

Trends in Maryland Public School Enrollment: Student Poverty

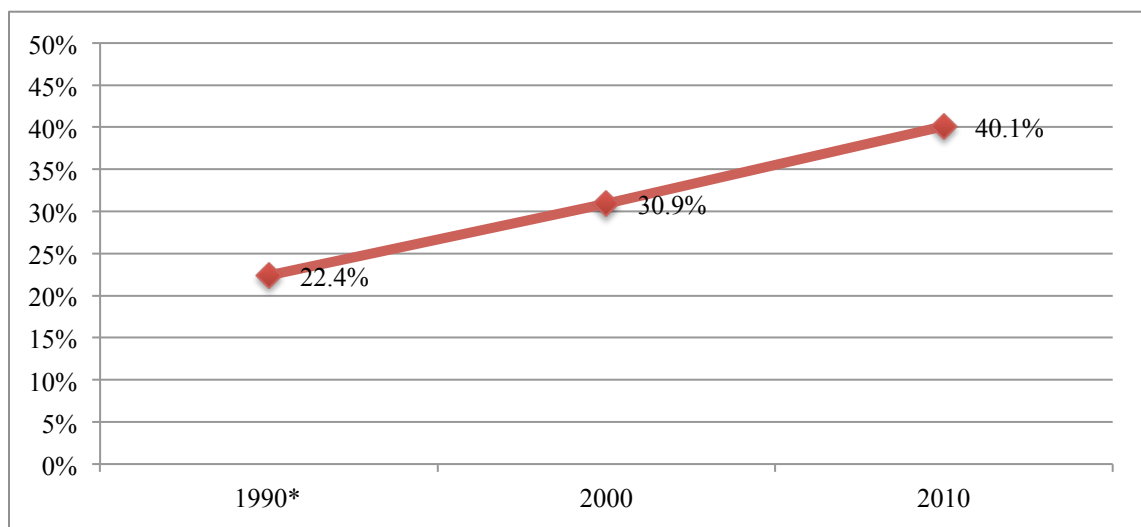
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Public school enrollment in Maryland is becoming poorer. The percentage of students from low-income families in Maryland public schools nearly doubled over the past 20 years.¹ In 1990, 22.4% of students were low-income compared to 40.1% in 2010. This data brief examines where these changes are taking place and how they have impacted the social-economic composition of schools.

Poverty in Maryland Schools is Rising

Scholars have long known the detrimental impact that an individual's poverty level has on academic achievement. Indeed, recent research finds a widening achievement gap between high- and low-income students (Reardon, 2011). But it is less widely acknowledged that high levels of school wide poverty—or concentrated poverty—create additional challenges for school systems and the students they serve. The economic composition of a school's student body is associated with educational outcomes of individual students independent of their family background. In other words, high concentrations of low-income students are associated with lower student achievement, regardless of an individual student's family income. Understanding how the socio-economic composition of schools is changing is essential for providing the appropriate supports and policies that students, families and communities need.

Figure 1. Percent low-income students in Maryland 1990-2010.



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Common Core of Data*.

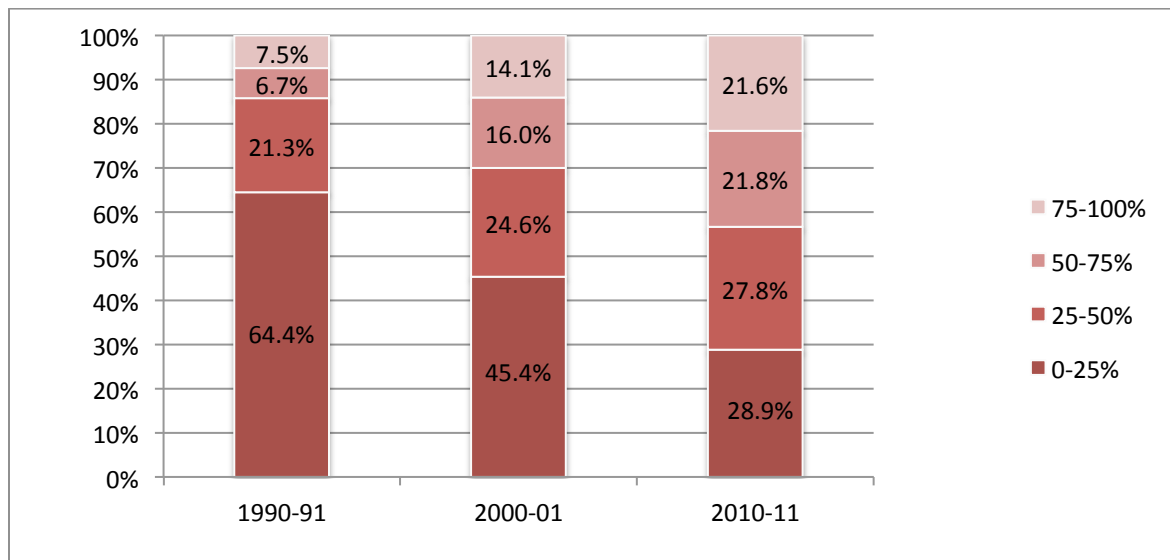
¹ Eligibility for free and reduced price meals (FRPM) is used to measure the number of students from low-income households.

