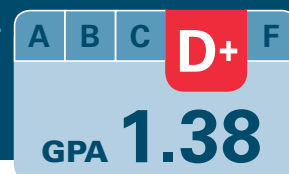


Maryland

State Policy Report Card 2013

State Rank: 17

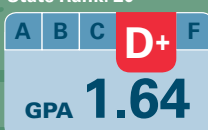
OVERALL
GRADE



Maryland has prioritized attracting and identifying excellent teachers in recent reform efforts, but it must do more to retain them. The state utilizes alternative pathways for teacher recruitment and has adopted better educator evaluations, but it does not require effectiveness to drive personnel or salary decisions and allows districts to prioritize seniority over impact in the classroom. Maryland does little to empower parents. The state does not provide meaningful information to parents regarding school and teacher performance. Public charter schools in Maryland are severely restricted, and accountability is very weak. Maryland could also expand state and mayoral authority to intervene in low-performing schools and districts. Finally, the state should no longer lock teachers into the existing outdated pension system and should instead offer a more attractive, portable retirement option.

Elevate Teaching

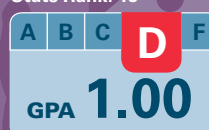
State Rank: 20



While Maryland is strong in some aspects of this area, the state must continue efforts to ensure effective teachers and principals are identified, retained, and rewarded. Maryland requires districts to evaluate educators on student growth and other key measures, although it should ensure these evaluations can meaningfully differentiate among teachers performing at different levels. The state shows commitment to recruiting top teaching talent; it requires alternative certification programs to be substantive and selective. But while ineffective performance is grounds for dismissal, seniority is permitted to drive personnel decisions. If Maryland wants to strengthen its teaching corps, it must treat them like professionals by tying evaluations to a four-tier rating system; holding alternative certification programs accountable; and requiring districts to use teacher effectiveness as the driving factor in placement, layoff, tenure, and compensation decisions.

Empower Parents

State Rank: 15



All families should have the information and access they need to provide a quality education, and no student should be forced to attend a low-performing school or be taught by a low-performing teacher. Therefore, Maryland must empower parents to take action by providing meaningful information on school performance and more high-quality school choice options. Maryland should grade its schools on an A-F letter system based on student achievement data and grant parents the power to petition local school boards to turn around failing schools. Also, the state could take stronger steps to increase the number of high-quality school choice options through public charter schools and a publicly funded scholarship for low-income students in chronically failing public schools. The state must also ensure accountability and high curricular standards from these options so parents are ensured high-quality choices.

Spend Wisely & Govern Well

State Rank: 25



Maryland has taken steps to ensure that school districts use resources wisely by requiring audits that include return-on-investment measures, which link spending data to academic achievement. The state should hold districts accountable by implementing governance changes where resources have been mismanaged. Currently, Maryland allows for limited state control of low-performing districts through gubernatorial appointments to school boards. To streamline accountability and better ensure that districts are focused on improving student outcomes, the state should permit full state and mayoral control of these districts. Additionally, to provide all teachers with career flexibility and retirement security, Maryland should reform its outdated pension system and move to a fully portable retirement plan.

Maryland Fast Facts

Total Students, 2010–11

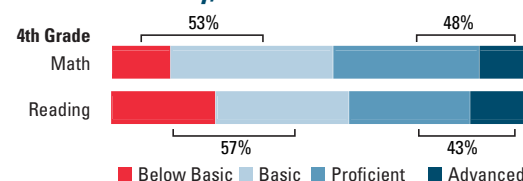
852,211

Sources: U.S. Department of Education, NCES, Common Core of Data (CCD), and 2011 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

NAEP Scale Score Rank, 2011

4TH GRADE	MATH	READING
	5	3
8TH GRADE	MATH	READING
	17	7

NAEP Proficiency, 2011





Elevate Teaching

Comprehensive Evaluation



Strong evaluation systems are foundational to improving teacher and principal quality; evaluations recognize excellence, support development, and address ineffectiveness. They must be meaningful, objective, and fair. Notably, Maryland's evaluations include multiple measures that weight student growth at 50% of the evaluation, although state law limits any single measure to account for no more than 35% of the total evaluation. The state's model only includes a three-tier performance rating system, however. To meaningfully differentiate performance among educators and to enable them to improve their practice based on substantive information, the state should require districts to incorporate a four-tier rating system in evaluations. Teacher evaluations should also include student surveys, and principal evaluations should include effective management of teachers. Additionally, the state's evaluation criteria should not be subject to contract negotiations, ensuring these systems will be subject to change based on student interests alone.

