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**TO:** Members of the State Board of Education

**FROM:** Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.

**DATE:** October 24, 2017

**SUBJECT:** U.S. Department of Education Charter Schools Program Grant

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**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this item is to provide an overview of responsibilities and a summary of the recent award of a grant to the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) from the U.S. Department of Education (USED) Charter Schools Program.

**BACKGROUND:**

The U.S. Department of Education (USED) Charter Schools Program manages several competitive grant programs. This award is part of the State Entities program. Eligible applicants were State Education Agencies, Statewide nonprofits supporting charter schools, and Governor's offices. For this competitive award process 21 state agencies or other entities applied. Nine awards were made. The MSDE received previous grants in this program in 2004 and 2007.

Currently, there are 49 public charter schools in Maryland. Thirty-nine of Maryland's 49 public charter schools received a subgrant from previous MSDE Charter Schools Program grants. The schools are located in five local school systems. There are 33 charter schools in Baltimore City, 10 in Prince George's County, three in Frederick County, two in Anne Arundel County, and one in St. Mary's County. Over 20,000 students are enrolled in Maryland charter schools, with an equal number on waiting lists. There are 31 nonprofit organizations operating charter schools.

Within the MSDE, the Office of School Innovations in the Division of Student, Family, and School Support (DOSFSS) is responsible for implementation of the Maryland Charter School Law. The Division provides technical assistance to local school systems, maintains data, and responds to inquiries from colleagues, local school systems, charter school operators, and the public.

Each local school system has a designated charter school liaison. Individuals in the DOSFSS meet with the local school system charter school liaisons five times a year. Attendance includes representatives from local school systems with and without operating charter schools. In the meetings, technical assistance is provided and updates are obtained from local school systems. Topics addressed in the past

year include oversight of enrollment lotteries, implementation of weighted lotteries, review of per pupil calculations, and the charter application process. The charter school liaisons 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.

The DOSFSS 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 DOSFSS is a resource to colleagues at the local school system level. The Division maintains accurate data on the numbers of schools, applications, and enrollment, and works with the Division of Curriculum, Research, Assessment, and Accountability to validate data for reports including Managing for Results. Annually, the performance and demographic data for charter schools is summarized. This information is included in a required annual report to the Maryland General Assembly.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The initial award of the USED Charter Schools Program Grant is \$5,490,859 for a two-year period, October 1, 2017 through September 30, 2019. The total award is \$17,222,222 over five years through September 30, 2022. Grants for years three through five will be dependent on federal appropriations. The USED link which provides information pertaining to the grant may be accessed at <https://innovation.ed.gov/files/2017/09/Marylandapp.pdf>. There are three areas of activities that will be launched with the grant.

**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 will be available for the start-up costs of new, expanding, or replicating charter schools that have been approved by the local boards of education. Subgrants will be awarded on a competitive basis. The MSDE projects three rounds of grant awards and approximately 20 awards.

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.

**Technical Assistance:** Technical Assistance activities will be developed to support the expansion, replication or creation of high quality public charter schools. Current and new charter operators will be offered assistance to determine readiness for replication or to launch a school, strategic leadership, and addressing the needs of all students.

Local School Systems will also benefit from technical assistance and professional development opportunities to help ensure that application and renewal processes are rigorous. For example, local

school systems will review Maryland's new accountability system for all public schools to determine whether there should be changes to the standards used to evaluate a charter school for renewal.

Sharing and Collaboration: The MSDE will support local school systems in identifying and disseminating promising practices in public charter schools. The project will include a statewide conference in year two highlighting practice sharing among charter schools and noncharter schools.

**ACTION:**

For information purposes only.

KBS/cb

# Maryland State Department of Education

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Maryland Public Charter Schools

U.S. Department of Education Grant

October 24, 2017

# Charter School Activities of Maryland State Department of Education

## Technical Assistance

- Provide guidance on implementation of the law.
- Convene all local school system liaisons.
- Meet individually with school system staff.
- Address inquiries from school systems, charter operators, parents, and the general public.
- Provide charter school information to MSDE Divisions.

## Monitoring/ Evaluation

- Maintain data for charter school enrollment, applications, performance and demographics.
- Complete reports.

