

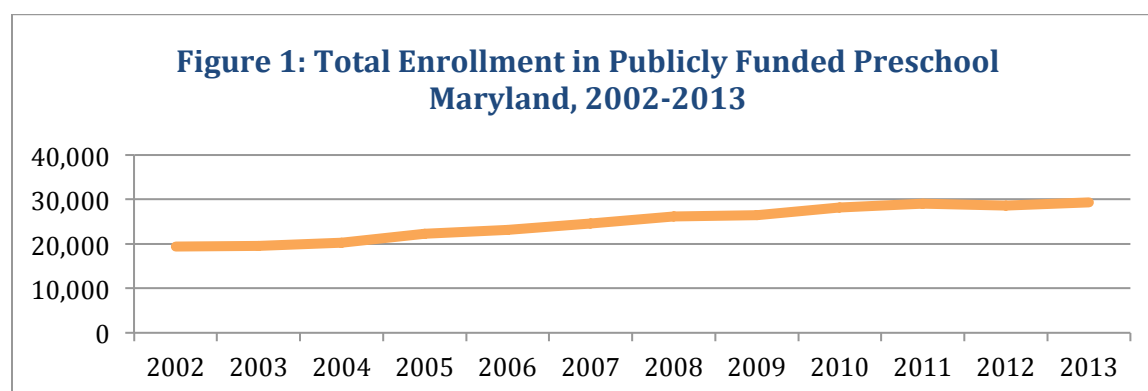
Ready at the Starting Line: Who Attends Publicly Funded Preschool in Maryland?

February 2014

Maryland provides publicly funded preschool for economically disadvantaged 4-year olds and some 3-year olds.¹ This data brief describes enrollment trends in publicly funded preschool in Maryland, presents data on enrollment by race and as a percentage of the state's population of 4-year children, and shows how state funding for publicly funded preschool has changed over time.

Enrollment Trends

Since 2002, enrollment in Maryland's publicly funded preschool has increased 51.9%, from 19,359 students in 2002 to 29,407 in 2013. Increased enrollment is tied to the 2002 *Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act*, which required all local school districts to provide access to preschool education for disadvantaged 4-year olds by 2008 (Figure 1).

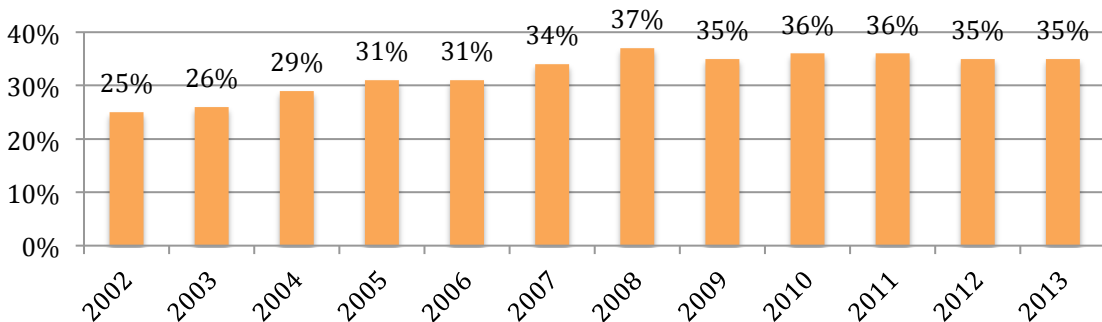


Source: Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE).

As shown in Figure 2, 35% of 4-year old children in Maryland were enrolled in publicly funded preschool in 2013 compared to 25% in 2002. Since 2008, the percentage of 4-year olds enrolled has fluctuated between 35% and 37%. A much smaller percentage of the state's 3-year olds are enrolled in publicly funded preschool, about 4% in 2013.

¹ By policy, 3-years are not eligible for publicly funded preschool, but some are enrolled under special conditions.

Figure 2: Percentage of State Population of 4- Year Olds Enrolled in Publicly Funded Preschool in Maryland, 2002-2013

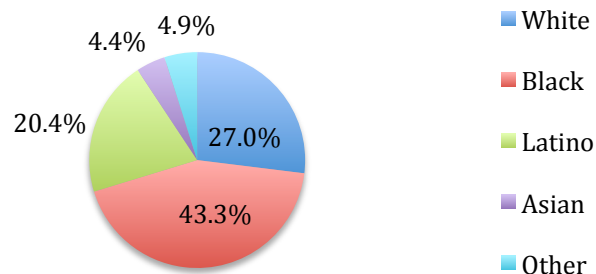


Source: 2002-2010: National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), 2012; <http://nieer.org/publications/annual-state-pre-k-reports-state-preschool-yearbooks>. 2011-2013: MSDE. Calculations are our own for 2011-2013

