

Charter School Law

- 8) Maryland's charter school law is currently ranked as the worst law in the nation according to the National Alliance of Public Charter Schools and the Center for Education Reform. What is an example of a good charter school law? What are the most important characteristics of a good charter school law?
- 9) Under current Maryland Law, the local school district (authorizer) signs a contract or a "charter" granting the operator (i.e. Frederick Classical Charter School, Inc., a non-profit) the ability to run the school with a unique philosophy of education. However, under the same law, the staff at a Maryland charter school are employees of the local school district, *not* the charter school itself. The vast majority of other charter states allow hiring teachers outside the local school district. As a result, Maryland charter operators do not have the authority to give implicit direction to ensure the vision of the school is achieved because the staff works for an employer *other* than the school itself. While Frederick County Board of Education does grant charters, it does not give operators the freedom to choose the tools to carry out that charter.
- Do you believe that the operator should serve as the direct employer of the staff?
 - What role should the authorizer serve in holding the operator accountable to its contract?
- 10) In Frederick County, charters are granted for 4 years.
- What do you believe is a reasonable time frame for charters to be operated before we have an accurate picture of its efficacy?
 - What metrics will you consider most important to evaluate efficacy?
- 11) Nationally, only a very small percentage of charter schools are unionized and the percentage of unionized charter schools continues to decline. In Maryland, 100% of charter schools are unionized because the law requires it. As a result, Maryland charter school operators have little ability to innovate in the area of operations like staff recruitment, hiring process and teacher qualifications. It also means that Maryland's charter schools have less ability to remain financially solvent since they have no input into salary negotiations but must pay the union-negotiated wages.
- Do you support or oppose changing Maryland's law to allow charter schools to be non-union? Why or why not?

Charter School Policy

- 12) It is the view of the Frederick Classical Charter School, Inc. that charter schools in Frederick County are not funded adequately. It is a fact that the regular schools' operating budget spends \$12,800 per student while the charter schools in Frederick County only receive about \$8,800 per student. That is \$4,000 (30%) less per student. Moreover charter schools receive \$0 of the capital budget.
- Do you believe charter schools are fairly funded? If not, what would you do to ensure more equitable funding?
- 13) In conclusion, please explain what your role will be as part of a charter school authorizer and why that role is important to all citizens in our community and beyond.