

Urban Education Study Tour

Profile of Study Tour Districts

Baltimore

Baltimore has started to recover from a prolonged period of disinvestment and population loss – but serious challenges remain. Since 1950, Baltimore’s population has declined from a high of 950,000 to about 635,000, as residents have left the city for the surrounding counties. According to the U.S. Census, the city has a 24% poverty rate, the 6th poorest in the nation, while 35% of Baltimore’s children live below the poverty line (twice the national average). At the same time, housing values across the city have doubled since 2000 and median household incomes and tax revenues also are increasing. After decades of out migration, analysts are projecting a slight increase in Baltimore’s population through 2030.

These statistics reflect two real and conflicting trends in Baltimore – one of stubborn, concentrated poverty that cuts many residents off from opportunities to improve their lives, and the other of increasing confidence in the city as a place to live, work and play. As people move back into Baltimore neighborhoods for the historic architecture, vibrant culture, and sense of community, the challenge remains of helping lower-income residents in severely depressed areas find decent housing, education and jobs. How to weave the ‘two Baltimores’ into a more cohesive whole remains a matter of significant and intense debate.

ABAG’s Education Affinity Group was created in 2001. The Education Affinity Group enables funders to learn about worthy education initiatives, including local and national school reform efforts. The opportunity for funders to meet on a regular basis, to share experiences and expertise regarding education funding, and to learn about promising educational efforts has resulted in increased interest and support for education in Baltimore City. In 2006, several Education Affinity Group members embarked on two more collaborative efforts which were stimulated by presentations to the Education Affinity Group: the Baltimore Education Research Consortium and Supporting Public Schools of Choice (SPSC).

Baltimore City Public School System

Number of Students: 82,381 (Maryland State Department of Education)

Number of Schools: 207 Schools (Baltimore City Public School System)

- 111 Elementary Schools and Elementary/Middle Schools
- 23 Middle Schools
- 46 High Schools
- 23 Charter, New, and Community Schools (Elementary, Middle and High Schools)

Student Profile

Ethnicity:

African American	88.8%
White (not of Hispanic origin)	8.3%
Hispanic	1.9%
Asian/American Indian/other	1.0%

Free and Reduced Meal students:

Elementary	82%
Middle	78%
High	56%

Maryland Report Card - Baltimore City 2007 Results:

The Maryland School Assessment (MSA) requires students in grades 3 through 8 to demonstrate what they know about reading and math; test measures basic as well as higher level skills.

Reading:

- Grade 3: 69% proficient and above
- Grade 4: 74% proficient and above
- Grade 5: 60% proficient and above
- Grade 6: 54% proficient and above
- Grade 7: 44% proficient and above
- Grade 8: 47% proficient and above

Mathematics:

- Grade 3: 62% proficient and above
- Grade 4: 73% proficient and above
- Grade 5: 64% proficient and above
- Grade 6: 42% proficient and above
- Grade 7: 26% proficient and above
- Grade 8: 24% proficient and above

The Maryland **High School Assessments** (HSA) are end-of-course tests that students take as they complete the appropriate high school level course. These courses include English 2, Government, Algebra/Data Analysis, and Biology. Passing the HSAs is a Maryland graduation requirement beginning with the Class of 2009.

Baltimore City 2006 High School Assessment Tests Results:

- English 2- 37% passing
- Biology- 48% passing
- Government- 54% passing
- Algebra- 37% passing

Graduation Rate for Baltimore City High School students: 60% (4,118 graduates)

Boston

The Boston Public School (BPS) System is home to the oldest public school in the country (Boston Latin School, founded 1635). Today, the BPS comprises 144 schools teaching 56,190 students (24,430 **K-12**; 11,890 **Grades 6-8**; 18,870 **Grades 9-12**).

The student body, like the city, is diverse:

- 41% Black
- 35% Hispanic/Latino
- 14% White
- 9% Asian
- 2% Multi-racial/other
- 74% of BPS students are eligible to receive free & reduced price meals
- 18% of BPS students are “English Language Learners” or “Limited English Proficient”

The Class of 2006 4-year graduation rate was 59% (the rate adjusts to 67% if transfers in are excluded). Of the estimated 77,000 school-aged children living in Boston, about 20,400 (27%) do not attend BPS. Of those, approximately 12,200 attend private and parochial schools and 4,500 attend public charter schools.

Dr. Carol R. Johnson is the new BPS superintendent, beginning her tenure in fall 2007. The BPS is governed by a 7-member School Committee appointed by the Mayor from nominees recommended by a broad-based Nominating Committee. Members serve 4-year terms. The approved budget for 2007-8 is \$747,485,524.

The funding scene in Boston is quite organized. There is a long standing group of funders – The Boston Education Funders (BEF) - who meet on a regular basis throughout the school for a learning community, bringing in key researchers and public officials for learning, discussion and dialog. BEF has deliberately decided not to become a pooled donor fund, but rather to concentrate on sharing knowledge and best practices. There are, however, many long standing successful and innovative collaborative funding efforts such as EdVestors, a philanthropic connector that brings together individual and organizational funders to focus on urban education reform. There are also standing donor collaboratives in the areas of parent organizing and school yard redesign.

Pittsburgh

This is a promising yet fragile moment for education in southwestern Pennsylvania. The city's major universities have been gaining steadily in national and international recognition for the quality of their peer-reviewed research and education programs. For example, the University of Pittsburgh, with major sustained funding from NIH, is moving aggressively to translate more of its biomedical research into patents and, eventually, startup companies.

Pittsburgh is also moving up in the rankings of venture capital investment. On a per capita basis it has moved from 36th in 1997 to 11th in 2006 in venture capital investment. Several promising new university spin-off companies have attracted significant investment from outside the region, and a number of nationally prominent companies have now located offices and laboratories in Pittsburgh in order to strengthen their technology partnerships with universities.

With new leadership in the Pittsburgh Public Schools there is visible momentum and public support for redesigning the system of pre-k to 12 education. Nonetheless, in a school district unable to do much bragging in recent years about student achievement, another challenge persists, namely, population decline. Demographic projections for the city schools, now at 29,400 students, indicate a possible drop to 22,000 over the next six years. To take on this challenge, the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center announced with great fanfare a contribution of \$100 million toward a goal of \$250 million for the Pittsburgh Promise, to ensure that more city students will complete postsecondary education.

Meanwhile, however, population growth and job growth remain frustratingly stagnant, and opportunities for the region's citizens to build successful careers here remain far too limited. In their efforts to diversify and rebuild the regional economy since the devastating job losses thirty years ago, the region's elected officials and other leaders have struggled to stimulate job creation in industry sectors related to the strengths of the region's universities. A large number of technology-based economic development experiments have been tried with significant state and private-sector funding, but the region's industry base continues to be unable to generate a sufficient number of jobs even for all of the college graduates who would like to remain, much less for those in the growing "Pittsburgh Diaspora" who would like to return. While there are strong indications that trends are in the right direction, a demoralized attitude continues to be pervasive among the region's citizens. Pittsburgh needs a series of visible successes to begin to convince its citizens to begin to believe again that the future can be bright.

Facts from the 2000 Census

City of Pittsburgh Population		Pittsburgh Public Schools	
Population:	334,563	Student Population:	29,400
White	68%	White	37%
African American	27%	African American	61%
Asian	3%	Asian	1%
Other	2%	Other	1%

Educational Attainment Level for adults 25 years or older

Less than 9 th grade	5%	Associate Degree	6%
9 th – 12 th grade no diploma	14%	Bachelors Degree	14%
High School Graduate	32%	Graduate Degree	13%
Some College, No Degree	16%		