

December 4, 2018
For immediate release

New state report cards set baseline for Baltimore City's public schools

(Baltimore, MD)—Today, the Maryland State Department of Education published report cards for most of the state's schools, created in response to the federal Every Student Succeeds Act.

"These new report cards are one snapshot of what's going on in our schools," said Dr. Sonja Brookins Santelises, City Schools' CEO. "They reflect data mostly from last year—data that we've already begun using ourselves to identify what's working in our schools and where we need improvement."

Report cards include a star rating for each school, based on academic and non-academic factors. For Baltimore City Public Schools, of the 166 schools* that received a report card, almost three-quarters received two or three of a possible five stars.

- 3 schools scored five stars (1.8%)
- 19 scored four stars (11.4%)
- 45 scored three stars (27.1%)
- 76* scored two stars (45.8%)
- 23* scored one star (13.9%)

** Six schools that received ratings closed at the end of the 2017-18 school year. Three of these schools received one star, and three received two stars.*

"As I've visited schools this fall, I've been energized by what I've seen—more reading of challenging, relevant content in all grades, more writing, increased access to the arts, hands-on activities that make science and math come to life for students, and expanded extracurricular programming," said Dr. Santelises. "While the report cards confirm that we have lots of work ahead, the work is already underway. The reports also show schools with three, four, and five stars across the city, telling us that students are succeeding regardless of neighborhood or background."

Chief Academic Officer Sean Conley said, "Under the blueprint for success we launched last year, we are emphasizing literacy as the key to academic growth across subject areas, expanding access to opportunities that meet all of students' needs and interests, and developing strong principals and teachers through expanded professional learning opportunities. We introduced a new math curriculum last year, and this year we launched a new curriculum in English language arts for kindergarten through 8th grade that includes a much stronger writing component."

As part of the blueprint, this year 55 schools are receiving additional staff and intensive training in literacy, social-emotional learning, or restorative practices. These schools will become models for other schools across the district, and 40 more schools will be added next year to receive this intensive level of support in one of these areas.

“We will continue to push for additional resources to make sure all our schools have programs that support our students and reflect their interests and passions,” said Dr. Santelises. “And we will continue to provide input to the Kirwan Commission and state lawmakers as they take up the issue of education funding during the 2019 legislative session. Lastly, we will continue to work with the state to make sure that this new rating system is fair and accurately reflects what our schools and students can and are doing by comparing their performance to similar schools across the state.”

Some schools do not receive ratings because of their specialized nature (e.g., separate public day schools that serve students with disabilities) or because they have insufficient data in certain categories. Moving forward, report cards will be issued annually, drawing on the previous year’s data.