

# Charter Schools Revisited:

*A Decade After Authorization,  
How Goes the North Carolina  
Experience?*

by John Manuel



## Executive Summary

**C**harter schools are hybrids of nonprofits and publicly-funded schools. As nonprofits, they receive freedom from many government regulations, and they are free to raise money from foundations, corporations, and individuals. Their volunteer governing boards are not subject to local boards of education, and they are free to recruit the best teachers. Yet charter schools are public schools in that anyone is eligible to attend, the schools do not charge tuition, and they receive normal state funding per student. The idea behind charter schools is that freedom from various rules and regulations will create room for innovation and then transmit fresh ideas to the public school system.

North Carolina first authorized charter schools in 1996. In the ensuing years, each of the available 100 charters has been awarded under the law. Some have been revoked or relinquished, meaning 138 schools have at one time or another held a state charter. Efforts to raise or eliminate the cap have been made in the North Carolina General Assembly since the cap was reached in the year 2000. But the state needs to know how charter schools have performed before expanding the experiment. So how do these schools perform in educating the state's children compared to traditional public schools? The law establishing charter schools outlined six purposes that provide a broad measure for success.

The N.C. Center for Public Policy Research first evaluated charter schools in 2002 and found them to be meeting only half the purposes set out for them in enabling legislation. We found that charter schools: (1) gave teachers new professional opportunities; (2) expanded school choice in the 47 counties that then had charter schools; and (3) were held accountable for student performance by being subject to the state accountability program.

However, the Center found charter schools fell short on the statutory goals of: (1) improving student learning; (2) serving as laboratories of innovation for the traditional public schools; and (3) increasing learning

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opportunities for all students. Moreover, the Center found charter schools much more likely to be racially segregated than the public schools as a whole, despite a state law requiring charter schools to reasonably reflect the racial make-up of their school district. However, for many of the schools, there was a lack of five full years of data to provide a clear trendline on charters' performance. Based on these findings, the Center concluded that the state should continue the charter schools experiment but should not allow for expansion or removal of the cap limiting the numbers of charters in the state to 100. The Center said the state should have five full years of accountability testing data in hand before deciding whether the cap should be raised or eliminated. The data are now in hand. What do the data tell us about charter school performance?

### **Academic Performance**

The state accountability testing program, known as the ABCs, assigns each school a performance composite, which is a percentage of students scoring at or above grade level (Achievement Level III). Any school with a performance composite where less than 50 percent of the students make expected academic growth is identified as a low-performing school which may need special assistance.

Charter schools achieving 70–100 percent performance composites rose from 37.5 percent in 1997–98 to 39.7 percent in 2000–01 to 68.9 percent in 2004–05. Results for 2005–06 are based on a revised accountability model, and the results are not comparable to those from previous years. In 2005–06, 43.4 percent of charter schools achieved performance composites between 70–100.

Charter schools registering a performance composite score below 50 percent dropped from 58.4 percent in 1997–98 to 44.9 percent in 2000–01 to 5.5 percent in 2004–05. In 2005–06, 16.1 percent of charter schools had a performance composite below 50.

Based on the data from 1997–2005, charter schools seemed to be improving, as measured by end-of-grade testing results. However, the 2005–06 data, while not comparable to the data from previous years, raise serious questions about the performance of charter schools.

The ABCs program classifies schools according to seven categories of performance. The top four categories are Honor Schools of Excellence, Schools of Excellence, Schools of Distinction, and Schools of Progress. The remaining three categories are No Recognition, Priority Schools, and Low-Performing Schools. In 2005–06, there were 99 charter schools in North Carolina: seven were Honor Schools of Excellence, none were

*Schools of Excellence, 12 were Schools of Distinction, 15 were Schools of Progress, 23 were No Recognition schools, 23 were Priority Schools, and six were Low-Performing Schools. Thus, 23 percent of charter schools were in the no recognition category, meaning these schools did not attain the academic progress the state thinks they should have, given the make-up of their student bodies. When No Recognition Schools, Priority Schools, and Low-Performing Schools are combined, an alarming 52 percent, or more than half, of the charter schools fell into the lowest three categories, as determined by the state ABCs testing program. Statewide, 48.1 percent of schools fell into the bottom three performance categories in 2005–06.*

*In 2005–06, 52.7 percent of charter schools made adequate yearly progress, as required by the federal No Child Left Behind Act, 47.3 percent did not, and the adequate yearly progress of eight charter schools is under review. Statewide, 45.2 percent of schools made adequate yearly progress, and 54.8 percent did not.*

*In February 2007, the N.C. Department of Public Instruction released for the first time four-year cohort graduation rates for 2006 by school. While, statewide, 68.1 percent of students graduated in four years, only 55.3 percent of charter schools students graduated in the same amount of time.*

*Furthermore, another strong qualitative study in North Carolina indicates that charter school students do not perform as well on end-of-grade tests as demographically similar students who remain in the traditional public schools. While advocates may argue that the state's accountability testing does not measure all the benefit students receive from attending charter schools, it is the measure the state uses to gauge classroom performance. For all their accomplishments, charters come up short on this measure.*

*The study by researchers Helen Ladd and Robert Bifulco of the Terry Sanford Institute of Public Policy at Duke University found that students in charter schools do not do as well on end-of-grade tests as their counterparts in traditional public schools, and that some of the difference is attributable to the charter schools themselves rather than to unobservable characteristics of the students. The researchers conclude that the academic gains of charter school students in both reading and math is significantly less than would have been the case had those same students remained in traditional public schools.*

*Other studies have found that while charter school student performance typically trails that of traditional public schools for charters that are newly opened, the difference in performance disappears for charters that*

have been operating for three or four years. Ladd and Bifulco conducted additional analysis to control for the length of time a charter had been opened. They found that the negative effects of charter schools in North Carolina “remain statistically significant and large even for schools that have been operating for five years.”

### ***Racial Balance***

*Of further concern is that charter schools remain more racially segregated than the traditional public schools as a whole. The issue has not been resolved since the Center originally examined charter schools in 2002. Of the 97 charter schools operating in 2000–01, 30 had student populations more than 80 percent non-white, despite a state law indicating charter schools must “reasonably reflect” the racial make-up of their school district. In 2003–04, 24 of 93 charter schools then operating were more than 80 percent non-white, and 15 of these 24 had student bodies that were more than 95 percent African American. In 2005–06, 39 of 99 charter schools had more than a 50 percent minority student population. Twenty-six of these schools were 80 percent or more non-white, and 14 of those were more than 95 percent African American. Four of the 99 charter schools were 100 percent African American. Two schools—Haliwa-Saponi Tribal and CIS Academy—have Native American student populations over 85 percent.*

### ***Transfers of Innovations in Charter Schools to Public Schools***

*Many charter schools have adopted a number of innovative approaches to learning, ranging from arts-based instruction at schools such as Arts Based Elementary in Winston-Salem and Sandhills Theater Arts Renaissance School in Vass, to international themes at schools such as Carolina International School in Harrisburg and Exploris Middle School in Raleigh, to Socratic dialogue at schools such as Socrates Academy in Charlotte and Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy in Mooresboro. While some innovations may have seeped into the traditional public schools, the Center finds there is little evidence that any have been adopted on a large-scale basis. Thus, the notion that charter schools could serve as a testing ground for educational innovations that ultimately could move into the public schools appears to be unfounded.*

### ***Management and Financial Compliance***

*When the Center examined the charter school experiment in 2002, 14 charters had closed or had their charters revoked, eight of them at least in part because of financial management problems. Concerns about financial management have eased somewhat after adoption of a 2002 requirement that charter school applicants spend a year planning before they can open their doors to students. The Center commends the N.C. Department of Public*

*Instruction and the State Board of Education for implementing this requirement, which was recommended by the Center in our 2002 evaluation.*

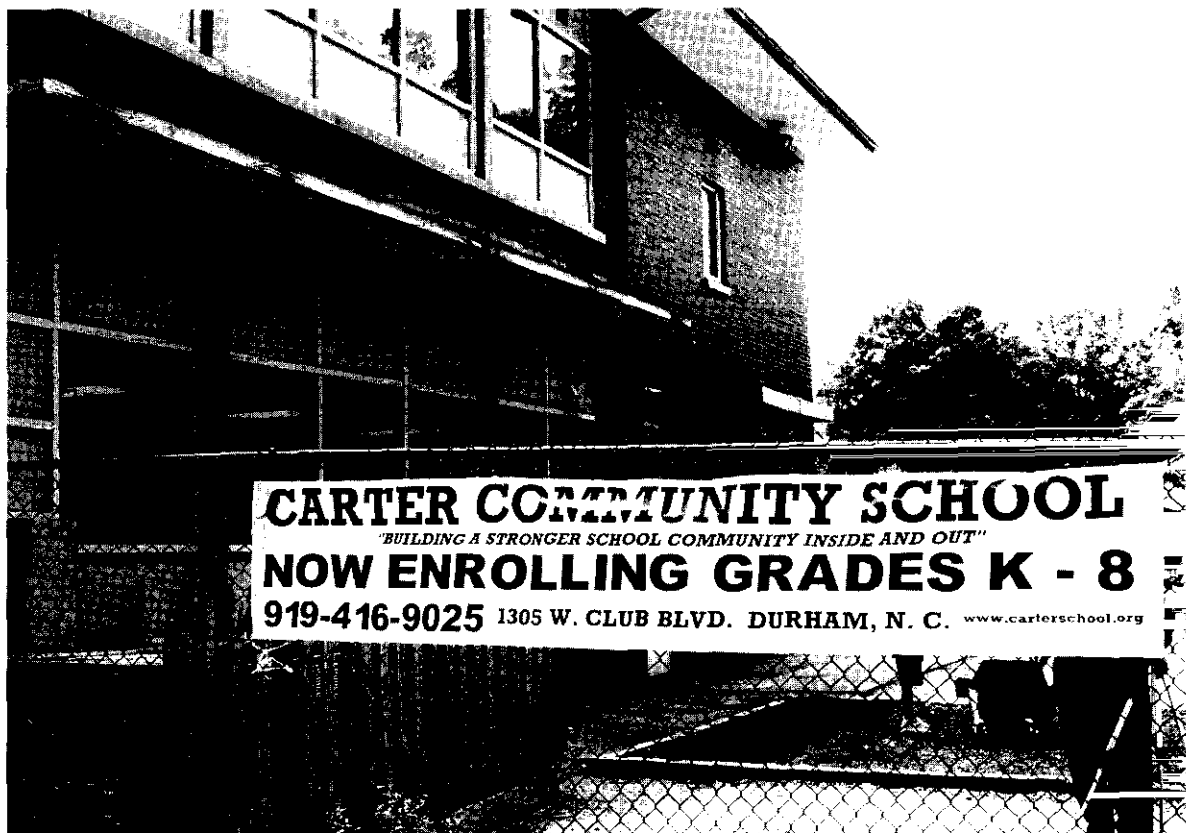
*However, financial concerns have not abated entirely. The total number of charter schools that have closed or had their charters revoked has now reached 27 of the total number of 138, or 19 percent, mostly because of insufficient enrollment or financial "noncompliance." For example, the State Board of Education revoked the charter of Imani Institute Charter School in Greensboro in July 2006. The school had not filed financial audits from 2001–02 through 2004–05. Baker Charter High School, authorized to operate in the Wake County Jail, had its charter revoked in October 2006, effective June 30, 2007. State regulators declared the books of the schools could not even be audited due to inadequate record-keeping and alleged that students attended classes no more than an hour a day.*

### **Conclusion**

*These findings by the Center—low overall academic performance compared to public schools, greater racial segregation, little if any innovation that was replicated in the traditional public schools, and problems with management and financial compliance—do not provide sufficient justification for expansion of the state's charter schools.*

*In 2004–05, the most recent financial data available, charter schools received a total of \$189,582,506—federal (\$16,472,667), state (\$112,798,911), and local revenue (\$60,310,928). That's a lot of money, especially when more than half of the charter schools fell in the bottom three performance categories, as determined by the state's ABCs testing program. North Carolina needs to make sure that charter schools are worth the money. Charter schools are a worthy experiment only if we get a return on our investment.*

*The Center offers three recommendations that could improve the records of charter schools across the state and thus warrant expansion of the charter school program if it is eventually successful: (1) charter schools that have failed to meet academic growth expectations for five consecutive years should be placed on immediate probation and given two years to achieve expected growth or must give up their charters; (2) revoked charters should be awarded to proposed schools that provide convincing evidence they will be able to meet the state's academic growth standards, with a preference given to granting charters in counties that do not already have a charter school; and (3) the North Carolina General Assembly should not increase the current cap of 100 charter schools it authorized by statute in 1996. Charter schools are an experiment, and it was and is important to try them. But, more attention needs to be given to the question of performance and whether these schools provide the "sound basic education" the State Constitution requires for all of North Carolina's children before expanding the experiment.*



Nearly a decade has passed since the General Assembly launched the charter schools experiment in North Carolina. Currently, more than 27,000 children are enrolled in the state's charter schools supported by 1,898 teachers. A total of 138 schools have been chartered, though in keeping with the limit prescribed in the law, no more than 100 have been in operation at any one time. Schools are operating in 46 of the state's 100 counties, serving all manner of populations and employing a variety of educational philosophies and techniques.

Charter schools are public schools operated as private nonprofits and subject to fewer regulations than the traditional public schools. For example, charter schools frequently do not have cafeterias or bus service, and they can use the savings to provide academic programs. Charter schools are free to the public and if demand requires it, students are chosen by lottery.

The original language in the 1996 law that authorized charter schools in North Carolina said charter schools were intended to: (1) improve student learning; (2) increase learning opportunities for *all* students, with a special emphasis on at-risk or gifted students; (3) encourage the use of different or innovative teaching methods; (4) create new professional opportunities for teachers, including "opportunities to be responsible for the learning program at the school site;" (5) provide expanded choice for parents and students within the school system; and (6) hold charter schools accountable for student performance.<sup>1</sup>

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*John Manuel is a free-lance writer and editor residing in Durham, N.C. and the co-author of the Center's 2002 study on charter schools in North Carolina. Photographs used to illustrate this article are from Carter Community School, a Durham charter school with themes of promoting financial independence and good citizenship. Photographs are by Karen Tam.*

This article analyzes charter school performance in four areas — academic performance, diversity, educational innovation, and financial stability. First and foremost is academic performance. Schools are in the business of producing learners who must be ready to advance to the next level. How are charter students performing compared to those in traditional public schools? Are there qualities inherent to charter schools, individually or as a whole, that cause students to either excel or lag behind their counterparts in the traditional public schools?

Diversity is a second issue the Center examines. The law establishing charter schools states, “Within one year after the charter school begins operation, the population of the school shall reasonably reflect the racial and ethnic composition of the general population residing within the local school administrative unit in which the school is located or the racial and ethnic composition of the special population that the school seeks to serve residing within the local school administrative unit in which the school is located.”<sup>2</sup> Some charter schools have been specifically created to attract and promote learning among certain racial and ethnic groups. Others, by virtue of their location or by the make-up of the applicants, end up catering to homogenous populations. Are charter schools meeting the legal requirements in the law?

Third is the question of educational innovation. Are charters successfully introducing innovations in curriculum and other areas? Are these innovations being adopted by traditional public schools? The final section deals with the question of financial stability. Can charter schools survive financially? Are they capable of managing their finances responsibly?

Some charters have reached the “promised land,” occupying beautiful buildings and ranking among the top schools in the state academically. Others have foundered after just a few years, unable to raise sufficient capital or to manage their finances responsibly. Many are still charting their path, secure in the belief that they have what it takes to succeed, but still seeking improvements in facilities and academics.

Waiting at the docks are more than a dozen applicants, eager to launch their own charters with a fresh crew of teachers and students. Each year, they compete for the handful of slots made available by schools that have closed or had their charters revoked. In 2005, 12 applicants competed for a single open slot. In 2006, 17 applications came in to the N.C. Office of Charter Schools, which forwarded 15 to the N.C. Charter School Advisory Committee. Ultimately, nine were considered by the State Board of Education for five open slots. This situation invariably leaves many applicants disappointed, along with parents, students, and teachers who look to charter schools as an alternative to the traditional public schools.