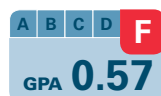
Momentum Builder: State has made recent progress in this policy area.

Anchor Objective: Foundational policy for meaningful education reform.

Gold Standard: Exemplar state policies that prioritize bold reform and put students first.

Objective	Score (0-4)
Teacher Evaluations	2
Principal Evaluations	2
Evaluations & Contracts	2

Use Evaluations for Personnel Decisions



Basing personnel decisions on performance is critical to building schools that retain effective teachers and make student achievement paramount. Maryland is behind in this area; specifically, the state does not use teacher effectiveness to drive decisions around teacher assignment, layoffs, or tenure. Schools do not have the authority to build and maintain an effective instructional team, including autonomy over hiring decisions and the dismissal of ineffective teachers. Furthermore, when laying off teachers during a budget-induced reduction in force, state law is silent regarding the criteria for layoffs; it neither requires performance to be the basis for layoffs, nor does it prohibit seniority from being used as a consideration. With regard to tenure, teachers receive this status after serving a short three-year probationary period. Attainment and revocation of tenure are not tied to performance. Prioritizing students and great teachers requires that performance, evident through strong evaluations, be the driving influence for all personnel decisions.

Objective	Score (0-4)
Ending Forced Placement	0
Staffing Decision	1
Tenure Attainment & Maintenance	1

Value Effective Teachers



To encourage a high-quality, diverse workforce, professional pay should be based on performance rather than other non-classroom factors such as seniority or degrees held. Maryland law is silent regarding automatic pay increases for teachers with master's degrees and whether school districts can adopt compensation systems that tie pay increases to measures of effectiveness. Local school boards determine teacher salaries through collective bargaining. To foster an environment aimed at attracting and retaining effective teachers, Maryland should expressly prohibit automatic pay increases for teachers with master's degrees alone and require districts to link salary increases to performance measures that prioritize student outcomes.

Objective	Score (0-4)
Reward Performance with Pay	2
Reform Salary Schedules	2

Alternative Teacher Certification



Maryland requires candidates to hold a bachelor's degree with a 2.75 GPA, as well as either a major in the content area or passage of a content-area exam. To strengthen its alternative certification programs, Maryland should require all candidates to demonstrate content mastery through an exam, instead of an undergraduate major, and should raise selectivity standards with a higher GPA or other criteria. Maryland has a well-defined monitoring and review process for alternative certification programs, as well as standards that the programs must meet to continue operation. The state has not yet linked teacher effectiveness data back to the programs beyond the residency year of the programs. Maryland collects teacher-specific information and plans to improve this policy over the coming year.

Objective	Score (0-4)
Alternative Certification Pathways	3
Alternative Certification Accountability	1



Empower Parents

Empower Parents with Information

A B C D **F**
GPA **0.60**

There are a number of steps that Maryland must take to empower parents with information and options. First, the state must require that every PK-12 school receive an annual report card that includes an A-F letter grade based on student achievement. Maryland should require notifying parents when their children are placed with an ineffective teacher and allow parents access to teacher evaluation information upon request. Additionally, Maryland should require districts to obtain parental consent for a student to be placed with an ineffective teacher. To empower parents with options, Maryland should establish a parent trigger law that allows a majority of parents to band together at the grassroots level and petition to turn around low-performing schools throughout the state.

Momentum Builder: State has made recent progress in this policy area.

Anchor Objective: Foundational policy for meaningful education reform.

Gold Standard: Exemplar state policies that prioritize bold reform and put students first.

Objective	Score (0-4)
School Report Cards	1
Parent Notification	0
Parent Trigger	0

Increase Quality Choices

A B C D **F**
GPA **0.14**

Maryland must ensure its students are not trapped in failing schools by increasing the number of high-quality school choice options for parents. Currently, Maryland allows for the formation of public charter schools, but authorization and autonomy are limited through local districts. Maryland should focus on growing high-performing charter schools through non-district authorizers and stronger, more robust accountability for both schools and authorizers, including closure triggers for low-performing schools. Further, the state should create a publicly funded scholarship program for low-income students in chronically failing public schools to attend a private school that meets certain accountability provisions.