DATA BRIEF

Economic Concentrated of Students

As the percentage of low-income students increased, the concentration of low-income students in schools increased as well. The percentage of Maryland schools with 75-100% low-income students increased three-fold, from 7.5% of schools in 1990 to 21.6% in 2010. By 2010, almost half (43.4%) of Maryland public schools had poverty levels of 50% or greater.

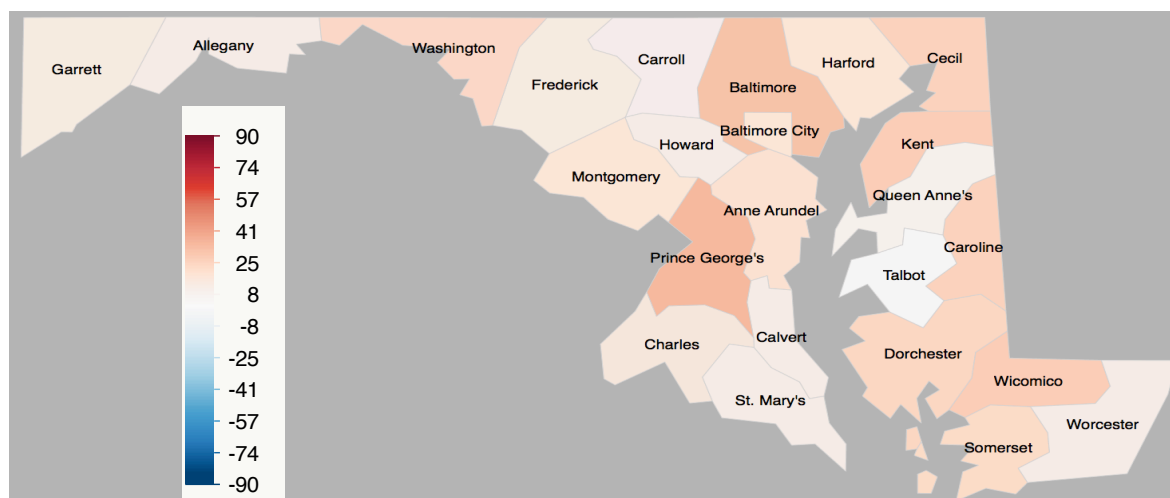
Figure 2. Percentage of Maryland public schools by level of low-income concentration, 1990, 2000, & 2010.



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Common Core of Data*.

Trends Across Districts

Over the last two decades, the percentage of low-income students increased in all districts in Maryland, ranging from an increase of 4.8 percentage points in Talbot County to 34.1 percentage points in Prince George's County. Other counties with large increases in low-income students include Baltimore County and several districts on the eastern shore.



DATA BRIEF

Table 1. Average Percentage Point Change in Low-Income Students by District, 1990-2010

District	1990 percent	2010 Percent	Percentage Point Change
Talbot	30.4	35.2	4.8
Queen Anne's	12.5	22.6	10.1
Carroll	5.1	15.7	10.6
Worcester	29.4	40.9	11.5
St. Mary's	16.7	28.8	12.1
Howard	3.8	16.1	12.3
Calvert	9.0	21.4	12.4
Allegany	36.1	48.9	12.8
Garrett	35.2	48.9	13.7
Frederick	8.7	22.8	14.1
Charles	13.0	28.4	15.4
Montgomery	13.4	30.6	17.2
Harford	10.0	27.4	17.4
Baltimore City	66.5	84.0	17.5
Anne Arundel	8.7	27.9	19.2
Somerset	43.7	65.6	21.9
Washington	21.5	43.9	22.4
Dorchester	35.9	59.5	23.6
Cecil	13.1	37.7	24.6
Caroline	26.9	52.5	25.6
Kent	23.2	49.6	26.4
Wicomico	24.5	52.0	27.5
Baltimore	11.3	42.3	31.0
Prince George's	20.3	54.4	34.1
State Total	22.4	40.1	17.7

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Common Core of Data*.

To read the full report, go to <http://www.mdequity.org/research/inequities>