Seven bills were introduced in the 2005 N.C. General Assembly to allow more charter schools or to authorize new sources of funding. One bill would have raised the cap by 10 charter schools each year, and another would have eliminated the cap entirely. None of the seven bills was enacted in 2005. When the legislature convened in May 2006, 39 of 57 Republican House members and three of 63 House Democrats co-sponsored a House Joint Resolution to allow the General Assembly to consider legislation removing the cap.<sup>3</sup> Once again, the effort was unsuccessful, but the partisan nature of the request demonstrated how the ground has shifted under the charter schools movement. When the initial legislation passed, a coalition of progressive Democrats, Republicans, and African-American lawmakers agreed to enter into an experiment with hopes of improving public education generally. Now, at least in the halls of the General Assembly, support for charter schools lies primarily with Republican legislators. Legislators from both sides of the aisle will need to decide whether the charter experiment in North Carolina is worthy of continuing or expanding, and if so, by how much.

In the 2007 session of the N.C. General Assembly, several bills have been introduced concerning charter schools. Some would raise the cap on the number of charter schools in the state (H.B. 30, S.B. 39, and S.B. 590), while others would eliminate



the cap altogether (H.B. 252, H.B. 416, and S.B. 106). Several bills address funding issues related to charter schools (S.B. 105 and S.B. 589), including giving access to lottery proceeds to charter schools (H.B. 152). By contrast, House Bill 236 concerns low-performing charter schools and directs the State Board of Education to terminate the charter of a school that fails to meet expected academic performance growth for seven consecutive years (see the Center's recommendation on p. 67).

Four years ago, the Center recommended that the General Assembly maintain the cap of 100 charter schools based on concerns about overall academic performance, a lack of racial diversity, and poor fiscal management on the part of certain schools. The General Assembly followed that recommendation, refusing to pass bills that variously called for raising the cap to 135 schools or for eliminating the cap altogether. The Center recommended that the General Assembly wait until it had five full years of student performance data before it considered raising the cap. These data are now in hand.

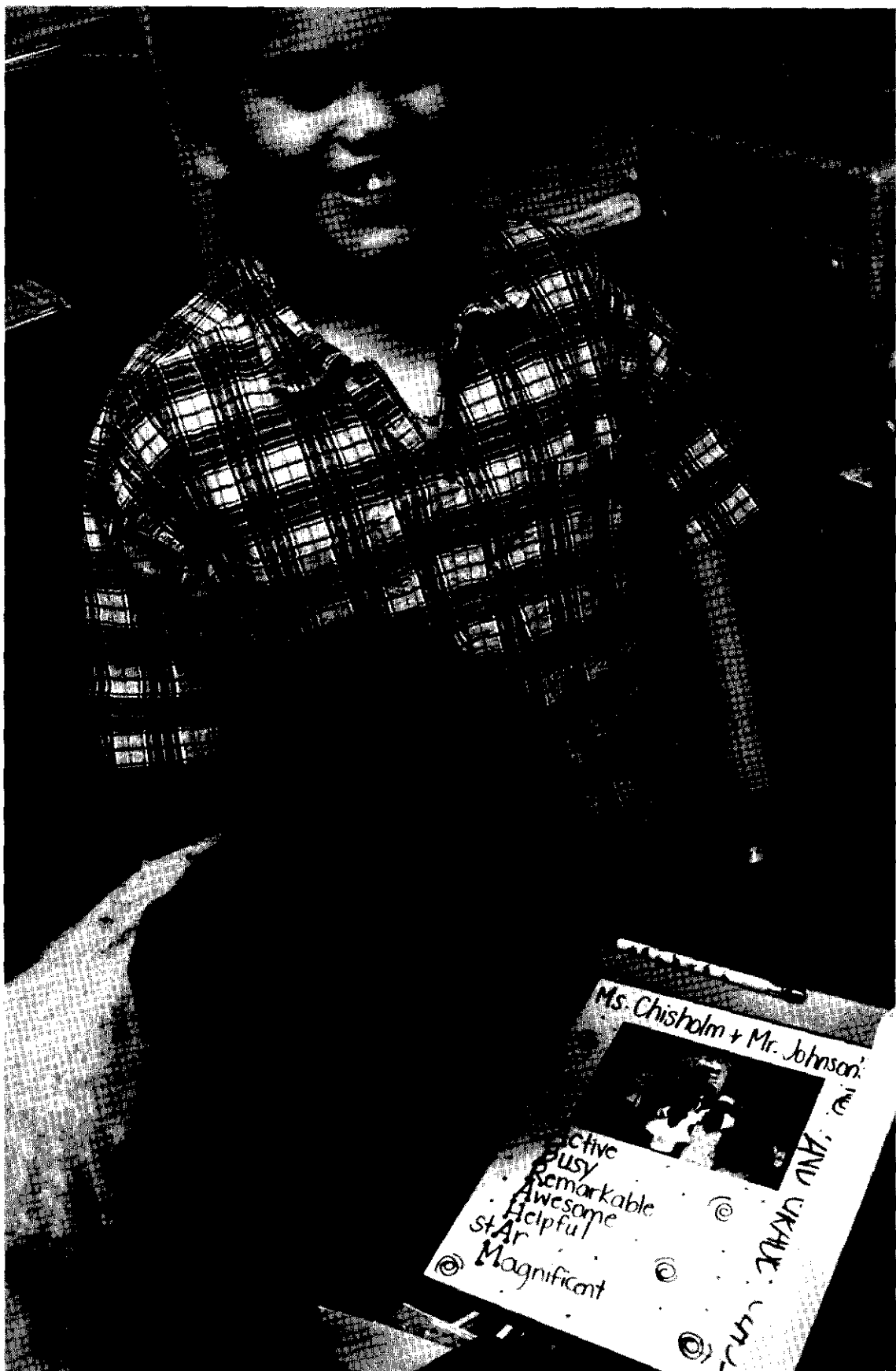
### **The Tale of the Tests—The Record of Charter Schools on Student Achievement**

**P**ressure to raise the cap on the maximum number of charter schools allowed in the state began almost as soon as the cap was reached. In the summer of 2002, when the General Assembly gave strong consideration to raising the cap, many of the charters had only been open for a year or two, raising the question of whether they had sufficient time to demonstrate the effectiveness of the charter curriculum and teaching. Now, the N.C. Department of Public Instruction has five full school years of state end-of-grade testing data on almost all charters. In addition, several studies, including one national and one specific to North Carolina, provide a specific comparison of charter schools to their traditional public school counterparts.

The state accountability testing program, known as the ABCs, assigns each school a "performance composite," which is a percentage of students scoring at or above grade level (Achievement Level III). Any school with a performance composite of less than 50 where students fail to make expected academic growth is identified as a low-performing school which may need special assistance. In this respect, charter schools showed consistent progress from 2000–05, but dropped back in the 2005–06 school year. Charter schools achieving 70–100 percent performance composites rose from 37.5 percent in 1997–98 to 39.7 percent in 2000–01 to 69.8 percent in the 2003–04 school year, before dropping slightly to 68.9 percent in 2004–05. Schools registering a composite score below 50 percent dropped from 58.4 percent in 1997–98 to 44.9 percent in 2000–01 to 14.4 percent in 2003–04 to only 5.5 percent, or five schools, in 2004–05 (see Table 1, p. 12). One charter school was classified as Low-Performing in 2003–04, down from 14 in 2000–01. And, no charter schools were labeled Low-Performing in 2004–05.

Academic performance results for 2005–06 are based on a revised accountability model used for the ABCs, and the results are not comparable to those from previous years. In 2005–06, 43.4 percent of charter schools achieved performance composites between 70–100, and 16.1 percent had a composite score below 50 percent. Six charter schools—CIS Academy, Healthy Start Academy, Maureen Joy Charter School, PreEminent Charter School, Sallie B. Howard School, and Torchlight Academy—were Low-Performing.

The ABCs program also assigns each school a status designation, which reflects the school's growth and performance composite. Schools were originally assigned to one of four categories: Exemplary Growth, Expected Growth, No Recognition, or Low-Performing. In 2003–04, the state added new classifications, including Honor Schools of Excellence, Schools of Excellence, Schools of Distinction, Schools of Progress, No Recognition, Priority Schools, and Low-Performing Schools. *(continues on page 24)*



**Table 1. Performance of All N.C. Charter**

		Year Opened	Met Expected Growth	Met Exemplary Growth	Performance Composite	Met Expected Growth	Met Exemplary Growth	Performance Composite	Met Expected Growth	Met Exemplary Growth	Performance Composite
Charter School / Grade Span		1997-1998			1998-1999			1999-2000			
	A Child's Garden School	Franklin									
	K-5	2001	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
1	Alpha Academy	Cumberland									
	K-8	2000	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
2	American Renaissance Charter School	Iredell									
	K-5	1998	NA	NA	NA	No	No	62.0	No	No	60.1
3	American Renaissance Middle	Iredell									
	6-8	1999	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	No	No	68.6
4	Ann Atwater Community School	Durham									
	4-9	2001	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
5	Arapahoe Charter School	Pamlico									
	K-8	1997	No	No	74.0	Yes	Yes	88.5	Yes	No	83.4
6	Arts Based Elementary	Forsyth/Winston-Salem									
	K-5	2002	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
7	ArtSpace Charter School	Buncombe									
	K-8	2001	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
8	John H. Baker Charter School	Wake									
	9-12	1997	ID	ID	ID	Yes	Yes	32.4	Yes	Yes	15.9
9	Bethany Community Middle School	Rockingham									
	6-8	2000	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
10	Bethel Hill Charter School	Person									
	K-6	2000	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
11	Brevard Academy	Transylvania									
	K-8	1998	NA	NA	NA	No	No	83.5	Yes	No	86.3
12	Bridges Charter School	Wilkes									
	K-8	1997	No	No	51.8	No	No	54.0	No	No	53.7
13	C. G. Woodson School of Challenge	Forsyth									
	K-12	1997	No	No	37.8	No	No	38.6	Yes	No	44.8
14	Cape Fear Center for Inquiry	New Hanover									
	K-8	2000	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
15	Cape Lookout Marine Science H.S.	Carteret									
	9-12	1998	NA	NA	NA	ID	ID	ID	Yes	Yes	41.5
16	Carolina International School	Cabarrus									
	K-9	2004	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
17	Carter Community School	Durham									
	K-8	1998	NA	NA	NA	ID	ID	ID	No	No	31.8

# Schools on End-of-Grade Tests from 1997-2006

Met Expected Growth	Met Exemplary Growth	Performance Composite	Met Expected Growth	Met High Growth	Performance Composite	Met Expected Growth	Met High Growth	Performance Composite	Met Expected Growth	Met High Growth	Performance Composite	Met Expected Growth	Met High Growth	Performance Composite	Met Expected Growth	Met High Growth	Met Expected Growth
2000-2001		2001-2002			2002-2003			2003-2004			2004-2005			2005-2006			
NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	No	No	65.7	Yes	Yes	90.6	Changed name to Crosscreek Charter School (see No. 28 below)					
No	No	52.7	No	No	49.8	Yes	No	55.8	No	No	69.7	No	No	72.8	Yes	No	50.7
No	No	64.0	No	No	73.6	Yes	No	81.9	No	No	80.2	Yes	Yes	84.1	No	No	75.5
No	No	62.9	No	No	74.3	Yes	Yes	85.8	No	No	85.2	Yes	Yes	87.4	No	No	75.2
NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	No	No	52.0	No	No	61.5	No	No	61.7	Closed		
Yes	No	81.8	No	No	87.5	Yes	Yes	91.5	Yes	Yes	95.1	Yes	No	93.5	Yes	No	77.2
NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	No	No	86.7	No	No	77.1	No	No	72.8	No	No	60.2
NA	NA	NA	No	No	74.5	Yes	Yes	82.4	Yes	No	85.3	Yes	No	82.0	Yes	No	71.0
NA	NA	NA	No	No	19.0	NA	NA	NA	Yes	No	50.0	Yes	Yes	50.0	No	No	38.7
No	No	63.8	No	No	81.8	Yes	No	82.8	No	No	87.2	No	No	87.1	No	No	76.7
No	No	60.0	Yes	Yes	80	Yes	Yes	88.5	Yes	No	91.3	Yes	No	90.9	No	No	81.0
No	No	84.2	No	No	82.3	Yes	Yes	85.8	Yes	No	89.9	Yes	Yes	89.2	No	No	68.4
No	No	68.5	Yes	No	69.2	Yes	No	64.0	Yes	Yes	75.3	No	No	65.1	No	No	53.5
No	No	42.6	No	No	39.3	Yes	Yes	64.3	Yes	Yes	71.6	Yes	Yes	73.6	No	No	50.0
No	No	89.7	Yes	No	88.8	Yes	No	88.9	Yes	No	88.0	No	No	83.9	No	No	76.0
Yes	No	46.0	Yes	No	53.8	Yes	Yes	44.7	Yes	Yes	49.4	No	No	0.0	Yes	Yes	53.0
NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	No	No	94.5	Yes	No	85.9
No	No	31.5	No	No	33.1	No	No	54.6	No	No	53.4	Yes	Yes	67.7	Yes	No	46.6

(continues)

**Table 1. Performance of All N.C. Charter Schools**

Charter School / Grade Span		Year Opened	Met Expected Growth	Met Exemplary Growth	Performance Composite	Met Expected Growth	Met Exemplary Growth	Performance Composite	Met Expected Growth	Met Exemplary Growth	Performance Composite
		1997-1998			1998-1999			1999-2000			
Charlotte-Mecklenburg School District											
18	Casa Esperanza Montessori K-6	Wake 2003	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
19	Central Park School for Children K-5	Durham 2001	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Chapel Hill Free Academy K-8 (Formerly Village Charter)	Orange 1997	Yes	No	77.0	Yes	Yes	74.1	No	No	67.1
20	Charter Day School K-8	Brunswick 2000	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
21	Chatham Charter School K-8	Chatham 1997	No	No	56.1	Yes	Yes	63.0	Yes	Yes	81.1
22	Children's Community School K-5	Mecklenburg 2004	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
23	Children's Village Academy K-6 (Formerly Children's Academy)	Lenoir 1997	No	No	30.4	Yes	Yes	55.1	No	No	54.9
24	CIS Academy 6-8	Robeson 1997	No	No	7.3	Yes	No	29.0	No	No	26.0
25	Clover Garden K-12	Alamance/Burlington 2001	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
26	Community Charter School K-5	Charlotte/Mecklenburg 1997	No	No	35.0	No	No	40.5	No	No	46.2
27	Community Partners Charter High 9-12	Wake 2000	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
28	Crosscreek Charter School K-8	Franklin 2001	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
29	Crossnore Academy K-12	Avery 1999	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Yes	No	35.8
30	Crossroads Charter High 9-12	Charlotte/Mecklenburg 2001	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
31	Dillard Academy K-4	Wayne 1998	NA	NA	NA	No	No	33.3	No	No	38.1
32	Downtown Middle 5-8	Forsyth/Winston-Salem 1997	No	No	84.3	No	No	81.4	No	No	79.4
33	East Wake Academy K-12	Wake 1998	NA	NA	NA	Yes	No	81.9	No	No	62.7
34	East Winston Primary School K-3	Forsyth/Winston-Salem 1998	NA	NA	NA	No	No	3.3	Yes	No	20.8

on End-of-Grade Tests from 1997–2006, *continued*

Met Expected Growth	Met Exemplary Growth	Performance Composite	Met Expected Growth	Met High Growth	Performance Composite	Met Expected Growth	Met High Growth	Performance Composite	Met Expected Growth	Met High Growth	Performance Composite	Met Expected Growth	Met High Growth	Performance Composite	Met Expected Growth	Met High Growth	Met Expected Growth
2000–2001			2001–2002			2002–2003			2003–2004			2004–2005			2005–2006		
NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	ID	ID	ID	No	No	82.0	Yes	No	78.3
NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	ID	ID	ID	No	No	82.8	No	No	64.1
No	No	73.1	No	No	69.6	No	No	67.6	Closed								
ID	ID	ID	No	No	53.5	Yes	Yes	80.5	Yes	No	86.2	Yes	Yes	91.9	Yes	Yes	78.8
No	No	73.2	Yes	No	78.6	Yes	Yes	89.2	No	No	79.2	Yes	No	81.8	Yes	Yes	73.2
NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Yes	No	93.8	Yes	No	87.0
No	No	47.0	No	No	48.6	Yes	Yes	60.2	Yes	Yes	65.8	Yes	Yes	80.8	Yes	No	56.0
Yes	Yes	39.0	Yes	No	50.7	Yes	Yes	79.2	Yes	Yes	63.6	No	No	63.2	No	No	33.0
NA	NA	NA	No	No	77.2	Yes	Yes	83.8	No	No	80.9	Yes	No	88.1	No	No	73.1
No	No	57.0	No	No	68.6	Yes	Yes	82.6	No	No	70.5	Yes	Yes	78.9	No	No	51.3
No	No	49.2	Yes	No	53.5	Yes	No	57.3	No	No	51.7	No	No	63.6	No	No	53.6
NA	NA	NA	ID	ID	ID	ID	ID	ID	ID	ID	ID	No	No	80.5	No	No	56.2
No	No	39.7	No	No	39.2	Yes	Yes	51.8	Yes	Yes	62.5	Yes	No	68.5	Yes	No	50.0
NA	NA	NA	No	No	14.6	Yes	Yes	15.1	Yes	Yes	26.7	NA	NA	NA	No	No	23.7
No	No	37.9	Yes	Yes	77.3	Yes	Yes	52.9	Yes	Yes	78.6	Yes	Yes	57.1	No	No	50.0
No	No	79.5	No	No	83.9	No	No	87.3	No	No	87.4	Yes	No	86.6	No	No	65.3
No	No	76.2	No	No	81.8	Yes	No	79.9	No	No	79.5	No	No	83.0	No	No	71.2
NA	NA	NA	Yes	Yes	76.8	Yes	Yes	76.6	No	No	38.9	Closed					

