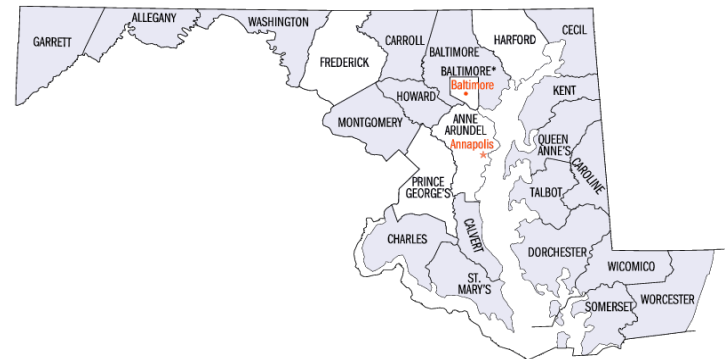




The Little Red Schoolhouse of Tomorrow

# Maryland Charter School Authorizers Conference

November 29, 2006





# Title I Funding

## Non Regulatory Guidance:

<http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/cschools/cguidedec2000.pdf>

*“For covered programs in which States and local educational agencies (LEAs) allocate funds by formula, a requirement that States and LEAs implement procedures that ensure that each charter school opening for the first time or significantly expanding its enrollment on or before November 1 of an academic year receives the proportionate amount of funds for which it is eligible within five months of the date the charter school opens or significantly expands its enrollment.”*



# Title I Funding

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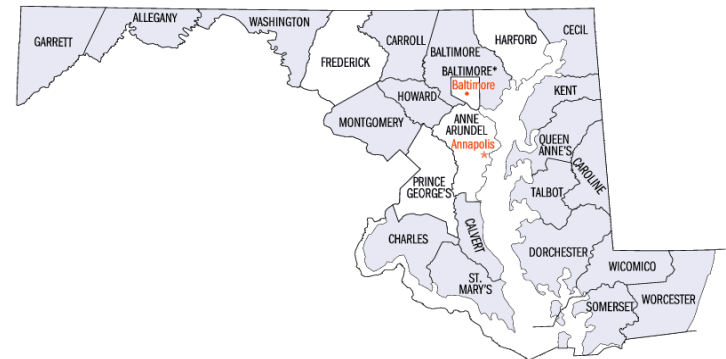
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# Charter School Evaluation

Presenter:  
Dr. Lauren Morando Rhim





## Evaluation Purpose:

- Fulfill a mandate of the Maryland Public Charter Schools Act of 2003 codified in the Code of Maryland, Education Article, §9-101, et seq. requiring MSDE to submit an evaluation of the public charter school program to the General Assembly by October 1, 2006.
- Assess the advisability of the “***continuation, modification, expansion, or termination***” of the Maryland Charter School Program.



# Evaluation Scope/Limitations

- Evaluation conducted in spring of 2006
- Intentionally did not look at the academic achievement during the first year of implementation—critically important to assess academic achievement in future evaluations
- Evaluation sought to:
  - *Document what has occurred since the charter school law passed in 2003*
  - *Provide data regarding first cohort of charter school*
  - *Inform future policy and practice*



# Data Sources

- District charter school policies (n=24)
- Stakeholders (n=74)
  - 30 LSS officials representing 23 districts
  - 17 parents
  - 19 founders/principals
  - 8 other stakeholders
- Application packets (n=13)
- Appeals (n=12)
- Parent satisfaction survey (n=557)
- Student demographics (n=3,313)
- Federal charter school grant policies and procedures



