

MARYLAND




Turn-around for low-performing students

The majority of Maryland's charter schools are in Baltimore, where reform-minded parents and educators have successfully organized top-notch schools. There is evidence of improved math and reading proficiency in the Old Line State, especially in the middle school years. In sixth grade, charter schools outperformed their conventional school peers by 6.4 percentage points in reading and 20.6 percentage points in math. Charter school students in seventh and eighth grades fared just as well, outperforming their conventional public school peers by an impressive 10 to 18 percentage points in reading and math.

Charter schools are also making significant progress in combating the achievement gap. Overall, 57.7 percent of African American charter school students scored at or above proficient in math, whereas only 37.7 percent of white students from conventional public schools performed at this level.³⁶

Two charter schools have closed in Maryland but neither was due to poor academic achievement. The reason for both is owing to district politics. (see glossary). The KIPP Harbor Academy was forced to close its doors when the Anne Arundel County School Board refused to lease space to the charter at a district middle school. The Potomac Charter School in Prince George's County suffered from low enrollment when tensions with the district became too burdensome to remain operationally stable. In the absence of objective authorizers, true accountability in Maryland is compromised.

Fast Facts

-  Maryland's charter school law has earned a "C" grade is ranked 32nd out of 41 laws in the country.
-  As of December 2008, there were 34 public charter schools serving 7,300 students in the state of Maryland.
-  An overwhelming number of Maryland charter schools are located in Baltimore.

36. "2008 Maryland School Report Card," Maryland Department of Education, www.mdreportcard.org/rcounty.aspx?WDATA=School.