(continues)

**Table 1. Performance of All N.C. Charter Schools**

		Year Opened	Met Expected Growth	Met Exemplary Growth	Performance Composite	Met Expected Growth	Met Exemplary Growth	Performance Composite	Met Expected Growth	Met Exemplary Growth	Performance Composite
Charter School / Grade Span		1997-1998			1998-1999			1999-2000			
	Engelmann School of the Arts & Sciences	<i>Catawba</i>									
	K-8	1997	No	No	64.3	No	No	40.5	No	No	40.8
35	Evergreen Community Charter School	<i>Buncombe</i>									
	K-8	1999	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	No	No	70.2
36	Exploris Middle School	<i>Wake</i>									
	6-8	1997	Yes	Yes	98.1	Yes	Yes	94.8	Yes	Yes	94.9
37	Forsyth Academies	<i>Forsyth/Winston-Salem</i>									
	K-8	1999	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	No	No	61.9
38	Francine Delany New School for Children	<i>Buncombe/Asheville City</i>									
	K-8	1997	Yes	No	70.0	Yes	Yes	74.6	No	No	71.1
39	Franklin Academy	<i>Wake</i>									
	K-12	1998	NA	NA	NA	No	No	64.8	Yes	Yes	81.0
40	Gaston College Preparatory (GCP)	<i>Northampton</i>									
	5-10	2001	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
41	Grandfather Academy	<i>Avery</i>									
	4-12	1997	ID	ID	ID	ID	ID	ID	Yes	No	37.5
42	Gray Stone Day School	<i>Stanly</i>									
	9-12	2002	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
43	Greensboro Academy	<i>Guilford</i>									
	K-8	1999	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	No	No	76.4
44	Guilford Preparatory	<i>Guilford</i>									
	K-11 (Formerly Guilford-SABIS® Charter School and then Guilford Charter)	1999	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	ID	ID	ID
45	Haliwa-Saponi Tribal	<i>Warren</i>									
	K-11	2000	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
46	Healthy Start Academy Charter Elem.	<i>Durham</i>									
	K-8	1997	ID	ID	ID	No	No	41.9	No	No	35.2
47	Highland Charter Public School	<i>Gaston</i>									
	K-3	1997	ID	ID	ID	ID	ID	ID	ID	ID	ID
48	Hope Elementary School	<i>Wake</i>									
	K-5	2001	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
49	Imani Institute Charter School	<i>Guilford</i>									
	6-8	1998	NA	NA	NA	No	No	57.5	No	No	56.3
50	Kennedy School	<i>Charlotte/Mecklenburg</i>									
	6-12	1998	NA	NA	NA	ID	ID	ID	ID	ID	ID
51	Kestrel Heights School	<i>Durham</i>									
	6-11	1998	NA	NA	NA	ID	ID	ID	Yes	No	59.7

on End-of-Grade Tests from 1997–2006, *continued*

Met Expected Growth	Met Exemplary Growth	Performance Composite	Met Expected Growth	Met High Growth	Performance Composite	Met Expected Growth	Met High Growth	Performance Composite	Met Expected Growth	Met High Growth	Performance Composite	Met Expected Growth	Met High Growth	Performance Composite	Met Expected Growth	Met High Growth	Performance Composite			
2000–2001			2001–2002			2002–2003			2003–2004			2004–2005			2005–2006					
Yes	Yes	64.0	No	No	66.4	Yes	Yes	63.4	Changed name to Visions Charter School (see No. 98 below)											
No	No	76.1	No	No	84.5	Yes	Yes	87.0	No	No	92.1	No	No	87.0	Yes	No	74.1			
Yes	Yes	96.5	Yes	Yes	98.4	No	No	97.3	Yes	Yes	97.8	Yes	Yes	98.3	Yes	Yes	94.6			
No	No	63.5	No	No	74.9	Yes	Yes	84.1	Yes	No	86.3	Yes	No	86.5	Yes	No	70.8			
Yes	Yes	85.4	Yes	Yes	86.6	Yes	Yes	85.4	Yes	Yes	90.7	Yes	Yes	89.7	No	No	74.0			
No	No	82.5	No	No	91.2	Yes	Yes	92.4	Yes	No	91.5	Yes	No	92.2	Yes	No	84.9			
NA	NA	NA	Yes	Yes	91.8	Yes	Yes	99.6	Yes	No	94.8	Yes	Yes	97.5	Yes	Yes	86.7			
No	No	34.1	No	No	44.6	No	No	54.8	Yes	No	60.7	Yes	No	65.9	Yes	No	55.7			
NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Yes	Yes	97.7	Yes	Yes	94.7	Yes	No	93.8	No	No	89.4			
No	No	82.3	No	No	86.6	Yes	Yes	92.9	Yes	No	94.5	Yes	No	94.9	Yes	Yes	90.5			
ID	ID	ID	No	No	66.7	Yes	Yes	74.8	No	No	76.6	No	No	72.5	Yes	No	61.7			
No	No	52.3	No	No	59.6	Yes	Yes	72.0	Yes	No	80.2	Yes	No	75.7	No	No	59.2			
No	No	43.9	No	No	45.6	Yes	Yes	56.9	No	No	64.3	No	No	50.0	No	No	38.0			
ID	ID	ID	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	No	No	NA	No	No	NA	NA	NA	NA			
NA	NA	NA	No	No	50.0	Yes	Yes	78.1	No	No	79.3	No	No	56.2	No	No	50.0			
No	No	53.0	No	No	52.8	No	No	58.9	No	No	63.0	No	No	62.8	No	No	50.0			
Yes	Yes	16.3	Yes	Yes	28.3	No	No	27.0	Yes	No	18.6	Yes	No	28.1	Yes	No	21.4			
Yes	No	71.6	Yes	Yes	73.6	No	No	70.7	No	No	72.6	No	No	70.3	No	No	67.8			

(continues)



**Table 1. Performance of All N.C. Charter Schools**

		Year Opened	Met Expected Growth	Met Exemplary Growth	Performance Composite	Met Expected Growth	Met Exemplary Growth	Performance Composite	Met Expected Growth	Met Exemplary Growth	Performance Composite
Charter School / Grade Span		1997-1998			1998-1999			1999-2000			
52	Kinston Charter Academy K-8	<i>Lenoir</i> 2004	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
53	Lake Norman Charter School 5-8	<i>Charlotte/Mecklenburg</i> 1998	NA	NA	NA	Yes	Yes	87.0	Yes	Yes	88.6
54	Lakeside School 6-12	<i>Alamance/Burlington</i> 1997	ID	ID	ID	No	No	7.0	Yes	Yes	23.7
55	Laurinburg Charter School 9-12	<i>Scotland</i> 1998	NA	NA	NA	ID	ID	ID	No	No	2.9
56	Laurinburg Homework Center 8-12	<i>Scotland</i> 1999	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	No	No	33.3
57	Lincoln Charter School K-6	<i>Lincoln</i> 1998	NA	NA	NA	No	No	76.0	No	No	70.9
58	Magellan Charter School 4-8	<i>Wake</i> 1997	Yes	Yes	95.7	Yes	Yes	97.2	Yes	Yes	96.4
59	Maureen Joy Charter School K-3	<i>Durham</i> 1997	ID	ID	ID	No	No	26.9	No	No	29.8
60	Metrolina Regional Scholars' Academy K-8	<i>Charlotte/Mecklenburg</i> 2000	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
61	Millennium Charter Academy K-7	<i>Surry/Mt. Airy</i> 2000	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
62	Mountain Discovery Charter K-8	<i>Swain</i> 2002	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
63	New Century Charter High School 9-12	<i>Alamance</i> 1998	NA	NA	NA	ID	ID	ID	Yes	Yes	52.2
64	Omuteko Gwamaziima K-8	<i>Durham</i> 1999	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	No	No	29.6
65	Orange Charter School K-8	<i>Orange</i> 1997	No	No	78.4	Yes	Yes	78.6	Yes	Yes	82.0
66	PACE Academy 9-12	<i>Orange</i> 2004	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
67	Phoenix Academy K-9	<i>Guilford</i> 2000	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
68	Piedmont Community Charter School K-11	<i>Gaston</i> 2000	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
69	PreEminent Charter School K-8	<i>Wake</i> 2000	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

on End-of-Grade Tests from 1997–2006, *continued*

Met Expected Growth	Met Exemplary Growth	Performance Composite	Met Expected Growth	Met High Growth	Performance Composite	Met Expected Growth	Met High Growth	Performance Composite	Met Expected Growth	Met High Growth	Performance Composite	Met Expected Growth	Met High Growth	Performance Composite	Met Expected Growth	Met High Growth	Met Expected Growth
2000–2001			2001–2002			2002–2003			2003–2004			2004–2005			2005–2006		
NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Yes	Yes	79.6	Yes	Yes	63.0
Yes	Yes	93.2	Yes	Yes	98.1	Yes	Yes	99.3	No	No	98.9	Yes	Yes	98.6	Yes	No	92.4
No	No	26.1	No	No	10.1	No	No	22.6	No	No	39.7	Yes	No	26.3	No	No	NA
Yes	Yes	24.7	No	No	23.5	NA	NA	NA	Yes	No	52.8	NA	NA	NA	No	No	15.3
No	No	15.4	No	No	37.5	Yes	Yes	52.9	Yes	Yes	63.2	Yes	No	30.4	Yes	No	25.7
Yes	No	80.6	No	No	79.9	Yes	Yes	86.7	Yes	No	84.3	NA	NA	NA	Yes	No	78.8
Yes	Yes	99.2	Yes	Yes	99.2	Yes	Yes	99.9	Yes	Yes	99.9	Yes	Yes	100	Yes	Yes	97.9
Yes	Yes	60.3	No	No	61.6	Yes	Yes	69.5	No	No	63.8	No	No	60.9	No	No	43.6
No	No	98.7	Yes	Yes	100	No	No	100	Yes	Yes	99.2	Yes	Yes	100	Yes	No	100
No	No	81.2	No	No	82.5	Yes	Yes	89.0	No	No	86.4	Yes	No	91.6	Yes	No	86.0
NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Yes	No	79.5	Yes	Yes	86.9	No	No	74.7	No	No	59.0
No	No	26.1	No	No	49.0	No	No	39.2	Yes	Yes	36.9	Yes	No	40.2	Yes	Yes	44.7
No	No	30.5	No	No	46.3	Yes	No	50.3	Yes	Yes	58.3	No	No	58.6	No	No	50.0
No	No	86.8	No	No	82.2	Yes	Yes	87.0	No	No	87.5	Yes	Yes	91.3	Yes	No	71.8
NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	No	No	56.3	Yes	Yes	56.7
No	No	79.1	Yes	Yes	83.0	Yes	Yes	93.1	Yes	No	95.3	No	No	95.7	No	No	81.5
No	No	59.9	Yes	No	75.4	Yes	Yes	89.4	No	No	88.0	Yes	No	91.3	Yes	No	74.1
ID	ID	ID	No	No	47.4	Yes	No	66.4	Yes	No	76.1	Yes	Yes	79.2	No	No	46.6

(continues)

**Table 1. Performance of All N.C. Charter Schools**

		Year Opened	Met Expected Growth	Met Exemplary Growth	Performance Composite	Met Expected Growth	Met Exemplary Growth	Performance Composite	Met Expected Growth	Met Exemplary Growth	Performance Composite
Charter School / Grade Span		1997-1998			1998-1999			1999-2000			
70	Provisions Academy 6-12	<i>Lee</i> 1999	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	No	No	20.2
71	Quality Education Academy 6-8	<i>Forsyth</i> 1997	No	No	26.4	Yes	Yes	53.6	No	No	52.5
72	Queen's Grant Community Schools K-8	<i>Charlotte/Mecklenburg</i> 2002	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
73	Quest Academy K-8	<i>Wake</i> 1999	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Yes	Yes	94.3
74	Raleigh Charter High School 9-12	<i>Wake</i> 1999	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Yes	Yes	87.6
75	Research Triangle Charter Academy K-8	<i>Durham</i> 1999	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	No	No	31.4
76	River Mill Academy K-12 (Formerly River Mill Charter)	<i>Alamance</i> 1998	NA	NA	NA	No	No	51.2	Yes	No	62.5
77	Rocky Mount Preparatory K-12 (Formerly Charter Public School and then Rocky Mount Charter)	<i>Nash</i> 1997	No	No	52.5	No	No	52.5	Yes	No	51.9
78	Rowan Academy K-5	<i>Rowan</i> 1999	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	No	No	37.4
79	Sallie B. Howard School K-8	<i>Wilson</i> 1997	No	No	51.4	Yes	No	45.8	No	No	45.7
80	Sandhills Theatre Arts Renaissance School (STARS) K-8	<i>Moore</i> 1999	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	No	No	46.6
81	Socrates Academy K-2	<i>Mecklenburg</i> 2005	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
82	SPARC Academy K-8	<i>Wake</i> 1998	NA	NA	NA	ID	ID	ID	No	No	31.4
83	Sterling Montessori Academy K-8	<i>Wake</i> 1997	ID	ID	ID	Yes	Yes	75.6	Yes	Yes	78.6
84	Success Institute K-8	<i>Iredell</i> 2000	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
85	Sugar Creek Charter School K-8	<i>Charlotte/Mecklenburg</i> 1999	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	No	No	26.6
86	Summit Charter School K-8	<i>Jackson</i> 1997	Yes	Yes	87.2	No	No	80.6	Yes	Yes	80.0

on End-of-Grade Tests from 1997–2006, *continued*

Met Expected Growth	Met Exemplary Growth	Performance Composite	Met Expected Growth	Met High Growth	Performance Composite	Met Expected Growth	Met High Growth	Performance Composite	Met Expected Growth	Met High Growth	Performance Composite	Met Expected Growth	Met High Growth	Performance Composite	Met Expected Growth	Met High Growth	Met Expected Growth
2000–2001			2001–2002			2002–2003			2003–2004			2004–2005			2005–2006		
No	No	39.0	No	No	39.2	No	No	45.0	Yes	No	44.2	Yes	No	39.0	Yes	No	18.1
Yes	No	57.0	No	No	54.0	Yes	Yes	63.7	Yes	Yes	75.9	Yes	No	76.2	No	No	61.5
NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	No	No	88.3	Yes	Yes	91.1	Yes	No	93.1	Yes	No	83.4
Yes	Yes	93.5	Yes	Yes	99.5	Yes	Yes	100	Yes	Yes	100	Yes	Yes	100	Yes	Yes	99.1
Yes	Yes	92.7	Yes	Yes	92.9	Yes	Yes	94.9	Yes	Yes	96.9	Yes	Yes	95.4	Yes	No	97.6
No	No	49.1	Yes	Yes	71.7	Yes	Yes	80.6	No	No	82.9	Yes	No	81.2	Yes	No	67.1
Yes	No	66.3	No	No	79.0	Yes	No	88.0	No	No	91.8	Yes	No	92.6	No	No	80.7
Yes	Yes	65.0	No	No	65.7	Yes	Yes	76.9	No	No	76.2	No	No	73.5	No	No	57.8
Yes	Yes	36.4	Yes	Yes	64.1	Yes	Yes	75.7	Yes	No	76.8	Yes	Yes	74.2	NA	NA	NA
Yes	No	60.1	No	No	66.3	Yes	Yes	77.2	Yes	Yes	81.8	NA	NA	NA	No	No	46.6
No	No	54.3	Yes	No	63.6	No	No	62.5	Yes	No	74.0	No	No	64.8	No	No	50.0
NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
No	No	47.6	No	No	52.8	Yes	Yes	57.3	No	No	63.0	No	No	70.8	Yes	No	42.7
No	No	76.8	No	No	80.0	Yes	Yes	86.8	No	No	90.7	NA	NA	NA	Yes	No	81.4
No	No	45.3	NA	NA	NA	Yes	Yes	56.0	Yes	No	82.1	No	No	71.5	No	No	54.7
No	No	41.1	No	No	41.8	Yes	Yes	59.4	Yes	No	64.4	No	No	69.3	No	No	50.3
No	No	85.7	Yes	Yes	93.7	Yes	No	88.5	Yes	No	95.7	Yes	No	92.3	Yes	No	88.2