Objective	Score (0-4)
Opportunity Scholarship	0
Charter Establishment & Expansion	1
Charter Accountability	0

Provide Comparable Resources for All Public Options

A B **C+** D F
GPA **2.60**

Children stuck in chronically failing schools should have an option to attend another school of their choice without being punished by the state through reduced funding. As an exemplary state, Maryland generally requires county boards of education to provide public charter schools with funding comparable to what traditional public schools in the counties receive, including funding from local tax revenues. The State Board of Education has prohibited skimming and prevented authorizers from requiring charter schools to purchase services from them. However, Maryland should strengthen charter schools' ability to purchase or lease unused facilities and should establish dedicated financing programs for charter school construction.

Objective	Score (0-4)
Fund Fairly	4
Enable Equitable Access to Facilities	0
Charter Facilities Financing	1

Methodology

State policies were analyzed and assigned an individual score from 0 to 4, with 4 representing the strongest lever for reform and the most common sense policy for students. Anchor policies were assigned a 3x weight. Grade point averages (GPAs) were calculated based on grouping policies by category. For the full methodology, evaluation rubric, and detailed analysis of each policy, please visit the website at reportcard.studentsfirst.org.

GPA Sample Calculations

	Score	Weight	Subtotal
Objective 1	3	x 3	= 9
Objective 2	2	x 3	= 6
Objective 3	4	x 1	= 4
	7		19
GPA = Subtotal ÷ Total Weight GPA = 19 ÷ 7 = 2.71			



Spend Wisely & Govern Well

Promote Governance Structures that Streamline Accountability



The ability to turn around failing schools is often hampered by bureaucratic red tape and politics. Maryland allows for limited state control of low-performing districts. The governor has the authority to appoint a specific number of members to school boards in low-performing districts to sit on the board and make decisions in conjunction with elected officials. In Baltimore, the governor and mayor share responsibility for appointing the school board. The state should enhance state intervention authority and allow for full state control of low-performing schools and districts. Maryland should provide authority to other mayors in districts that do not meet expectations.



Momentum Builder: State has made recent progress in this policy area.



Anchor Objective: Foundational policy for meaningful education reform.



Gold Standard: Exemplar state policies that prioritize bold reform and put students first.



Objective	Score (0-4)
Mayoral & State Control	1

Spend Taxpayer Resources Wisely to Improve Outcomes for Students



Given the limited resources available for public education, states must ensure that districts spend as many dollars as possible in the classroom rather than in bureaucracy and that the dollars invested drive the greatest change. Maryland empowers data-driven decisionmaking by requiring audits that include return-on-investment measures, which link spending data to academic achievement. However, the law should enable the state to initiate governance changes at school districts when resources are mismanaged.



Objective	Score (0-4)
Fiscal Transparency	3
Management Alternatives	3
Class Size	4

Make Teacher Pensions Portable and Fair



Attracting a high-quality workforce will require a competitive retirement plan. Portable retirement options, such as 401(k) plans, are an essential component of compensation packages and make the teaching profession more competitive. It is a classic win-win for teachers and districts. Under current policy, Maryland requires employees of traditional schools and charter schools to participate in its defined benefit plan. These plans promise teachers a payout based on years of service and salary, not the actual amount contributed to or earned through the fund. If teachers leave before reaching retirement age, they risk losing a significant portion of their savings. To provide career flexibility and ensure sustainability of the existing system, Maryland should move to a portable employer-sponsored retirement plan and permit public charter schools to opt out of the plan.



Objective	Score (0-4)
Pension Reform	0



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A movement to transform public education

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StudentsFirst is a bipartisan grassroots movement of more than 2 million members nationwide, working to focus our education system on what's best for students. Today, too many of America's children are not getting the quality education they need and deserve. StudentsFirst is helping to change that with common sense reforms that help make sure all students have great schools and great teachers. We are working to ensure educators are valued for the critical role they play in kids' lives, families have high-quality school choices and a real say in their child's education, and our tax dollars are spent wisely on what works for kids. Launched by former Washington D.C. Public Schools Chancellor Michelle Rhee in December 2010, StudentsFirst has successfully helped pass more than 70 student-centered policies in 17 states, and our movement continues to grow.