# Authorizer Policies

- MSDE model charter policy served as a foundation upon which districts built their unique authorizer policies and practices. Some policies infuse rigor or extend guidance while others introduce requirements that may be difficult for applicants to fulfill.
- Examination of application packets revealed that 11 of 13 application packets provide detailed guidance and assistance for charter developers
- Districts have developed rigorous application procedures that include:
  - intention form or letter of intent ( $n = 11$ )
  - concept proposal or prospectus ( $n = 10$ )
  - applicant interview ( $n = 8$ )
  - Sample forms/templates ( $n=10$ )
  - list of resources ( $n=9$ )
  - flowcharts/timelines ( $n=10$ )
  - application checklists ( $n=9$ )
  - evaluation criteria ( $n=10$ )
- In some districts, process is unnecessarily bureaucratic and time consuming (e.g., too many personnel involved and requirements related to facilities)



# Applications & Appeals

- 41 unique charter school applications have been submitted statewide:
  - *26 approved*
  - *15 denied or recommended for resubmission*
- Charter applications have generated 12 appeals to the State Board of Education
- Appeals are procedural as well as substantive in nature
- Conflicts associated with per-pupil funding continue to be a key focus of appeals and litigation between applicants and authorizers



# Parent Satisfaction

- Prevalent reasons parents characterized as influential in their decision to enroll their children in charter schools:
  - *good teachers and high quality of instruction (95%)*
  - *safety for their child (94%)*
  - *educational philosophy (88%)*
  - *academic reputation/high standards (88%)*
  - *interest in educational reform (76%)*
  - *promises made by charter school spokesperson (70%)*
- 92% of parents are satisfied with the charter school their child attends
- 93% of parents with students enrolled in spring of 2006 planned to continue to enroll their child in the charter school in fall 2006



# Barriers to Application/Approval

- Primary barriers identified in interviews and documents:
  - *newness of the charter sector,*
  - *access to facilities and facilities financing,*
  - *ambiguity regarding per-pupil allocation,*
  - *single authorizer system, and*
  - *limited operational autonomy.*



# Recommendations

- Foster acquisition of appropriate facilities and allocate additional resources for facilities
- Create alternate authorizer
- Implement funding policies that reflect State Board of Education's definition of commensurate
- Delegate responsibilities to charter schools
- Continue proactive role of State Board and MSDE



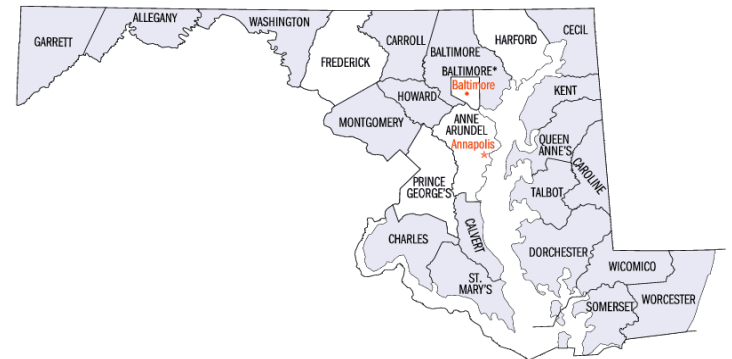
## Recommendations (con't)

- Foster development of efficient charter authorization policies and practices
- Continue/expand collaborative technical assistance
- Ensure policies do not limit access
- Establish data management systems to track academic growth of individual students



## The Little Red Schoolhouse of Tomorrow

# Now What? A Look at Accountability





# The Presenters

- **Pat Crain** – Director, Office of School Innovations – MSDE
- **Kathy Lane** – Director of Alternative Education and Safe Schools – Anne Arundel County Public Schools
- **Tammi Thomas** – Coordinator of New, Charter and Community Schools – Baltimore City Public Schools



# On Going Oversight

- Exercise public stewardship responsibilities
- Minimize administrative burdens
- Design information gathering systems
- Balance compliance with school autonomy
- Determine and communicate what information will be used to evaluate the school and the tools which will be used to gather the information



# On-Going Oversight

- Compliance- Monitor only that which is legally required
- Information Gathering- Create rubric/protocols designed to ensure tracking of required documentation
- Corrective Action- Outline steps for progressive sanctions



