded in subgrants to nonprofit organizations operating or seeking to operate public charter schools in Maryland. The grants are available for the start-up costs of new, expanding, or replicating charter schools that have been approved by the local board of education. Sub grants are awarded on a competitive basis.

Typically, there is a year of planning between approval of a charter school and opening. Charter school operators will propose plans for the planning year and initial one to two years of operation. Activities supported by the grant may include recruitment, planning, professional development, marketing, and technology acquisition.

The MSDE made its first awards in September 2019.

The Round 1 grantees are:

- Chesapeake Charter School, St. Mary's County: To add 170 new students to its current K-8 program focusing on project based learning and arts integration.
- Baltimore International Academy (BIA) West, Baltimore City: To replicate its existing K-8 program emphasizing language immersion in another Baltimore neighborhood. BIA West opens for the 2019-2020 school year.
- Watershed School, Baltimore County: To launch a new elementary school in 2019-2020 with an environmental focus and extensive community outreach. Watershed opens for the 2019-2020 school year.
- Legends Charter School, Prince George's County: To open a new K-4 school with an intention of expanding to K-8, focusing on financial literacy and entrepreneurship. Legends will open in fall 2020.
- Chesapeake Math and Information Technology Academy (CMIT) South, Prince George's County: To replicate its STEM-based school model, which is currently successful at three locations in the county. CMIT opened in fall 2018.
- DaVinci Collaborative School, Baltimore City: To start a new high school targeting internships and an intensive advisory model. The DaVinci Collaborative's project has not begun, pending the resolution of an appeal of denial of its charter application.

The second round of grants was announced in September 2019. The Round 2 grantees are:

- Clay Hill Public Charter School, Baltimore City: To replicate the successful Patterson Park Public Charter School. The school will open in the 2020-2021 school year.
- Baltimore Montessori Public Charter School, Baltimore City: To expand this existing school, adding 230 seats.
- Baltimore International Academy (BIA), Baltimore City: The BIA will expand its original school, adding 325 seats over the grant period.
- Empowerment Academy, Baltimore City: To expand enrollment at this existing arts-focused K-8 school
- New Song Academy, Baltimore City: This existing school, located in the Sandtown Winchester neighborhood will convert to charter status as of fall 2020.

Technical Assistance: The grant enables the MSDE to increase its technical assistance activities. Current and new charter operators can obtain assistance to determine readiness for replication or to launch a school, strategic planning, and addressing the needs of all students. The Maryland Alliance of Public Charter Schools (MAPCS) was awarded a contract for this work.

As noted above, local school system authorizers also benefit from technical assistance and professional development opportunities to help ensure that application and renewal processes are equitable and rigorous. In the coming year, additional opportunities will be offered.

Sharing and Collaboration: The MSDE will continue to support local school system authorizers in identifying and disseminating promising practices for public charter schools. The project will include a statewide conference in year three (Fiscal Year 2020) to highlight practice sharing among charter schools and traditionally-managed schools.

Appendix

Maryland Public Charter Schools: Percent of Students Scoring 4 or 5 on PARCC Assessments, 2018

Maryland Public Charter Schools: Percent of Students Scoring 4 or 5 on PARCC Assessments, 2018

	ENG/ LANGUAGE ARTS 3-5		ENG/ LANGUAGE ARTS 6-8		MATH 3-5		MATH 6-8		ALGEBRA 1	
	All Students	Free / Reduced Meals	All Students	Free / Reduced Meals	All Students	Free / Reduced Meals	All Students	Free / Reduced Meals	All Students	Free / Reduced Meals
Yellow: charter avg exceeds county avg for student group										
Blue: charter avg exceeds state avg for ALL students										
Baltimore City										
Afya Public Charter School			16	15.9			7.6	6.7	0	0
Baltimore Collegiate School for Boys	7.1	3.2	15.5	12.7	12.5	5.4	13.9	11.3		
Baltimore International Academy	16.7	11.4	38.5	26.9	15.9	13.6	23.6	13	63.6	33.3
Baltimore Leadership School for Young Women			21.6	15.6			1.8	1	4.3	4.5
Baltimore Montessori Public Charter School	28.2	15.1	43.6	14.6	18	5.7	12.9	2.4	62.5	0
Banneker Blake Academy for Arts and Sciences			5.1	2.9			3.3	2.9		
Brehms Lane Public Charter School	5.9	5.7			6.5	5.3				
City Neighbors Charter School	27.8	6.3	46.1	40	20.8	12.5	20	15.4	13.3	0
City Neighbors Hamilton	27.3	12.5	25.6	10.7	25.6	16.7	10.1	0	38.5	33.3
City Neighbors High School									6.4	5.1
City Springs Elementary	16.5	16.4	9	8.2	11	10.7	1	1.1		
ConneXions: A Community Based Arts School			3.4	2.6			1.1	0.6	0	0
Coppin Academy									2.2	3.7
Creative City Public Charter School	10.8	2.1			10.7	4.1				
Empowerment Academy	19.8	20	40.8	39.1	26.7	25.5	14.1	10.9		
Frederick Elementary	4	4.2			4	3.6				
Furman Templeton Preparatory Academy	9.6	7.8			3.5	3.4				
Govans Elementary	20.5	15.2			18.5	10.9				
Green Street Academy			19.6	18.1			15.5	15	8.8	6.3
Hampstead Hill Academy	51.2	38.6	52.2	43.6	44.9	31.8	37.2	31.2	65.5	75
Independence School Local I									1.4	0
KIPP Harmony Academy	16.4	14.9	21.6	17.1	25.1	22.5	22.9	18.9		
Lillie May Carroll Jackson School	0	0	17.7	13.6	0	0	8	6.8		
Midtown Academy	47.6	18.5	43.1	35.1	42.9	25.9	12.3	2.7		
Monarch Academy Public Charter School	7.3	6.1	10	7.2	6.5	4.6	2.7	3.2		
Northwood Appold Community Academy	13.3	10.9			10.2	5.5				
Patterson Park Public Charter School	39.5	21.4	33.3	20	31.4	15.2	8.1	2.1	17.9	14.3
Roots and Branches School	4.6	2			1.5	0				
Rosemont Elementary	21.6	16.4	16.2	15.4	20.6	13.7	14.5	14.4		
Southwest Baltimore Charter School	18	14.4	11	5.4	18.7	14.4	11	5.4		
The Crossroads School			25	14			24.4	19		
The Green School	32.5	12.5			33.8	12.5				
Tunbridge Public Charter School	39.7	17.7	59.5	43.1	28.5	11.3	44.1	23.9	0	0
Wolfe Street Academy	19.4	11.1			23.5	22.2				
Baltimore City Charter Total	19.1	11.9	23.0	15.7	18.0	11.3	13.8	9.4	9.1	5.6
All Baltimore City Schools	16.5	10.6	18.8	12.4	16.8	11.3	10.9	6.8	8.8	5.9