(continues)

**Table 1. Performance of All N.C. Charter Schools**

Charter School / Grade Span										
	Year Opened	Met Expected Growth	Met Exemplary Growth	Performance Composite	Met Expected Growth	Met Exemplary Growth	Performance Composite	Met Expected Growth	Met Exemplary Growth	Performance Composite
	1997-1998				1998-1999			1999-2000		
87 The Academy of Moore County 5-8 (Formerly Mast School)	<i>Moore</i> 1997	No	No	81.9	Yes	Yes	76.3	No	No	72.3
88 The Learning Center K-8	<i>Cherokee</i> 1997	No	No	56.1	Yes	No	68.6	No	No	57.8
89 The Mountain Community School K-8	<i>Henderson</i> 1999	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Yes	Yes	90.7
90 The New Dimensions School K-5	<i>Burke</i> 2001	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
91 The Woods Charter School 1-12	<i>Chatham</i> 1998	NA	NA	NA	ID	ID	ID	No	No	62.1
92 Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy 6-12	<i>Rutherford</i> 1999	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	No	No	81.0
93 Tiller School 1-6	<i>Carteret</i> 1998	NA	NA	NA	Yes	Yes	74.4	Yes	Yes	77.0
94 Torchlight Academy K-5 (Formerly NE Raleigh Charter Academy)	<i>Wake</i> 1999	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	No	No	52.6
95 Two Rivers Community School K-8	<i>Watauga</i> 2005	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
96 Union Academy K-10	<i>Union</i> 2000	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
97 Vance Charter School K-8	<i>Vance</i> 1999	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	No	No	72.9
98 Visions Charter School K-6	<i>Catawba</i> 2003	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
99 Washington Montessori K-8	<i>Beaufort</i> 2000	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Wayne Technical Academy 9-12	<i>Wayne</i> 1999	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Yes	Yes	8.5

Source: N.C. Department of Public Instruction. See <http://abcs.ncpublicschools.org/abcs/> for data.

ID = Insufficient data as reported by N.C. Department of Public Instruction

NA = School not open or data not available

Note: Results for 2005-06 are based on a revised accountability model and are not comparable to results from previous years. High growth was referred to as exemplary growth prior to 2002.

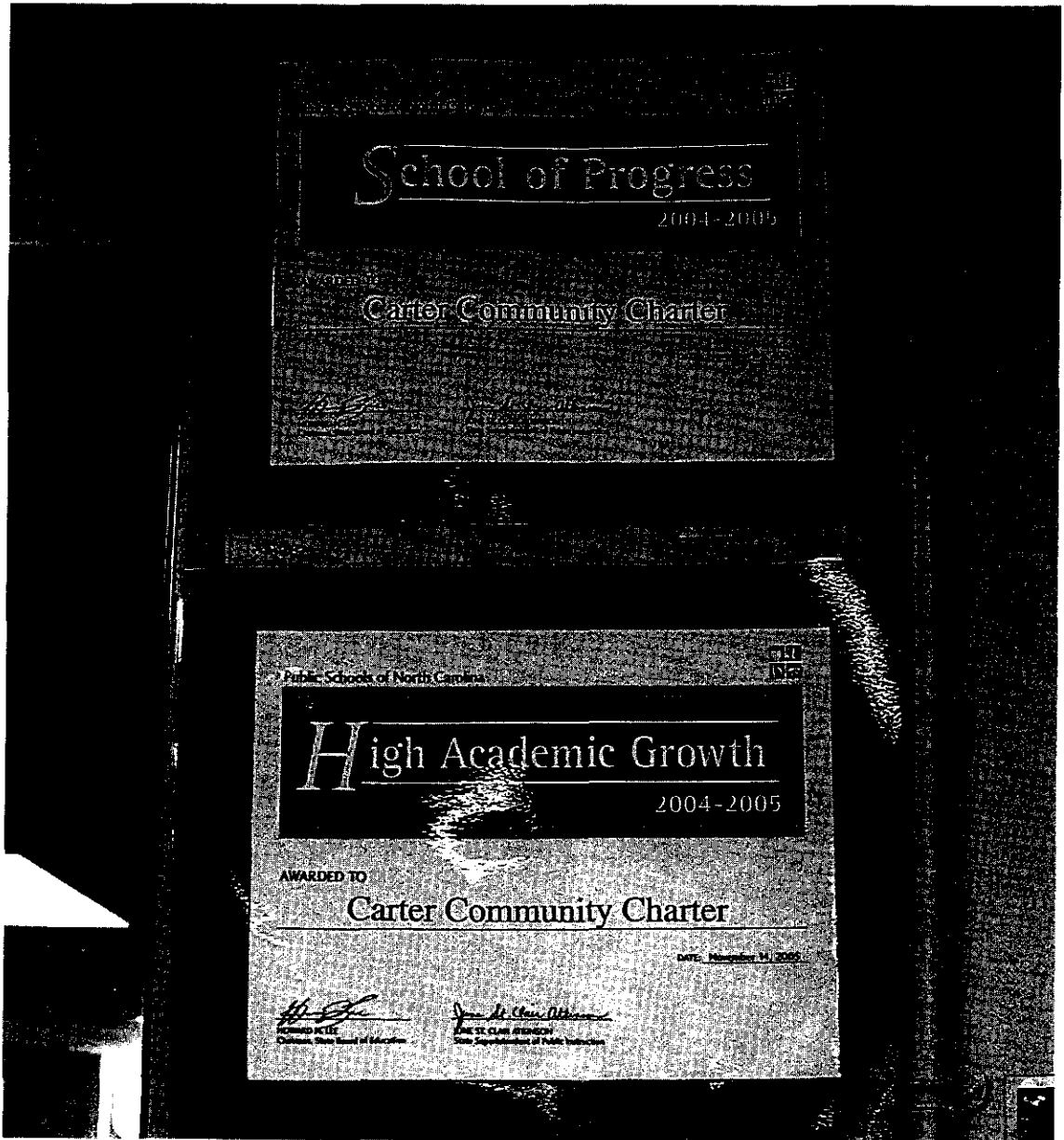
on End-of-Grade Tests from 1997–2006, *continued*

Met Expected Growth	Met Exemplary Growth	Performance Composite	Met Expected Growth	Met High Growth	Performance Composite	Met Expected Growth	Met High Growth	Performance Composite	Met Expected Growth	Met High Growth	Performance Composite	Met Expected Growth	Met High Growth	Performance Composite	Met Expected Growth	Met High Growth	Met Expected Growth
2000–2001		2001–2002		2002–2003		2003–2004		2004–2005		2005–2006							
No	No	65.1	Yes	Yes	68.4	Yes	No	70.3	Yes	Yes	80.3	No	No	62.3	No	No	55.8
No	No	77.1	No	No	71.8	Yes	Yes	72.2	No	No	73.5	Yes	No	78.3	Yes	Yes	83.1
No	No	88.4	Yes	Yes	94.2	Yes	No	85.5	Yes	No	94.2	Yes	No	93.6	No	No	88.1
NA	NA	NA	ID	ID	ID	ID	ID	ID	No	No	59.4	No	No	63.5	Yes	No	49.0
Yes	Yes	81.8	Yes	Yes	79.5	No	No	88.6	Yes	No	86.7	NA	NA	NA	Yes	No	88.3
No	No	83.3	No	No	86.8	No	No	87.1	No	No	86.8	Yes	No	90.6	No	No	85.0
Yes	Yes	87.8	Yes	No	89.2	Yes	Yes	90.0	No	No	84.9	Yes	No	92.3	No	No	69.9
No	No	39.8	No	No	48.8	Yes	Yes	55.2	No	No	66.3	No	No	58.1	No	No	38.3
NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	No	No	80.4
No	No	84.2	Yes	No	87.0	Yes	No	90.4	No	No	91.4	No	No	88.6	Yes	No	83.6
No	No	73.3	Yes	No	85.6	Yes	Yes	90.7	Yes	No	93.5	Yes	Yes	93.6	Yes	No	82.9
NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Yes	No	51.6	No	No	56.9	Yes	No	60.0
ID	ID	ID	No	No	78.6	Yes	Yes	82.7	Yes	Yes	87.2	No	No	85.1	No	No	66.2
No	No	5.8	Yes	No	16.4	No	No	31.4	Closed								

The N.C. Department of Public Instruction reported ABC data for 99 charter schools in 2005–06. Seven of those charter schools have closed: East Winston Primary School, Lakeside School, Ann Atwater Community School, Rowan Academy, Visions Charter, Laurinburg Charter School, and Imani Institute. In 2006–07, there are 93 charter schools operating in North Carolina, including John H. Baker Charter High, which will close on June 30, 2007. Seven charter schools are in the preliminary planning stages: Charlotte Secondary School, KIPP: Charlotte, Columbus Charter School, Voyager Academy, Pine Lake Preparatory, Neuse Charter School, and the Wilmington Preparatory Academy. Only Columbus Charter in Columbus County and Neuse Charter in Johnston County would be in counties without charter schools.

(continued from page 10) Within these categories, the ABCs recognizes schools of high growth (referred to as exemplary growth prior to 2001), expected growth, and less than expected growth.

The new classifications — added to account for federal testing standards in the No Child Left Behind law — make it difficult to compare charters' ABC status with previous years. However, it is possible to make comparisons with the traditional public schools for the same year. For example, during the 2003–04 school year, a much higher percentage of traditional public schools than charter schools (72.4 percent versus 49.2 percent) ranked in the top four categories. These categories are Honor Schools of Excellence, Schools of Excellence, Schools of Distinction, and Schools of Progress. Correspondingly, a much lower percentage of traditional public schools than charters (27.3 percent versus 50.2 percent) landed in the bottom three categories. These categories carry the labels No Recognition, Priority Schools, and Low-Performing Schools. Charters had a particularly heavy percentage of schools,



42.1 percent, classified as No Recognition, meaning students at each of these schools did not register sufficient academic growth over the course of the school year after adjusting for demographics and prior academic performance of the student body.

At the same time, 20.4 percent of charters were ranked as Honors Schools of Excellence. Included in these is the highest-ranked school in the state, Quest Academy in Raleigh, with a performance composite of 100, followed closely by Magellan Charter of Raleigh with a 99.9, and Metrolina Regional Scholars Academy in Charlotte with 99.2. While these schools differ in terms of racial and ethnic diversity, ranging from a low of 6 percent minority students and no African-American students to a high of 39.8 percent minorities at Metrolina Regional Scholars Academy, they share a common distinction. No students at any of the three schools qualify for free and reduced priced lunches, a statistic used to measure the number of students at a school facing economic hardship. That's not to say all charter schools that perform well on state accountability tests share this characteristic. For example, at Gaston College Preparatory Academy, with its longer school day and year, more than 95 percent of students scored at grade level. The school, with a student body that is 92.8 percent minority and with 70 percent of its students qualifying for a free or reduced-price lunch, earned the designation Honor School of Excellence. However, Gaston College Preparatory Academy is the exception, rather than the rule.

Yet another means of measuring academic performance of charter schools is whether all populations of students within the school are making adequate yearly progress (AYP) under the federal No Child Left Behind Act. Both traditional and charter public schools have struggled to meet academic proficiency targets for all *subgroups* of students as required under the law. For the 2004–05 school year, 57.3 percent of traditional public schools made adequate yearly progress compared to 61.1 percent of charter schools.<sup>4</sup> A higher percentage of charter schools than traditional public schools also made adequate yearly progress in the 2002–03 and 2003–04 school years. Because charter schools are smaller, they often have fewer subgroups within their student bodies, which can make achieving adequate yearly progress less challenging. Of the 37 charter schools that failed to make adequate yearly progress in 2004–05, Crossroads Charter High School in Charlotte achieved the distinction for only one of seven subgroups. At Guilford Charter in Guilford County, eight of 13 subgroups made adequate yearly progress, while seven of 13 subgroups made adequate yearly progress at Healthy Start Academy in Durham, and none of the three subgroups at Lakeside School in Alamance County achieved the distinction.

But Jack Moyer, Director of the Office of Charter Schools, says an equally troubling list could be made of traditional public schools where adequate yearly progress was not attained by large numbers of subgroups. These include Fairmont Middle School in Robeson County, where seven of 13 subgroups made adequate yearly progress, the grades 6–12 alternative school Lakeview in Durham with zero of four subgroups attaining adequate yearly progress, and West Hoke Middle School in Hoke

*There once was a pretty good student,  
Who sat in a pretty good class  
And was taught by a pretty good teacher;  
Who always let pretty good pass.*

...

*When he looked for a pretty good job.  
It was then, when he sought a position,  
He discovered that life could be tough.*

...

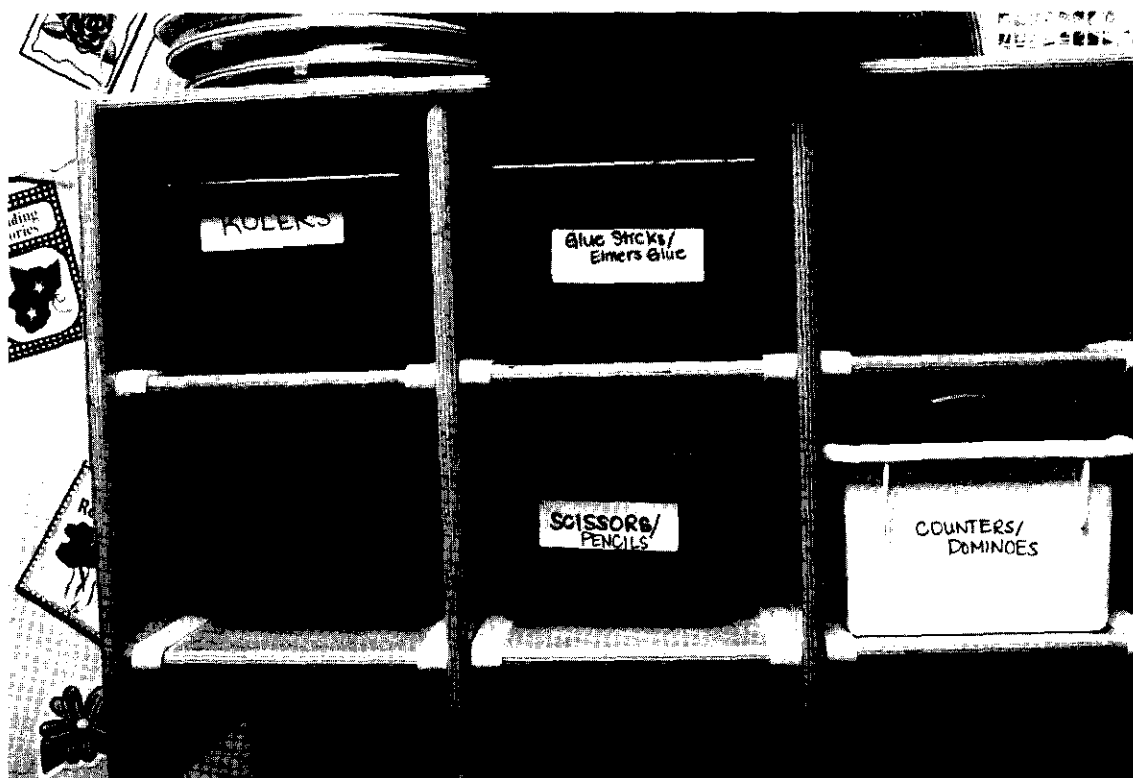
*The pretty good town in our story  
Was part of a pretty good state,*

...

