

# BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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**To: The Honorable Stephanie Rawlings Blake  
Mayor  
The Honorable Jack Young  
City Council President**

**From: Dr. Sonja Brookins Santelises  
Chief Academic Officer  
Baltimore City Public Schools**

**Re: 12-0007R**

City Schools' vision for College Access and Career Readiness is to establish a district-wide culture that encourages and directs appropriate post-secondary options for all students. It is to build a college-going culture for all students that prepares them to successfully enter college (without the need for remediation) or the world of work upon graduation. We recognize and understand the diverse and unique needs of our students. Interwoven into the structure of our schools is the belief that students and parents, in partnership with the school, will participate in activities to ensure college and career readiness.

Earning a college degree increases a person's income, employment opportunities and quality of life. Understanding this, City Schools has begun the process of working to remove barriers to student matriculation to college. These efforts include working with non-traditional (charter, transformational and accelerator) schools; increasing family awareness of graduation requirements; improved college awareness and college admissions process training for school counselors; ensuring that students and families are exposed to the FAFSA application process and college and career readiness information in middle, and support for students and families through the use of new technology including Naviance software that aids in post secondary career planning.

We recognize that continued work is needed to address these barriers; however, our efforts are yielding positive results. In 2006, the high school graduation rate (Leaver)<sup>1</sup> was 60.6% and the Fall College Enrollment rate was 44.7%. In 2010 the graduation rate (Leaver) was 65.9% and the College Enrollment rate was 46.7% (BERC, August 2011).

<sup>1</sup> Leaver rate from MSDE, [mdreportcard.org](http://mdreportcard.org).

**GREAT KIDS  
GREAT SCHOOLS**



Tremendous progress has also been made in the dramatic expansion of Advanced Placement (AP) course offerings and enrollment throughout the district, as shown in the table below.

	2004	2007	2011	% change 2004-2011
<b>Number of AP courses</b>	44	58	138	214%
<b>Number of students enrolled in AP courses</b>	823	1,188	2,669	224%
<b>Number of AP scores of 3 or higher</b>	249	373	499	100%

*Source: College Board and SMS Attendance File as of May each year*

City Schools is encouraged that our dedicated school counselors and staff are assisted in their efforts by four substantial partnerships, described below:

- The CollegeBound Foundation has staff in over 20 high schools and works collaboratively with the high school guidance counselors providing college advisory and admission services.
- College Summit, another college advisory partner, targets first generation college students and works in some of our non-traditional schools.
- Collegiate Directions, Inc. (CDI) started working with City Schools last year, focusing on three pilot schools. CDI has since expanded to 11 schools, providing college guidance and admission training sessions for high school guidance counselors. These sessions are topic-based, and the scope of work is geared toward improving college advising, data tracking and student support and advocacy.
- Finally, in September 2011, our newly implemented college data tracking system, Naviance Succeed, was introduced. The Naviance Succeed program has four dimensions: college planning, course planning, career planning, and success planning. There is an additional family engagement component of the program called Family Connection, the student and parent-facing website.

City Schools expects that this collaboration will continue to increase college access awareness and college readiness and post-secondary career options for our students.