Maryland Public Charter Schools: Percent of Students Scoring 4 or 5 on PARCC Assessments, 2018

	ENG/ LANGUAGE ARTS 3-5		ENG/ LANGUAGE ARTS 6-8		MATH 3-5		MATH 6-8		ALGEBRA 1	
	All Students	Free / Reduced Meals	All Students	Free / Reduced Meals	All Students	Free / Reduced Meals	All Students	Free / Reduced Meals	All Students	Free / Reduced Meals
Anne Arundel County										
Chesapeake Science Point			77.6	70.8			53.8	46.9	56.1	70
Monarch Academy	33	17.2	33.6	18.2	29	15.5	22.9	10.2	32.4	14.3
Anne Arundel County Charter Total	33.0	17.2	55.6	40.4	29.0	15.5	36.2	23.1	46.8	47.1
All Anne Arundel Schools	47.9	26.2	46.1	22.7	41.7	20.1	33.7	13.9	45.5	22.4
Frederick County										
Carroll Creek Montessori Public Charter School	43.5	44.4	61.8	57.1	30.4	27.8	31.3	25	100	0
Frederick Classical Charter School	52.5	52.9	63.6	42.9	54.9	35.3	42.9	16.7	95	50
Monocacy Valley Montessori School	52.2	10	79	72.7	38.9	10	56.3	36.4	100	0
Frederick County Charter total	49.7	40.0	67.8	56.4	42.8	26.7	43.8	25.7	96.9	50.0
All Frederick Schools	51.2	31.2	53.7	29.8	52.3	29.6	43.6	19.5	54.4	25.3
Prince George's County										
Chesapeake Math and IT Elementary Public Charter	46.7	43.2			27.6	23.9				
Chesapeake Math and IT Public Charter			49.2	44			25	25.8	20.7	20
Chesapeake Math and IT South Public Charter			43.9	33.9			33.6	18.4	15.9	12
College Park Academy			46.5	43.3			29.2	24.8	17.8	14.9
Excel Academy Public Charter	14	13	29.8	25.3	17.5	17.4	11.3	5.3		
Imagine Andrews Public Charter	44.8	26.9	42.3	36.7	33.8	19.2	13.1	10		
Imagine Foundations at Leeland PCS	29.8	24	39.5	37	31.9	28.6	12.4	15	46.2	33.3
Imagine Foundations at Morningside PCS	25.9	23.1	24.7	15.2	13	7.7	3.9	3.3	11.1	0
Imagine Lincoln Public Charter	24.4	20.4	22.3	24	5	4.1	7.9	9.3	0	0
Turning Point Academy Public Charter	22.8	18.6	35.7	34.1	19.6	17.9	17.7	18.1	53.3	70
Prince George's County Charter	30.8	23.1	40.7	34.8	21.6	16.4	21.2	17.1	20.4	18.6
All Prince George's Schools	28.1	22.2	30.8	24.6	20.6	15.8	13.3	10	11.9	9.3
Saint Mary's County										
Saint Mary's Charter										
Chesapeake Charter School	71.2	37.5	75.9	16.7	66.4	50	54.1	0	100	0
Saint Mary's Charter Total	71.2	37.5	75.9	16.7	66.4	50	54.1	0	100	0
All Saint Mary's Schools	46.8	24.6	43.8	20.6	46.6	23.1	35.2	16	45.2	20.7
All Maryland Schools	41.4	23.6	41.8	22.4	39.7	21.2	27	11.9	31.2	13.3
TOTAL of all charter schools	24.6	14.2	33.0	21.0	21.3	12.5	18.7	11.5	18.5	10.4



**Division of Student Support, Academic Enrichment, and Educational Policy
Maryland State Department of Education
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