*Pretty proud of the greatness it had,  
Which learned much too late,  
If you want to be great,  
Pretty good is, in fact, pretty bad.*

—CHARLES OSGOOD  
"THE OSGOOD FILE"





*Charters offer teachers a chance to realize their dreams. If you have a good idea, and it's in the best interest of the kids, we'll let you try it.*

—ROB MATHESON  
TEACHER, KESTREL HEIGHTS CHARTER  
SCHOOL IN DURHAM

County, where eight of 13 subgroups made adequate yearly progress. Moyer adds that it isn't fair to criticize charter schools for testing smaller numbers of subgroups because the same is true of many traditional public schools. "Merely discounting the AYP status due to lower numbers of subgroups undermines charter schools' accomplishments because just as many traditional schools with lower numbers of subgroups fail to attain AYP," says Moyer. "We cannot discount a school's performance, charter or LEA, because they have a handful of subgroups (i.e. many of the early college high schools in 2006 only had one or two subgroups)."

In 2005–06, 52.7 percent of charter schools made adequate yearly progress, 47.3 percent did not, and the adequate yearly progress of eight charter schools is under review. Statewide, 45.2 percent of schools made adequate yearly progress and 54.8 percent did not.

In addition to their disappointing performance on the state's ABCs testing and on the federal government's adequate yearly progress, charter schools also do not have graduation rates as high as those achieved statewide. In February 2007, the N.C. Department of Public Instruction released for the first time four-year cohort graduation rates for 2006. This measure tracks each freshman through four years of high school. Statewide, 68.1 percent of freshman graduated, but only 55.3 percent of freshman in charter schools graduated. Six charter schools had cohort graduation rates lower than 30 percent: Cape Lookout Marine Science High (28.6%), Laurinburg Charter (27.8%), Crossnore Academy (27.3%), The Laurinburg Homework Center (23.3%), Kennedy Charter (20.0), and Crossroads Charter High (14.3%) (see Table 2, p. 27).

In conclusion, the academic performance of charter schools—as measured by the ABCs, adequate yearly progress, and cohort graduation rates—needs to improve before North Carolina increases or eliminates the cap on the number of charter schools.

## Other Studies of Charter Schools in North Carolina

So how do North Carolina's charter schools compare to traditional public schools on the whole? In 2004, two studies were published that specifically compared the performance of several charter schools with traditional public schools in North Carolina. Researchers Helen Ladd and Robert Bifulco of the Terry Sanford Institute of Public Policy at Duke University published "The Impacts of Charter Schools on Student Achievement: Evidence from North Carolina" in August 2004. This study asked three questions:

**Table 2. 2006 Four-Year Cohort High School Graduation Rates by Charter School**

School Name	Graduates/ Numerator	Class Size/ Denominator	Percent Graduated
1. Crossroads Charter High	4	28	14.3%
2. Kennedy Charter	3	15	20.0%
3. The Laurinburg Homework Center	7	30	23.3%
4. Crossnore Academy	6	22	27.3%
5. Laurinburg Charter	5	18	27.8%
6. Cape Lookout Marine Science High	18	63	28.6%
7. CG Woodson School of Challenge	12	30	40.0%
8. Baker Charter High	6	14	42.9%
9. Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy	15	31	48.4%
10. New Century Charter	11	22	50.0%
<b>Charters Average</b>			<b>55.3%</b>
11. Gray Stone Day	31	55	56.4%
12. Clover Garden	6	10	60.0%
<b>Statewide Average</b>			<b>68.1%</b>
13. East Wake Academy	16	22	72.7%
14. Community Partners Charter	16	20	80.0%
15. Rocky Mount Preparatory	17	20	85.0%
16. Woods Charter	21	23	91.3%
17. Franklin Academy	24	26	92.3%
18. River Mill Academy	13	14	92.9%
19. Raleigh Charter High	98	101	97.0%

Source: N.C. Department of Public Instruction. 2006 4-Year Cohort Graduation Rate by School. See <http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/docs/newsroom/news/2006-07/byschool-attach4.pdf>.

- 1) Do students who attend charter schools make larger achievement gains, on average, than they would have in the absence of charter schools?
- 2) Do students who attend traditional public schools located near charter schools, and thus subject to competition from charter schools, make larger achievement gains than they would have in the absence of charter schools?
- 3) What accounts for quality differences between charter schools and traditional public schools?<sup>5</sup>

The study followed five cohorts of students, collectively encompassing all public school students in North Carolina, entering third grade during the 1995–96 school year through the 2000–01 school year, when most would graduate from eighth grade. Students' scores on end-of-grade (EOG) reading and math tests were used to mark their progress. Significantly, the study included 8,745 students who attended both traditional public schools and a charter school at some point between grades 3–8. This allowed researchers to compare the test score gains of students in charter schools with the test score gains made by the same students in traditional public schools.

The study found that, on average, students in charter schools do not do as well on end-of-grade tests as their counterparts in traditional public schools, and that some of the difference is attributable to the charter schools themselves rather than to unobservable characteristics of the students. Charter school students exhibit “considerably smaller achievement gains” in reading and math, on average, than they would have in traditional public schools.<sup>6</sup>

Noting that other studies have shown that charter school student performance typically lags that of traditional public schools for charters that are newly opened, but disappears for charters that have been operating for three or four years, Ladd and Bifulco conducted an additional analysis to control for length of time a charter had been open. They found that the negative effects of charter schools in North Carolina “remain statistically significant and large even for schools that have been operating for five years.”<sup>7</sup>

The study did not find that the presence of a charter school had any effect on the achievement of students in nearby traditional public schools. As to why students make smaller test score gains in charter schools than traditional public schools, the authors suggest that high student turnover in some charter schools may be the difference. “On average, the percentage of students in a school between grades 4 and 8 that have made a non-structural transfer in the last year is higher in charter schools than in traditional public schools,” the authors state. A non-structural transfer occurs when a student decides to transfer to a new school before completing the full grade span at the school he or she is attending. As expected, the average student turnover is lower in charter schools that have been open longer. However, the authors find that average turnover rates remain twice as high in charters even when they have been open for five years.

A separate study by George M. Holmes, Jeff Desimone, and Nicholas G. Rupp was published by the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, a long-time advocate of charter schools. It found that examining performance at the school level rather than the level of the individual student did show a competition effect of improvement at North Carolina traditional public schools located near charter schools. The authors speculate that this finding, which is contrary to the finding by Ladd and Bifulco, may be because traditional schools faced with competition tended to focus on students just shy of achieving grade level, so that gains by a few students could have a big effect on the overall performance of the school. “In short, our results reveal substantial improvements in traditional public school performance due to the introduction and (continues on page 32)

*Be good enough not to have  
students leave your schools.*

—ROGER GERBER  
DIRECTOR, N.C. LEAGUE OF  
CHARTER SCHOOLS

in other countries through pen pal and Internet correspondence and through visiting delegations from these countries," Beall says. Guests from more than 20 countries have visited the campus in collaboration with Charlotte's International House and the U.S. Department of State.

Faculty at CIS come from seven different countries. Two teachers hail from Uganda, representing the UNITE program (Uganda and North Carolina International Teaching for the Environment), sponsored by the N.C. Zoological Park. CIS is the first charter school to be a partner with World View, the prestigious center in Chapel Hill that provides international education programs, seminars, workshops, and travel experiences for K-12 educators worldwide.

CIS follows the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program, an international, transdisciplinary program designed to foster development of the "whole child," including social, physical, emotional, and cultural as well as academic needs. The Primary Years Program employs six transdisciplinary themes school-wide for each six-week term: who we are, where we are in place and time, how we express ourselves, how the world works, how we organize ourselves, and sharing the planet.

The teaching follows units of inquiry. "The 4<sup>th</sup> grade might be studying North Carolina history, which has involved a tremendous growth in population from immigration," Beall states. "A unit of inquiry might ask, what are the deeper events going on? Why do people move? Students might develop a project on migration and movement."

CIS also places a strong emphasis on environmental education. Beall hopes the 34-acre campus with its forest and wetlands will become an outdoor classroom for various activities that promote environmental awareness and stewardship. Plans for permanent buildings call for energy and water-saving features such as daylighting (clerestory windows that replace the need for artificial lights) and cisterns to gather rainwater for use in flushing toilets. Teachers and students work together on environmental service projects "to cultivate respect, learn responsibility, develop solutions and offer service while having fun." In 2005-06, CIS had a performance composite of 85.9 percent, 15<sup>th</sup> highest among charter schools.

—John Manuel

(continued from page 28) growth of charter school choice," the authors conclude. "Read alongside the results of studies based on student-level data, they suggest that even a little bit of competition can force schools to appear to be improving, but that policymakers need to take care to ensure that translates into real gains for the average student."<sup>8</sup>

*"Charter school students exhibit 'considerably smaller achievement gains' in reading and math, on average, than they would have in traditional public schools."*

— STUDY BY HELEN LADD AND  
ROBERT BIFULCO

In 2004, SRI International conducted a study for the U.S. Department of Education entitled "Evaluation of the Public Charter Schools Program." The federal government supports charter schools through the Public Charter Schools Program (PCSP). PCSP funds the state grant program, supports charter school research and demonstration programs, and underwrites national charter school conferences. The SRI report was designed to: (1) provide the public and education policymakers with the findings from a descriptive examination of how the PCSP operates, and (2) continue documentation of the evolution of the charter school movement.

The report contains case studies of charter schools in five states, including North Carolina, analyzing data from the 2001–02 school year. Based on these case studies, the report concludes that charter schools are less likely to meet state performance standards than traditional public schools. For North Carolina, the key finding was that 12 percent of charter schools did not meet the state performance standard (e.g., were classified as Low-Performing under the ABCs program) during the 2001–02 school year, as opposed to 1 percent of traditional public schools.<sup>9</sup> The study does not attempt to answer whether this is due to some attribute of the charter schools themselves, the prior achievement of the students, or some other factor.

However, the authors make clear that “charter schools were less likely to meet performance standards compared with traditional public schools” in all five states studied: Colorado, Illinois, Massachusetts, North Carolina, and Texas.<sup>10</sup> (For more, see “Issues Surrounding Charter Schools: A Look at Other States,” pp. 38–43.)

*“[O]ur results reveal substantial improvements in traditional public school performance due to the introduction and growth of charter school choice.”*

— STUDY BY GEORGE M. HOLMES, ET AL.

## Weighing the Numbers

**T**he mission of the Office of Charter Schools within the N.C. Department of Public Instruction is to provide leadership and technical assistance to people interested in starting a public charter school and, once started, to help the schools maintain high-quality academic programs and assist with issues around management and governance within the school in compliance with the North Carolina Charter Schools Act.<sup>11</sup> While a state agency, the office advocates for charter schools within the scope of the law. That’s in part because without charter schools, the office would have no reason to exist. Officials in the office are quick to point to the dramatic improvement in charter schools’ performance composites for the 2003–04 school year over 2000–01, the last year considered in the Ladd-Bifulco study. They are especially proud of the fact that only one of the 94 charters ranked as Low-Performing in 2003–04, compared to 19 in 2000–01. And, no charter schools were designated as Low-Performing in 2004–05.

“We closed some schools and worked really hard with others to bring them up,” says Jackie Jenkins, education consultant for the Office of Charter Schools. Jenkins says the key to improving the schools’ performance has been The Instructional Leadership Coaching Program (ILCP) sponsored through federal grants aimed at improving charter school performance. ILCP engaged five experienced educators to work as coaches with the leaders of 15 charter schools designated as Low-Performing or priority schools in the 2000–01 school year, and the Office of Charter Schools staff says the program was implemented successfully for four years. The focus of the coaching effort was to develop an organizational structure in the schools and instructional leadership behaviors in the principals that supported improved teaching and better student performance. The program was designed specifically for low-performing charter schools and *was not offered to traditional public schools*.

“Research on effective schools points to the fact that the ultimate determination of excellence is in the leadership of the school and the quality of the teaching staffs,” Jenkins says. “We believe that leadership development and focused, quality staff development provides the framework that supports teaching excellence.”

Moyer, Director of the Office of Charter Schools, says performance of new charter schools has been helped dramatically by a state requirement put in place in 2002 as part of a federal grant approved through the U.S. Department of Education, that charter schools conduct a full year of planning before opening.<sup>12</sup> New schools receive a \$100,000 grant from the federal government to assist with this planning, to train the nonprofit school’s board of directors, and to get computers set up. “This is the best

*"It comes as no surprise to teachers in the traditional public schools that children transferring in from charter schools are behind. We've been seeing this for some time."*

— CAROLYN MCKINNEY, VICE-PRESIDENT,  
N.C. ASSOCIATION OF EDUCATORS

thing the state has done," Moyer says. "The state has taken a huge responsibility in helping charter schools be successful, and it's really paid off."

Further measures the state has taken to help charter schools succeed include: creation of a 10-year charter to help schools qualify for school construction loans; an annual charter schools conference that highlights best practices; regular visits to charter schools by consultants from the N.C. Office of Charter Schools; specialization of the consultant staff in areas such as board training, administrative mentoring, and exceptional children; and development of an interactive "mailbox" system to help charter schools comply with administrative reporting requirements.

Moyer is not dissuaded by the studies that show North Carolina charter schools lagging in performance behind traditional public schools. He points to a steady record of improvement beginning in 2001–02 in the percentage of charter schools making expected or high growth on the state's accountability tests based on make-up of their student bodies. While charter schools still trail the traditional public schools on this measure, Moyer says there have been some years where charter school growth showed improvement while traditional school growth declined.<sup>13</sup> "No one can say that if a child was in another school, they'd be doing 'X,'" Moyer says. "Many of the students who choose charters do so because they were struggling academically in traditional public schools. You can't expect charters to turn them around in a year or two." Moyer also points to a 2006 policy brief that details the difficulty of evaluating the charter schools movement nationally. As the authors put it, "There is no single method, and no single study, that can convincingly tell policymakers all that they need to know about the impact of charter schools on student learning."<sup>14</sup>

Roger Gerber, executive director of the N.C. League of Charter Schools of Chapel Hill, N.C., agrees. "There are studies that come to different conclusions," Gerber says. "The results are all over the place. You have to look at the author's agenda."

Duke professor Ladd defends her study, pointing out that she and Bifulco were not hypothesizing what students would do, but comparing actual gains of students in charter schools with gains the same students made in traditional public schools. "Sometimes the students went from public schools to charter schools, and sometimes it was the other way around," she says. "We observed the same negative effect either way. You wouldn't expect charter school students [coming from traditional public schools] to do *worse* even if they were unhappy with the public schools."


As for any hidden agenda, Ladd asserts she is not anti-charter. "My husband is on the board of a charter school in Durham that's doing quite well," she says. "But charters cannot claim to improve academic achievement."

Carolyn McKinney, vice-president of the N.C. Association of Educators, says the anecdotal information she gets from traditional public school teachers supports Ladd and Bifulco's findings. "It comes as no surprise to teachers in the traditional public schools that children transferring in from charter schools are behind," McKinney says. "We've been seeing this for some time."

Bryan Hassel is executive director of Public Impact, a Chapel Hill-based nonprofit organization conducting research on charter schools. Hassel was commissioned by the Charter School Leadership Council, now called the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, to do a national review of research on charter school achievement. *Charter School Achievement: What We Know*, published in July 2005, analyzes 26 studies that looked at change over time in student or charter school performance. Of these, says Hassel, 11 follow individual students over time, which he characterizes as the "ideal way to examine change." The remaining studies use other methods, such

as looking at school-wide or grade-wide changes in performance. Of the 26 studies, 12 found that overall gains in charter schools were larger than for other public schools. Four found charter schools' gains higher in certain significant categories of schools (e.g., elementary schools, high schools, or schools serving at-risk students). Six studies found comparable gains in charter and traditional public schools. Four studies, including two that focused specifically on North Carolina schools (Noblitt & Dickson's 2001 study and Ladd & Bifulco's 2004 study), found that charter schools' gains lagged those of the traditional public schools generally.<sup>15</sup>

But a careful read shows a mixed picture. "At some level, mixed results are inevitable," writes Hassel. "The charter sector is host to a vast diversity of schools, utilizing all manner of educational and organizational approaches. The charter is but a shell, into which the operators place an instructional and management program. Asking about the quality of 'charter schools' as a group is a bit like asking about the quality of 'new restaurants' or 'American cars' — any overall generalization will mask the great diversity within."<sup>16</sup>



...an educationally classless society. Our  
...is our ruling class.  
...be an educationally  
classless society... We should have a  
one-track system of schooling, not  
system with two or more tracks, only  
one of which goes straight ahead while  
the others shunt the young off onto  
sidetracks not headed toward the goal  
our society opens to all.

