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LOCAL INTEREST IN CHARTER SCHOOLS IN BALTIMORE

The Maryland Charter Law passed in the 2003 session of the Maryland General Assembly.

The City Policy currently states that the BCPSS board will approve up to 3 charter schools in the first three years.

If 3 schools are approved for September 05, the next school will not open until September 2008.

Numbers as of May 23, 2004:

- The Center for Education Reform has had meetings with 18 individual and groups considering developing a plan for a charter school. Requested for information and meetings continue.
 - ✓ Neighborhood where there is interest in charter include, Northeast Baltimore, Southwest Baltimore (Union Square), East Baltimore (Patterson Park, and near Sojourner Douglass), Greenmount West
- The BCPSS has received 11 Letters of Intent.
- The BCPSS has received 1 complete and strong application from the City Neighbors Charter School.
- The BCPSS can expect at least 3 additional applications by September 1, 2004 seeking approval for a September 2005 opening.
- The BCPSS can expect at least 2 strong applications in the coming year for a September 2006 opening.
- Based on community meeting attendance and interested families filling out survey forms, two charter groups already know that interest would exceed slots available should they be approved.

These numbers are despite many unknowns:

- Community leaders working on charter school plans are doing so with little of the information they need:
 - ✓ How the finances will work, if they will be able to secure a facility (within the school system) or outside it (no support in this case).
 - ✓ What the appeal process might consist of at the local or state level
 - ✓ They have received no formal information from the BCPSS about its systems, processes (e.g. finance, special education)

Yet they move forward with an impressive amount of enthusiasm and determination.