# Evaluation Tools

- Accountability Plan
- Compliance Plan
- On Site Review
- Annual Audits
- Progressive Sanctions



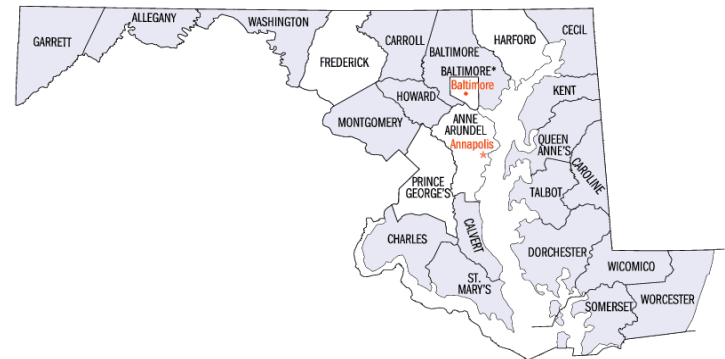
# Look Fors

- Academic Performance
- Financial Management and Solvency
- Governance and Organizational Viability



## 2006 Maryland Charter School

# Developing Accountability Plans





# WHY ACCOUNTABILITY?

- In exchange for autonomy there is oversight and accountability
  - National movements:  
Excellence/Achievement and School Choice
- Accountability is part of the role of the authorizer



## WHAT DOES ACCOUNTABILITY LOOK LIKE?

- Accountability is a system or framework that generates charter school authorizer functions
- Accountability starts at the early stages of reviewing an application, to contract negotiations, on-going monitoring, accountability plan development, reporting performance, and high stakes decisions
- Accountability protocols and processes should be comprehensive, streamlined, and realistic



## WHAT IS AN ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN?

- Accountability Plans are blueprints that clearly state expectations for school performance and operations
- Accountability Plans encompass the charter term and become part of the charter agreement
- Accountability Plans are developed by school leaders based on authorizer guidelines and requirements



# ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN FORMAT

- BCPSS Accountability Plan Guidelines and sample plan are based on lessons learned from other states: DC, IL, MA, MI, and BCPSS' School Improvement Plan
- Plan is organized into three categories: **Academic Program, Organizational Viability, and, Faithfulness to the Charter**
- Authorizer sets mandatory components and performance standards
- School operators have some discretion to establish goals and targets, select assessments, and identify strategies and activities



# ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN FORMAT

- Goals
- Performance Indicators
- Assessment Tools
- Baseline Data – Year 1 Data
- Annual Objectives - Year 2 Data
- Charter Term Target – Year 3 Data
- Strategies, Activities, and Milestones



# MANDATORY COMPONENTS

## ACADEMIC PROGRAM

- Reading/Language arts
- Math
- Science
- Graduation rate (*HS*)
- College readiness (*HS*)
  - PSAT, SAT II, AP courses
- College acceptance or career training programs (*HS*)

## ORGANIZATIONAL VIABILITY

- School profile data
- Parent and student satisfaction or involvement
- Governance
- Finances



## FAITHFULNESS TO THE CHARTER

- **Unique measures** related to the school mission, vision, academic design stated in the approved application.
- **Outcome measures** – demonstrate mastery or proficiency in content or skill
  - Ex: oral presentations, portfolios, exhibitions, research projects linked to a school's theme, etc.
- **Input measures** – tracking student participation in school's thematic focus to ensure exposure and to assess if the school's design/mission is implemented
  - Ex: Internships, upper level & specialty courses, field trips, etc.



## HOW ARE ACCOUNTABILITY PLANS USED?

- Accountability Plan performance is reported annually in each school's Annual Report
- Accountability Plan development (in Year 1) and progress towards meeting goals and targets (in Years 2&3) are assessed in annual site reviews
- Schools with repeated poor performance may receive BCPSS sanctions
- School Board will make high stakes decisions (renewal/revocation) based on school performance using AYP & Accountability plan data