THE PAUSE

Of the two North Carolina studies Hassel reviews, the Bifulco and Ladd study is discussed above. The other study was conducted by George Noblit of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's School of Education under contract with the N.C. Department of Public Instruction. Noblit found that, "When compared to traditional public schools, charter schools as a group do not demonstrate better performance; in fact, their students tend to trail those in other public schools, even though their students as a group appear to have exhibited higher achievement scores prior to entering the charter schools."<sup>17</sup>

Both of the North Carolina studies fit Hassel's description of the ideal study design in that they followed the performance of individual students over time. And though he is an advocate for charter schools, Hassel does not dispute the findings of the North Carolina studies. Why would North Carolina charters do poorly in comparison to those in some other states?

"It could be due to the authorization process," Hassel says. "I feel the bar was originally set too low in terms of charter schools' academic plan and leadership. Now, the state is much more aware of the need for good planning."

Moyer points out that besides academics, other areas of performance can be measured. "One of those areas is the safety of the school, and this would directly influence a parent's decision to place their child in a charter school" Moyer says. "Charter school students are significantly less likely to be involved as victims or perpetrators

of violent acts." In 2003–04, North Carolina charter schools had 2.52 reportable criminal or violent acts per 1,000 students while traditional public schools, reporting by local school district, had 7.37 reportable criminal or violent acts per 1,000 students. In 2004–05, the numbers were 2.293 for charter schools compared to 7.485 for traditional public schools. In 2005–06, the numbers were 1.6138 for charter schools and 7.90 for traditional public schools.

*"Many of the students who choose charters do so because they were struggling academically in traditional public schools. You can't expect charters to turn them around in a year or two."*

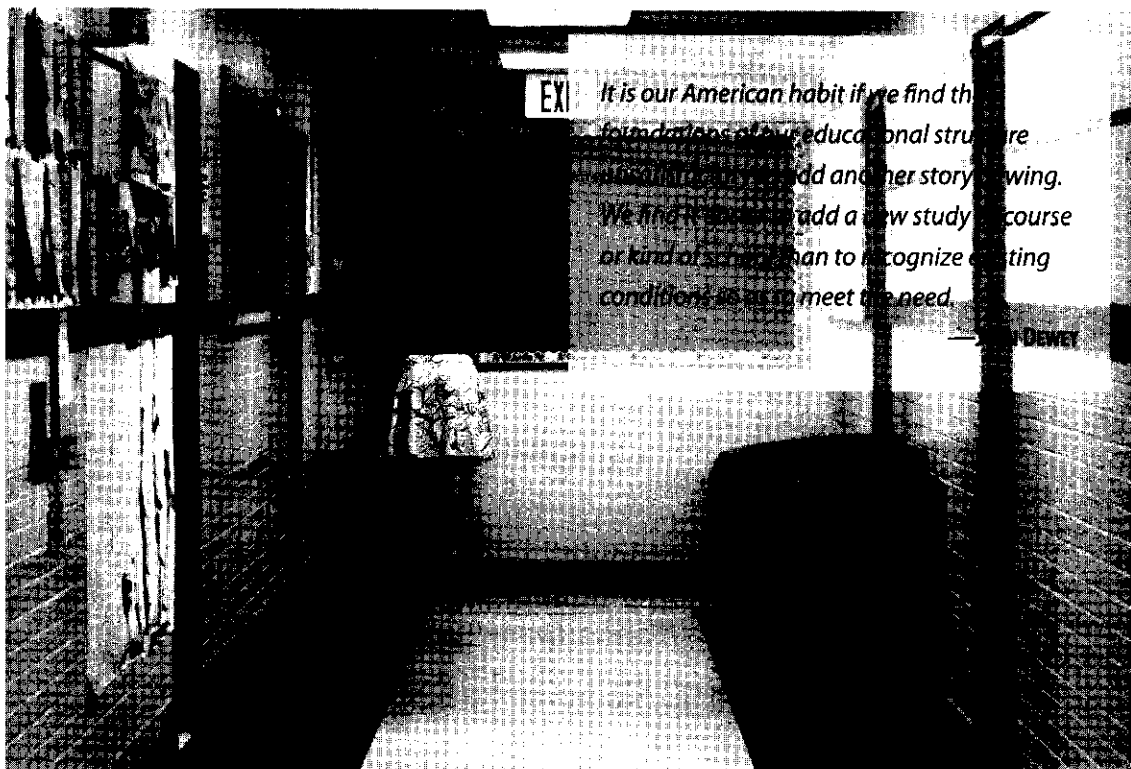
—JACK MOYER, DIRECTOR,  
N.C. OFFICE OF CHARTER SCHOOLS

## The Record of Charter Schools on Racial Balance

The state law authorizing charter schools has this to say on the subject of racial balance within North Carolina's charter schools: "Within one year after the charter school begins operation, the population of the school shall reasonably reflect the racial and ethnic composition of the general population residing within the local school administrative unit in which the school is located or the racial and ethnic composition of the special population that the school seeks to serve residing within the local school administrative unit in which the school is located."<sup>18</sup> Early critics of the charter school movement worried that charter schools were going to become a bastion for white flight. Sen. Doug Berger (D-Franklin) believes the concern is a legitimate one. Berger says he has opposed expansion of the cap on the number of charter schools because he believes the schools have been used as a vehicle to escape desegregated schools. As an example, Berger cites Vance Charter School in Henderson, N.C. Berger says the school is overwhelmingly white and has resisted his suggestion that a percentage of its classroom seats be reserved for students eligible for a free or reduced-cost lunch. "I'm not ideologically opposed to charter schools," says Berger, "provided that children get a quality education and it's not a means by which people can functionally engage in white flight."

Vance Charter School is one of several charter schools with disproportionate numbers of whites, but the number of disproportionately African-American charter





schools is far greater. In its previous analysis of charter schools, the Center found that a significant number of charters (30 in 2000–01) had student populations more than 80 percent non-white.<sup>19</sup> Some were specifically targeted toward certain racial groups, with an Afro-centric or similar emphasis in their charters.

Reflecting the original charter schools authorizing legislation and the Center's concern that the charter schools movement should not promote resegregation of public schools any more than is already occurring, the Center recommended in 2002 that the State Board of Education not grant any new charters for schools that target a narrow racial or ethnic population. Few charters have been granted for such schools and at least 15 predominantly African-American charter schools have had their charters terminated, though that was for other reasons such as declining enrollment, failing to comply with financial regulations, and poor business management, according to the Office of Charter Schools.

However, the number of schools dominated by a single ethnic group — usually African American — is still significant. In 2005–06, 39 of 99 charter schools had more than a 50 percent minority student population. In fact, 26 of the 99 charter schools (26.26 percent) were 80 percent or more non-white, and  
(continues on page 44)

*"Within one year after the charter school begins operation, the population of the school shall reasonably reflect the racial and ethnic composition of the general population residing within the local school administrative unit in which the school is located or the racial and ethnic composition of the special population that the school seeks to serve residing within the local school administrative unit in which the school is located."*

— N.C.G.S. § 115C-238.29F(g)(5)

(continued from page 37) 14 of those were more than 95 percent African American. Four of the 99 were 100 percent African American (see Table 3, p. 45).<sup>20</sup> Two schools—Haliwa-Saponi Tribal and CIS Academy—have Native American student populations over 85 percent.

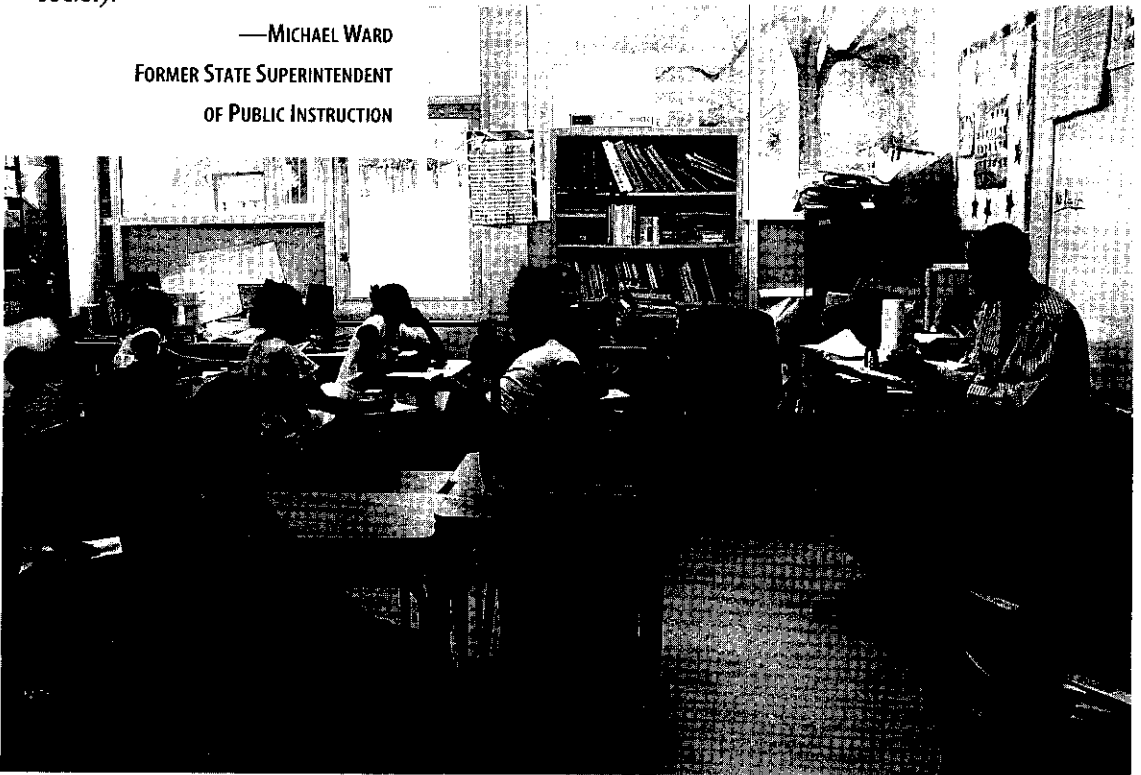
"If you compare charter schools on a school-by-school basis, the diversity issue does provide concern," says Moyer. "However, certain school districts in North Carolina have high numbers of minority students in less than diverse schools—Charlotte/Mecklenburg and Durham." And, while African-American students were one of the largest racial or ethnic groups attending the state's charter schools, the total enrollment numbers now more closely resemble those of the traditional public schools when broken down by race. In other words, while there is broad variation in diversity among individual charter schools, charter school attendance on the whole is not skewed toward one racial group or another.

For Berger, who is white, predominantly African-American or other non-white ethno-centric schools are less troubling than those that are primarily white. That's because socio-economic difficulties characteristic of many minority groups create self-esteem issues that may interfere with learning, says Berger. "Good self-esteem is a critical component toward children being successful," Berger says.

Because people voluntarily apply to charter schools and schools choose from among these applicants by lottery, charter school administrators say they cannot dictate who attends their schools. And in granting charters, state and other officials have only marginal leverage to impact the racial make-up of charter schools. "Any time you force a school of choice not to be a school of choice, you've got a problem," says Michael Fedewa, former chairman of the N.C. Charter Schools Advisory Committee, which screens applications for new charters before

*I'm not suggesting that lack of diversity is unacceptable in all instances, but we should not accept these kinds of student enrollment patterns without asking some pretty probing questions. I fear we may some day look back on this period as the early Balkanization of our society.*

—MICHAEL WARD  
FORMER STATE SUPERINTENDENT  
OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION



**Table 3. N.C. Charter Schools That Are  
Majority African American (2005–06)**

#	School Name	County/School System	Percent African American
1	Children's Village	Lenoir	100.00%
2	Dillard Academy	Wayne	100.00%
3	Laurinburg Charter	Scotland	100.00%
4	Omuteko Gwamaziima	Durham	100.00%
5	Healthy Start	Durham	99.10%
6	Highland Charter	Gaston	99.07%
7	Hope Elementary	Wake	98.95%
8	Maureen Joy	Durham	98.62%
9	Sugar Creek Charter	Charlotte/Mecklenburg	98.19%
10	Torchlight Academy	Wake	98.19%
11	Success Institute	Iredell	97.94%
12	PreEminent Charter	Wake	97.89%
13	SPARC Academy	Wake	96.94%
14	Imani Institute	Guilford	95.31%
15	Kinston Charter	Lenoir	94.63%
16	Crossroads Charter	Charlotte/Mecklenburg	94.15%
17	Kennedy Charter	Charlotte/Mecklenburg	92.86%
18	Rowan Academy	Rowan	90.90%
19	Carter Community	Durham	90.51%
20	Gaston College Prep	Northampton	89.87%
21	Quality Education Academy	Forsyth/Winston-Salem	87.37%
22	Guilford Charter	Guilford	85.53%
23	East Winston Primary	Forsyth/Winston-Salem	84.62%
24	Alpha Academy	Cumberland	80.00%
25	Baker Charter	Wake	79.17%
26	CG Woodson	Forsyth	77.59%
27	Research Triangle Charter	Wake	76.15%
28	Downtown Middle	Forsyth/Winston-Salem	71.90%
29	Community Charter	Charlotte/Mecklenburg	70.83%
30	Laurinburg Homework Center	Scotland	66.02%
31	Ann Atwater	Durham	65.63%
32	Provisions Academy	Lee	62.66%
33	Rocky Mount Preparatory	Nash	61.13%
34	Sallie B. Howard*	Wilson	59.02%
35	Kestrel Heights	Durham	57.75%
36	STARS Charter	Moore	56.79%
37	Forsyth Academies	Forsyth/Winston-Salem	51.24%

**N.C. Charter Schools That Are Majority Native American**

#	School Name	County/School System	Percent Native American
1	Haliwa-Saponi Tribal	Warren	88.08%
2	CIS Academy	Robeson	85.86%

\* The Sallie B. Howard School also has a significant Hispanic population — 38.53% of the student population. The total percentage of non-white students at this school is 97.85%.