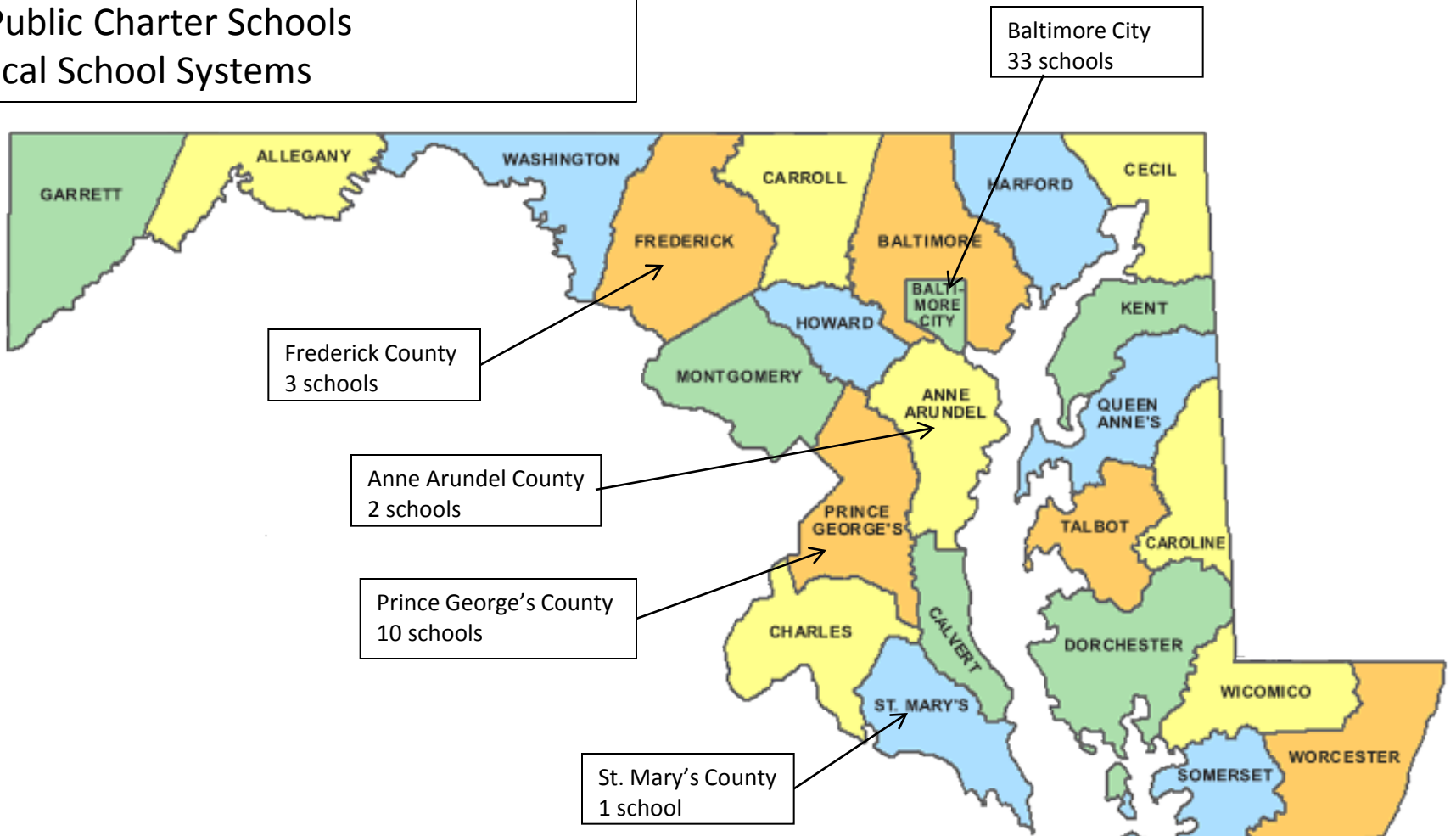
# Public Charter Schools in Maryland



- ◆ 49 Public Charter Schools
- ◆ 5 Local School Systems
- ◆ 20,000 K-12 Students
- ◆ 31 Nonprofit Operators

# Maryland Public Charter Schools – 2017-2018

49 Public Charter Schools  
5 Local School Systems



# U.S. Department of Education Charter Schools Program Grant

**The USED Charter Schools Program grant is competitive.**

21 Applicants —————> 9 Awards (IN, MD, MN, MS, NM, OK, RI, TX, WI)

<b>Initial Award</b>	<b>\$5,490,859</b>
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Initial Grant Period (2 years)	10/1/17 through 9/30/19
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<b>Total Award</b>	<b>\$17,222,222</b>
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Years 1 and 2	\$5,490,859
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Year 3	\$5,160,613
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Year 4	\$4,273,289
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Year 5	\$2,297,461
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\*Funding in Years 3 through 5 is contingent on Federal Appropriations.



# U.S. Department of Education Charter Schools Program Grant

The award of the USED Charter Schools Program grant will enable Maryland to:

- Support the startup, expansion, and replication of public charter schools and
- Promote quality through technical assistance activities for charter school applicants and local school systems.

# Activities of the Charter School Program Grant

## Subgrants to Charter School Developers

- 90 percent of funding.
- Competitive grant for start-up costs of new, expanding and replicating public charter schools, approved by local boards of education.

## Technical Assistance

- Charter School Operators: Assess readiness to start or expand a charter school.
- Local School Systems: Application and renewal processes, standards of effective authorizing.

## Sharing/Collaboration

- Professional development with focus on collaboration of charter and traditional schools.