

Statement on Decision by Maryland Superior Court Regarding Charter Schools

By Jeanne Allen, President, The Center for Education Reform

Funding Must Follow Students. Decision Impacts all State Deliberations

Maryland's highest court justly ruled yesterday that charter schools are entitled to be funded the same way all other public schools are funded. By doing so, the Court affirmed that charters are indeed constitutionally protected public schools. This is a victory for charter school families in Maryland and nationwide.

After several appeals, the Superior court upheld the decision by the State Board of Education, which ruled that the "commensurate" funding for charter schools should be defined as funding equal to what is spent on conventional public school students.

This is a spending adjustment, not a loss to districts or a funding increase to taxpayers. When public school students choose to go to other public schools, monies should be fluid and follow them, and not be allocated based on formulas and previous enrollment numbers.

Charter schools are not solely about educating individual students. The charter school reform is also a tool to help all schools learn how to better tie funding to education. The Maryland decision creates a path that will allow school districts to explore how they can better fund and deliver public education, regardless of the what kind of public school a child attends.

All state lawmakers involved in creating these options for students will consider the decision by this court – and others – that requires all public schools, no matter what kind, to be funded equally. Money should follow students. That is the clear conclusion from this decision.

To set up an interview with Jeanne Allen, please call Jon Hussey at 1-800-521-2118. For information about The Center for Education Reform (CER) go to www.edreform.com.