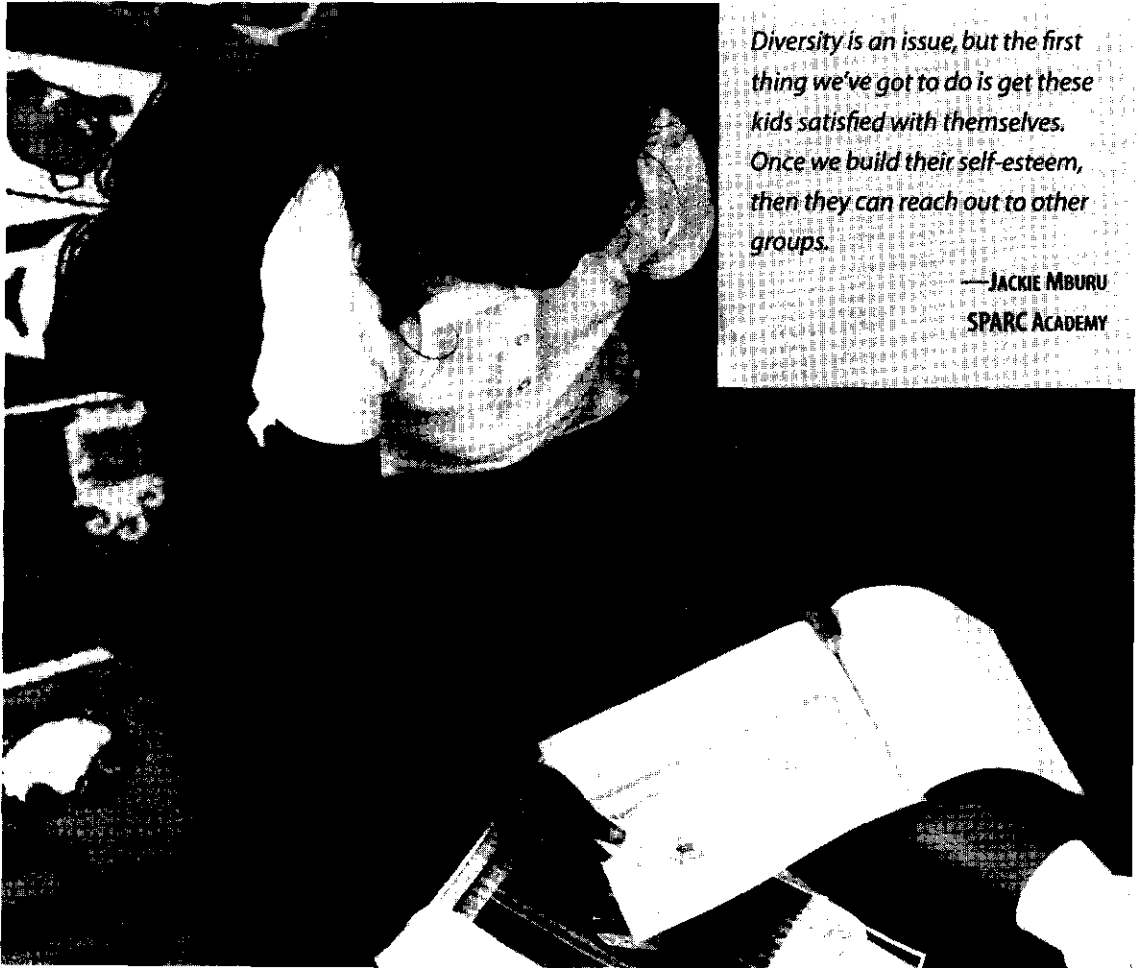
Source: North Carolina Public Schools Statistical Profile 2006. Table 36. Charter School Membership by Race and Sex, 2005–06, pp. 317–18. See [http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/docs/fbs/resources/data/statistical\\_profile/2006profile.pdf](http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/docs/fbs/resources/data/statistical_profile/2006profile.pdf).

they are passed on to the State Board of Education. "From a committee standpoint, we ask that they make a good faith effort [to diversify], but that only goes so far." Indeed, one successful charter school attempted to set aside 15 percent of its slots for minorities but was rebuffed by the Charter School Advisory Committee under the advice of the N.C. Attorney General's Office on grounds that the rules require a straight lottery for open seats. "The state statute requires the use of a lottery if applications exceed the number of seats available," says Moyer. "The school's lottery cannot be established to favor particular groups just as the N.C. Education Lottery, to be open and fair, cannot be established to favor certain citizen groups.

However, Sen. Doug Berger believes the rules would not stand in the way of setting aside a certain percentage of seats for children from families of lower socioeconomic status. That is how the Wake County Public Schools have chosen to maintain diversity in the face of court rulings that forbid the assignment of students to schools by race, Berger says.

While segregation in substantial numbers of charter schools has been apparent for some years, Moyer says few people have publicly expressed concern. "We don't hear any complaints except from the media and a few public school administrators who feel charter schools are taking the cream of the [student] crop," Moyer says.

The authors of the SRI International study for the U.S. Department of Education examined the association between academic performance and school type after controlling for the proportion of minority students. Charter schools in North Carolina



*Diversity is an issue, but the first thing we've got to do is get these kids satisfied with themselves. Once we build their self-esteem, then they can reach out to other groups.*

—JACKIE MBURU  
SPARC ACADEMY



serve larger proportions of minority students than traditional public schools, and the authors wanted to know if this was a factor in the lower performance. They found that charter schools were still less likely to meet state performance standards regardless of the proportion of minority students.<sup>21</sup>

Federal and state law have mandated integration of the public schools on the basis that segregated schools violated the U.S. constitutional guarantee of “equal protection under the laws” and the state guarantee of an “equal educational opportunity” and thus were by definition inferior, at least when it came to the plight of African Americans. The widely held view was that diversity benefits everyone. Today, African Americans and other minorities in some instances choose to attend schools with members of their own race.

“Race does matter, but it’s all in the way it’s handled,” says Jackie Mburu, an African American and former principal of Raleigh’s SPARC Academy, which promotes African culture in its setting and curriculum. “It’s like Baptist churches. One might have an African-American congregation, and another down the road might be white. If you choose to attend a church where you feel comfortable and where you’re not knocking the other church, what’s wrong with it?”

“Evidently, many of our kids feel rejected by the public education system,” says Sen. Larry Shaw, an African-American state Senator (D-Cumberland) and sponsor of a bill to raise the cap on charter schools. “That’s why we feel we need to get behind the charter movement.”

Fedewa believes that one reason that traditional public school administrators have not spoken out against minority-dominated charter schools is that the latter provide a valuable alternative for students that may present academic or behavioral challenges.

*“Evidently, many of our kids feel rejected by the public education system. That’s why we feel we need to get behind the charter movement.”*

— SEN. LARRY SHAW (D-CUMBERLAND)

**Table 4. Number of Charter Schools in N.C., by County (2006–07)**

County	Number	County	Number	County	Number
1. Alamance	3	35. Franklin	1	69. Pamlico	1
2. Alexander	0	36. Gaston	2	70. Pasquotank	0
3. Alleghany	0	37. Gates	0	71. Pender	0
4. Anson	0	38. Graham	0	72. Perquimans	0
5. Ashe	0	39. Granville	0	73. Person	2
6. Avery	2	40. Greene	0	74. Pitt	0
7. Beaufort	1	41. Guilford	4	75. Polk	0
8. Bertie	0	42. Halifax	0	76. Randolph	0
9. Bladen	0	43. Harnett	0	77. Richmond	0
10. Brunswick	1	44. Haywood	0	78. Robeson	1
11. Buncombe	3	45. Henderson	1	79. Rockingham	1
12. Burke	1	46. Hertford	0	80. Rowan	0
13. Cabarrus	1	47. Hoke	0	81. Rutherford	1
14. Caldwell	0	48. Hyde	0	82. Sampson	0
15. Camden	0	49. Iredell	3	83. Scotland	1
16. Carteret	2	50. Jackson	1	84. Stanly	1
17. Caswell	0	51. Johnston	0	85. Stokes	0
18. Catawba	0	52. Jones	0	86. Surry	1
19. Chatham	2	53. Lee	1	87. Swain	1
20. Cherokee	1	54. Lenoir	2	88. Transylvania	1
21. Chowan	0	55. Lincoln	1	89. Tyrrell	0
22. Clay	0	56. Macon	0	90. Union	1
23. Cleveland	0	57. Madison	0	91. Vance	1
24. Columbus	0	58. Martin	0	92. Wake	14
25. Craven	0	59. McDowell	0	93. Warren	1
26. Cumberland	1	60. Mecklenburg	9	94. Washington	0
27. Currituck	0	61. Mitchell	0	95. Watauga	1
28. Dare	0	62. Montgomery	0	96. Wayne	1
29. Davidson	0	63. Moore	2	97. Wilkes	1
30. Davie	0	64. Nash	1	98. Wilson	1
31. Duplin	0	65. New Hanover	1	99. Yadkin	0
32. Durham	6	66. Northampton	1	100. Yancey	0
33. Edgecombe	0	67. Onslow	0		
34. Forsyth	5	68. Orange	2		
				<b>Total:</b>	<b>93</b>

Number of 100 counties without charter schools: 54

Source: <http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/docs/charterschools/resources/charterschoolqa.ppt#269,19>.  
Charter Schools by County 2006–2007 School Year.

"The [traditional] public schools are happy to have charters take kids that are having trouble," Fedewa says. "In fact, the Chapel Hill City Schools expressed considerable concern when it appeared that School in the Community charter was going to close. They didn't want to have to take those kids back."

However, the Ladd study examining academic performance indicates students in North Carolina charter schools are sacrificing academic gains as a result of moving to charter schools, so public officials have reason to be concerned. In a more recent paper focusing more narrowly on race and charter schools, Bifulco and Ladd reach two important conclusions: (1) students who move from traditional public schools to charter schools generally move into a more racially isolated environment; and (2) this combined with poorer academic performance for African American students when they move to charters may contribute to the race-based academic achievement gap in the North Carolina public schools.<sup>22</sup> In considering state policy toward the cap on charter schools, legislators will need to consider whether the proliferation of charter schools serving racial minorities should be discouraged, encouraged, or simply accepted as freedom of choice. Bifulco and Ladd's latest study provides food for thought on this question.

## How Much Innovation Occurs in Charter Schools?

One of the original goals of the charter school movement, as stated in the authorizing legislation, was to "Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods."<sup>23</sup> The idea was that charter schools could provide an opportunity for teachers and administrators to try innovations in the classroom which, if successful, could serve as models to be copied in the traditional public schools. Charter schools have adopted a number of innovative approaches to learning, ranging from arts-based instruction at schools such as Arts Based Elementary in Winston-Salem and Sandhills Theater Arts Renaissance School in Vass, to international themes at schools such as Carolina International School in Harrisburg and Exploris Middle School in Raleigh, to Socratic dialogue at schools such as Socrates Academy in Charlotte and Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy in Mooresboro. Yet there is little evidence that traditional public schools have adopted these innovations on a large-scale basis.

At SPARC Academy, boys and girls are educated separately, starting in sixth grade. Administrators insist this makes for a better learning environment. "When the boys and girls are together, you can see and feel the difference between the way they respond to each other and to the teacher," says Jackie Mburu, the former principal of SPARC Academy. "By separating them, the single genders stay more focused, more open to discuss things without the opposite gender making comments."

Joy Warner of Children's Community School in Davidson insists that arts-based instruction does wonders for her children. "Brain research says hands-on learning is crucial for young children, and that's why we use a lot of arts," Warner says. "All classes perform what they study in class."

At Quest Academy in Raleigh, one of the top-ranked schools in the state on ABC scores, Principal Charles Watson sticks to a simple formula of small classes and good teachers. "All our teachers are certified; 40 percent hold masters degrees," Watson says. "We ask them to do only one thing — teach 15 kids," Watson says. The school day at Quest, where the grade span is kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade, is short (five hours), and no extracurricular activities are provided. The typical traditional public school offers a seven-hour school day and average student-teacher ratios of 19:1 for grades K-3 and 21:1 for grades 4-8.

Gaston College Preparatory School, in the Northampton County town of Gaston, N.C., follows a formula of long days (eight hours compared to seven in the typical public school) and lots of extracurricular activities, including field trips to Ivy League

*"Realistically, I don't think the public schools can afford to do what we do. They can't get smaller. They can't shorten their instructional day. You can't take a large public school and tell the teachers they don't have any work days."*

— CHARLES WATSON, PRINCIPAL,  
QUEST ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

colleges. Classes are large. Most teachers are not certified. "If you walked into any of our classrooms, you would not be able to tell the difference between a teacher that is certified and one that is not," says Caleb Dolan, principal of Gaston College Preparatory. State law requires that charter schools employ at least 75 percent certified teachers for grade K–5 and 50 percent certified teachers for grade spans 6–8 and 9–12.<sup>24</sup>

Aside from an annual conference coordinated by the Office of Charter Schools, the state has not established a vehicle by which the traditional public schools can examine charter schools innovations and consider them for adoption. And some in the traditional public schools may not feel there is much to be learned. Indeed, spokespersons for the North Carolina Association of Educators and the N.C. School Boards Association could cite no example where a charter school innovation had been adopted by a traditional public school in North Carolina.

"I don't know how we can get innovation accepted," Moyer says. "The traditional public schools don't necessarily want to listen." But Moyer says traditional public schools are quietly adopting some of the innovations that occur in charter schools. "Actually, movement of innovations from charter schools to LEAs is occurring, but the LEA would not advertise this fact," says Moyer. "Further, if the LEA decides not to adopt an innovation that is their choice, but that does not indicate these novel practices are not occurring."

Moyer offers several instances where North Carolina charter schools have offered information on innovations to the state's traditional public schools or where the traditional public schools had sought that information out.

For starters, Moyer says the Office of Charter Schools has invited every LEA superintendent in the state to attend its annual conference in the fall. Further, a number of innovations have been adopted or explored around the leasing and construction of buildings on a tight budget. In addition, Moyer cites numerous partnerships between charters and traditional public schools where ideas and resources are shared. "These are just a few among many others," says Moyer.

The examples include:

- Arts Based Elementary School and Winston-Salem Forsyth County Schools, where the local school system provides buses to the charter school for field trips, does the charter school's payroll, and provides additional administrative support.
- Chatham Charter School and Chatham County Schools, where the administrators at the charter school are incorporated into local leadership training sessions.
- Cape Lookout Marine Science High School, in Carteret County, where the charter school provides services for local students in partnership with the LEA. Further, the school currently leases its facility from the county.
- ArtSpace Charter School in Buncombe County, which has hosted training for teachers in Buncombe County. The training focused on how to integrate the arts into the classroom while also providing resources for this arts integration through the National Archives website.
- Charter Day School in Brunswick County, where the school has provided training for two elementary school faculties on how to implement Direct Instruction.





These schools were low-performing, but their scores have risen with this charter school's assistance. Charter Day School also has trained the "lead trainer" in Brunswick County Schools on Direct Instruction for use in the county school system.

And, Moyer cites one example where a traditional public school uses a concept tried out at a charter school just down the street. "Exploris Middle School, located in downtown Raleigh, has a partnership with the Exploris Museum," says Moyer. "Their curriculum is closely tied to the offerings of the museum as well. Wake County Schools opened a school on the same square called Moore Square Museum Magnet School. This is clear evidence of an innovation moving to an LEA."

However, there are some instances where innovations tried in charter schools just may not be feasible in larger public schools. Quest Academy Principal Watson, a veteran of 30 years in teaching and administration in the traditional public schools, says he doubts the public schools could adopt any of the traits that have proven successful at his charter, such as smaller classes, shorter days, and elimination of teacher workdays. "Realistically, I don't think the public schools can afford to do what we do," Watson says. "They can't get smaller. They can't shorten their instructional day. You can't take a large public school and tell the teachers they don't have any work days."

This raises the question among some advocates for charter schools as to whether the charter experiment should really be considered a proving ground for innovation or simply another choice in public education. "The whole innovation premise needs to be redefined," says Fedewa. "The charters as a rule have not provided that 'aha' experience, but choice is itself an innovation."

**Table 5. 10 Highest-Performing Charter Schools  
on End-of-Grade Tests, 2005–06**

	<b>School System</b>	<b>School Name</b>	<b>Grade Span</b>	<b>Performance Composite Score</b>
1.	Charlotte/Mecklenburg	Metrolina Regional Scholars Academy	K-8	100.0
2.	Wake County	Quest Academy	K-8	99.1
3.	Wake County	Magellan Charter	4-8	97.9
4.	Wake County	Raleigh Charter High	9-12	97.6
5.	Wake County	Exploris	6-8	94.6
6.	Charlotte/Mecklenburg	Lake Norman Charter	5-8	92.4
7.	Guilford County	Greensboro Academy	K-8	90.5
8.	Stanly County	Gray Stone Day	9-12	89.4
9.	Chatham County	Woods Charter	1-12	88.3
10.	Jackson County	Summit Charter	K-8	88.2

**10 Lowest-Performing Charter Schools  
on End-of-Grade Tests, 2005–06**

	<b>School System</b>	<b>School Name</b>	<b>Grade Span</b>	<b>Performance Composite Score</b>
1.	Scotland County	Laurinburg Charter	9-12	15.3
2.	Lee County	Provisions Academy	6-12	18.1
3.	Charlotte/Mecklenburg	Kennedy Charter	6-12	21.4
4.	Charlotte/Mecklenburg	Crossroads Charter High	9-12	23.7
5.	Scotland County	The Laurinburg Homework Center	8-12	25.7
6.	Robeson County	CIS Academy	6-8	33.0
7.	Durham County	Healthy Start Academy	K-8	38.0
8.	Wake County	Torchlight Academy	K-6	38.3
9.	Wake County	Baker Charter High	9-12	38.7
10.	Wake County	SPARC Academy	K-8	42.7

*Source:* N.C. Department of Public Instruction. Kennedy Charter, Laurinburg Homework Academy, Provisions Academy, Crossroads Charter High, Lakeside School, Laurinburg Charter, Grandfather Academy, Crossnore Academy, and Baker Charter High are allowed to use alternative assessments due to the high-risk nature of their students. Laurinburg Charter closed in June 2006. Baker Charter High is located in the Wake County Jail. In October 2006, the State Board of Education voted to revoke the school's charter. It will close June 30, 2007.