Enrollment Differences by Race

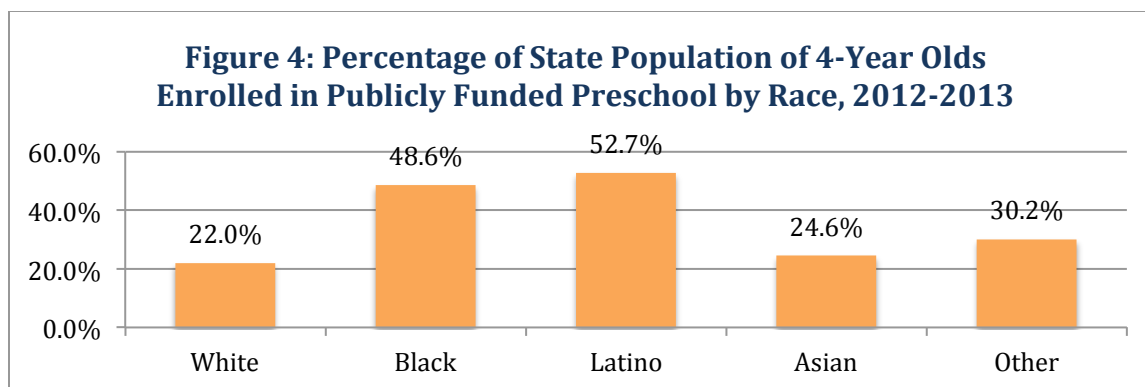
Figure 3 shows that Black children comprised 43.4% of total publicly funded preschool enrollment in 2013 compared to 27% White, 20.4% Latino, and 4.4% Asian. However, looking at the composition of preschool enrollment does not tell us what *proportion* of each racial group attends preschool.

Figure 3: Preschool Enrollment by Race, 2012-2013



Source: MSDE. Note: Asian includes Census categories of Asian and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. Other includes American Indian and Two or More Races.

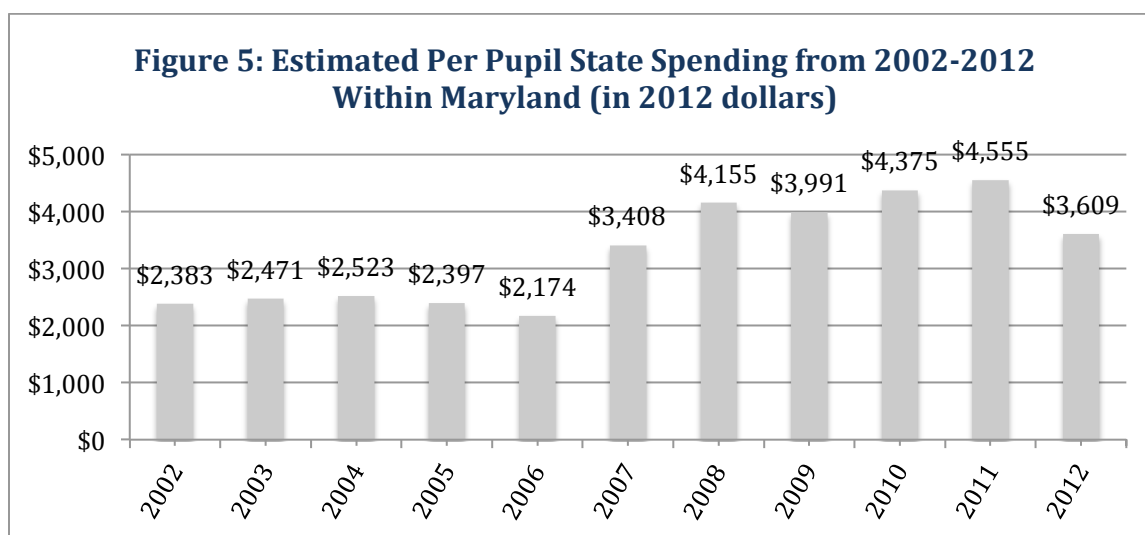
Figure 4 displays enrollment in publicly funded preschool as a percentage of the total population of 4-year old children by race. Latino children are more likely to be enrolled in state funded preschool than other groups of children. In 2013, 52.7% of all Latino 4-year olds were enrolled in Maryland's publicly funded preschool. Almost half (48.6%) of all 4-year old Black children were enrolled in preschool compared to 24.6% of Asian and 22.0% of White 4-year olds in the state. Because of changes in how the Census collects racial/ethnic data, the new "two or more races" category, included here with American Indian in "other," suggests that overall, the current program is reaching high proportions of minority students, particularly Black and Latino students.



Source: MSDE. Calculations are our own. Note: Asian includes Census categories of Asian and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. Other includes American Indian and Two or More Races.

How Has Funding Changed Over Time?

Maryland does not provide a dedicated funding source for preschool education. The 2002 *Bridge to Excellence Act* included increases in education funding intended to cover part of the expense of mandated preschool. Increased state aid was phased in from fiscal year 2003 to fiscal year 2008. Local districts provide the largest proportion of preschool funding. Estimated total preschool spending (local, state, federal) per child enrolled was \$8,599 in 2012 (NIEER, 2012). Figure 5 shows estimated state per pupil spending for preschool. From 2002 to 2006 state funding for preschool fluctuated between \$2,100 and \$2,500 per student. Beginning in 2007, per pupil spending increased from \$2,174 in 2006 to \$3,408 in 2007. Average per pupil spending continued to increase until 2012, when state funding for preschool decreased 20% from the year before.



Source: NIEER, 2012.