**Table 6. Comparison of Charter Schools  
with Traditional Public Schools**

<b>Areas of Special Treatment for Charter Schools</b>	<b>Areas Where Charter Schools are Disadvantaged Compared to Traditional Public Schools</b>	<b>Areas Where There Is No Difference Between Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools</b>
Are eligible for special federal grants available only to charter schools	Receive no state or local dollars for capital construction	Both receive state and local average daily membership funding
Able to offer longer school day and school year	No state lottery money for school construction	Both receive local fines and forfeitures money collected by the courts
Able to offer smaller class size	Classes less likely to be taught by fully licensed and certified teachers	Both are subject to state and federal school accountability requirements for academic performance
No accountability for racial balance	Each charter school functions like its own school district so there is no support from the local education administrative unit (LEA). However, there is support from the Office of Charter Schools in the state Department of Public Instruction.	
Not required to operate cafeteria or provide bus service		
Greater flexibility in hiring and firing of teachers		
Special mentoring and greater support from state in business management and planning		
Students or their parents can select a charter school and are not subject to reassignment like traditional public school students		
Freedom from many state regulations governing schools, though must take state and federal academic performance tests		

## Management and Financial Viability of Charter Schools

### *Charter Schools That Closed or Had Charters Revoked*

Since the state began the charter school experiment in 1997, at least 27 charters have closed or had their charters revoked, most because of insufficient enrollment or financial “noncompliance.” Another 11 were granted charters but never opened (see Table 7). Of these, five failed to open due to incomplete planning, two failed to open due to unresolved legal issues, two failed to open due to inability to secure an adequate school facility, and one failed to open because initial enrollment fell short.

Laurinburg Charter School had its charter revoked in November 2004 based on a broad range of findings, including an audit exception for the school’s drawing state funding of \$102,539.76 for 24 out-of-state students in fiscal year 2002–03. In addition, the Charter School Advisory Committee found irregularities in the school’s administration of state accountability testing. “The Committee was not satisfied that, in light of the years of inadequate, if not evasive, testing procedures, the School has the ability or the desire to rectify the situation,” wrote Office of Charter Schools Director Jack Moyer in a September 13, 2004, letter to the school outlining reasons the advisory committee was recommending revocation.

Imani Institute in Greensboro joined the list of schools forced to close when the State Board of Education revoked its charter in July 2006. The school had not filed required annual financial audits from 2001–02 through 2004–05. And in October 2006, the State Board of Education revoked the charter of John H. Baker Charter High School, effective June 30, 2007. Charter school regulators say the school failed to keep adequate records on enrollment and finances, and that classes were limited to as little as an hour a day. Authorized to operate in the Wake County Jail, the school began operating offsite and even met in public libraries. In the end, regulators determined that Baker Charter was operating more like a tutoring program than a school.



Because funding is directly tied to the number of students at a school, declining enrollment can quickly lead to serious financial issues. Of the 27 schools that have closed, at least 15 were attributed to some degree to declining enrollment that decimated funding. Insufficient funding can compromise the quality of a learning environment and closure of a school can disrupt children's lives. Forced closure of charter schools can make embarrassing headlines. But some see this as part of the natural evolution of the charter experiment.

"I don't see the closure of these charters schools as a negative," Moyer says. "It eliminates the problem schools and allows us to put in new charters that are properly planned." However, Leanne Winner, government affairs director for the N.C. School Boards Association, says closures can create problems for both the students attending problem schools and the local school systems that must take students back, sometimes in the middle of the school year when state and local funding for the student already has been allocated to the failed charter school. "They've had kids come back with no funds attached, and they just have to absorb them," says Winner.

### ***What the State Office of Charter Schools Does To Improve Financial Viability***

Moyer hails a requirement adopted in 2002 as part of a federal grant that charters conduct a year of planning in advance of opening. The Office of Charter Schools in the N.C. Department of Public Instruction has established a mentoring program for charter school administrators that helps them improve their financial management and other leadership skills. New charters also are required to attend a monthly training program in Raleigh designed and instituted by the Office of Charter Schools. And, the office has added a staff person to work with schools on an on-going basis to improve their financial management.

"Having Karen Frazier [a financial analyst] on our staff is great," says Moyer. "She's out there working with the schools, giving them training. That is a huge improvement from the past."

Through the Office of Charter Schools, schools applying for a charter from the state can receive a federal grant (Charter School Implementation Grant) of \$100,000 for preliminary planning. If they are granted a charter by the State Board of Education, the schools can receive an additional \$200,000 plus \$250 per child for each of the first two years of operation. Schools also are eligible to apply for a competitive grant in the third year of operation to be used to disseminate information about their school and programs. Traditional public schools are not eligible for this funding, which is intended to promote the growth of high quality charter schools.

In addition to providing funds for individual charters, the federal grant covers administrative and program expenses of the state Office of Charter Schools. State money only covers staff salaries. One of the chief arguments advocates make for lifting the cap on charter schools is to take advantage of this federal money and allow the state office to continue providing valuable services.

"Without new schools to open, we will lose our federal funding," says Jackie Jenkins, the education consultant in the Office of Charter Schools. "We have one school to open next year (2005-06), and the amount of money we could keep for one school would be small. So it is important to have the cap removed or we would not be able to continue programs that improve learning and operations of all charter schools." The state awarded four new charters in 2006-07, (*continues on page 60*)

*For a large and growing district like Wake County, the opening of another charter may be a relief because there are so many students crowding into the system, but for a small, rural district, the loss of ADM funds caused by the opening of a charter can have a very negative effect.*

—JAN CROTTS  
FORMER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
N.C. ASSOCIATION OF  
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

**Table 7. Revocations and Voluntary Relinquishments of**

<b>County</b>	<b>Charter School</b>	<b>Year Approved</b>	<b>Year Opened</b>
1. Pitt	Right Step Academy	1997	1997
2. Forsyth	LIFT Academy	1997	1997
3. Wilkes	Elizabeth Grinton Charter School	1997	1997
4. Wayne	Bright Horizons	1997	1997
5. Caldwell	Nguza Saba Charter School	1997	1997
6. Wake	Bonner Academy	1997	1997
7. Onslow	PHASE Academy	1998	1998
8. Orange/Chapel Hill City School	School in the Community	1997	1997
9. Orange	Odyssey Charter School	1997	Withdrew — did not open (one year delay)
10. Martin	Bear Grass Charter School	1998	Withdrew — did not open
11. Wake	Sankore	1998	1998
12. Cumberland	OMA's Inc. Charter School	1998	1998
13. Durham	Partnership Academy	1998	Withdrew — did not open (one year delay)
14. Wilkes	Arts and Basics Charter	1998	1998
15. Wayne	Change for Youth	1998	1998
16. Catawba	Catawba Valley Tech	1998	Withdrew — did not open
17. Wilkes	Wilkes Technical High	1998	1998
18. Iredell	Developmental Day School	1999	1999
19. Wake	Hope Elementary School	1999	Withdrew — did not open (one year delay)
20. Harnett	Harnett Technical High School	1999	Withdrew — did not open
21. Cabarrus	Cabarrus County Charter School	1999	Withdrew — did not open

## Charters Authorizing Charter Schools, 1997–2006

Action	Date	Reason for Action
Revocation	January 2001	Financial noncompliance
Revocation	December 1999	Financial noncompliance
Revocation	December 1999	Exceptional children noncompliance
Revocation	August 1999	Student enrollment/business
Revocation	January 1999	Student numbers/business
Revocation	May 1998	Financial/governance noncompliance
Revocation	December 2000	Financial noncompliance
Relinquishment	May 1999	Enrollment/business
Relinquishment	January 1998	Incomplete planning
Relinquishment	August 2001	Incomplete planning
Relinquishment	March 2001	Enrollment/business
Relinquishment	December 2000	Enrollment/business
Relinquishment	August 2000	Incomplete planning
Relinquishment	October 1999	Enrollment/business
Relinquishment	September 1999	Enrollment/business
Relinquishment	April 1999	Enrollment
Relinquishment	November 1998	Enrollment/business
Relinquishment	January 2002	Inadequate funding/declining enrollment
Relinquishment	February 2000	Incomplete planning
Relinquishment	September 1999	Incomplete planning
Relinquishment	February 2000	Incomplete planning

(continues)

**Table 7. Revocations and Voluntary Relinquishments of**

<b>County</b>	<b>Charter School</b>	<b>Year Approved</b>	<b>Year Opened</b>
22. Mecklenburg	Tarheel Challenge-West	1999	Withdrew — did not open
23. Sampson	Tarheel Challenge-East	1999	Withdrew — did not open
24. Harnett	Harnett Early Childhood Academy	1998	1998
25. Durham	Turning Point Academy	1998	1998
26. Durham	Success Academy	1999	1999
27. Stanly	Stanly County Outreach	1999	1999
28. Bladen	Tar Heel Charter High School	2000	Withdrew — did not open
29. Guilford	Oak Ridge Charter School	2001	Withdrew — did not open
30. Wayne	Wayne Technical Academy	1998	1999
31. Forsyth	East Winston Primary School	1998	1998
32. Alamance	Lakeside School	1997	1997
33. Durham	Ann Atwater Community School	2001	2001
34. Rowan	Rowan Academy	1999	1999
35. Catawba	Visions Charter	1997	1997
36. Scotland	Laurinburg Charter School	1998	1998
37. Guilford	Imani Institute	1998	1998
38. Wake	John H. Baker Charter High	1997	1997

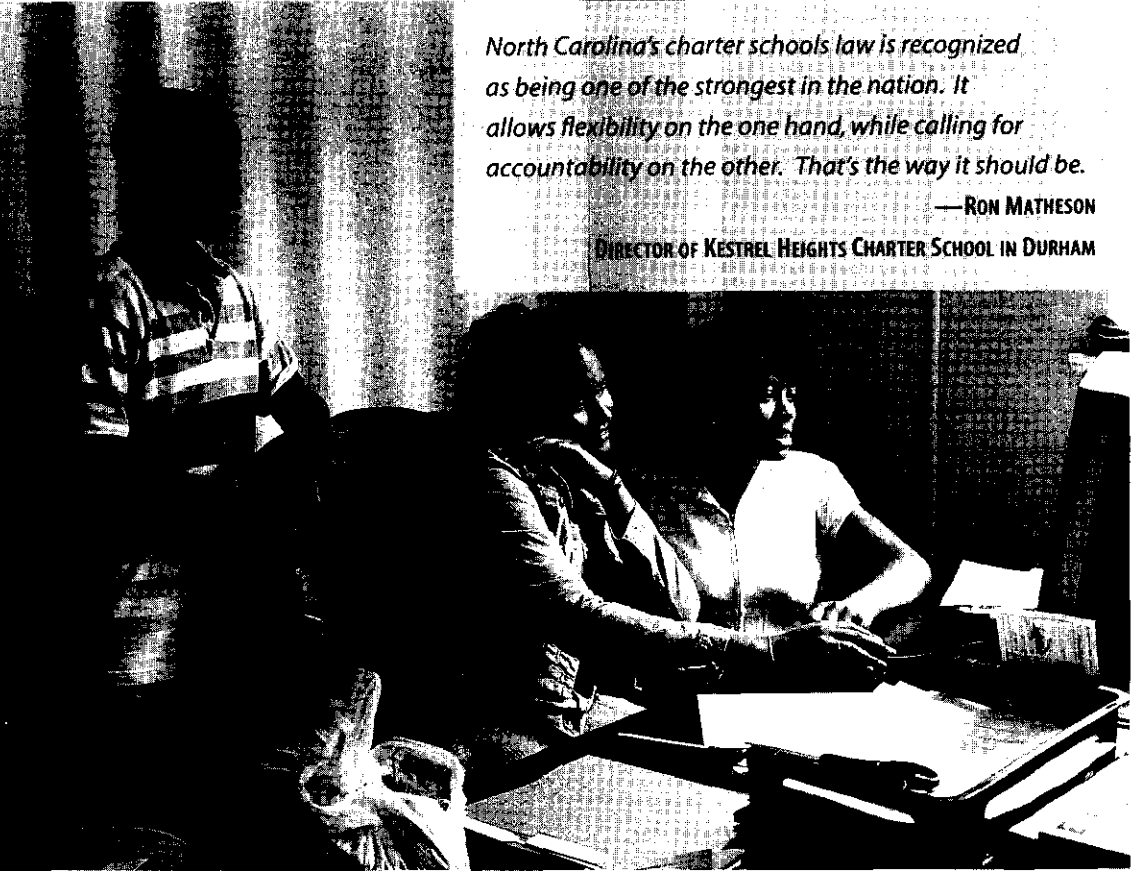
*Note:* One school, Chapel Hill Free Academy formerly Village Charter, is no longer open. It is unclear why it is not on this list from DPI.

*Source:* Data maintained by N.C. Office of Charter Schools and meeting records of the State Board of Education.



**Charters Authorizing Charter Schools, 1997–2006, *continued***

<b>Action</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Reason for Action</b>
Relinquishment	May 1999	Unresolved legal issues
Relinquishment	May 1999	Unresolved legal issues
Relinquishment	February 2002	Enrollment/business
Relinquishment	August 2002	Enrollment/business
Relinquishment	August 2002	Enrollment/business
Relinquishment	August 2002	Enrollment
Relinquishment	May 2002	Facilities
Relinquishment	July 2002	Facilities
Renewal not approved	July 2003	Business, enrollment, reporting, governance
Revocation	December 2003	Governance, business, reporting, financial
Relinquishment	December 2005	Closing of children's facility
Relinquishment	December 2005	Low enrollment
Relinquishment	February 2006	Finance
Relinquishment	March 2006	Low enrollment/finance
Renewal not approved	June 2006	Governance, finance, enrollment
Revocation	July 2006	Governance, finance
Revocation	Effective June 30, 2007	Governance



*North Carolina's charter schools law is recognized as being one of the strongest in the nation. It allows flexibility on the one hand, while calling for accountability on the other. That's the way it should be.*

—RON MATHESON

DIRECTOR OF KESTREL HEIGHTS CHARTER SCHOOL IN DURHAM

(continued from page 55) and the Office of Charter Schools continues to support raising the cap to open still more schools.

Leanne Winner, director of government relations for the North Carolina School Boards Association, says the argument that expansion is needed in order to continue to provide administrative services from Raleigh is a poor one. "You're making the assumption that federal funds will always flow, and we all know that's not necessarily true," says Winner. "The schools will require ongoing resources, and the money won't last," she says, adding that continuing the flow of federal funds "would only help serve the existing staff," while demands for services would increase with the number of schools.

Moyer says the idea that federal funds cover employee salaries is "completely untrue," though it does pay for a range of programs. "The state covers the Office of Charter School employees," says Moyer. "Under our current federal grant, money will revert to the federal government because we cannot spend it — the cap prevents further charter schools," says Moyer. "If these federal funds evaporate, the state will have to cover costs for the following programs or cut them entirely, which diminishes services to charter schools — the administrative mentoring program, perpetual consultant site visits, the annual charter schools conference that highlights best practices, teaching coaching, etc."

The State Board of Education (SBE) supports a one-time increase in the cap of 8–10 schools, says Rebecca Garland, executive director. "They would like it to be very slow and incremental growth, because every time you add another charter school, it's like adding another LEA (or local school district)," says Garland, and that places a greater administrative burden on the state. "The State Board supports slow, incremental change — so [charter schools] can grow successfully."

## ***Funding of Capital Expense and Construction of Charter Schools***

Finding funds to cover capital expenses also continues to be a challenge for charter schools. By law, charters cannot use state or local money for the purchase or renovation of buildings. In the 2005 session of the N.C. General Assembly, Sen. Edward Goodall (R-Union) introduced a bill that would allow counties to levy property taxes to provide funds for charter schools within the county to cover operations or capital expenses, but the bill died in committee.<sup>25</sup> A similar bill introduced by Sen. Larry Shaw suffered the same fate.<sup>26</sup> Additionally, charter schools advocates are seeking a share of school construction funds to be allotted from the new state lottery, so far without success. Of the 35 percent of state lottery revenues earmarked for education, 40 percent is to be set aside for school construction.<sup>27</sup> Historically in North Carolina, school construction has been primarily a local responsibility.

So far, the state has drawn the line at providing tax dollars to charter schools earmarked for school construction. According to Winner, the North Carolina School Boards Association would like to keep it that way. "The premise has been, if they have enough community support, they should be able to figure out a way to provide a building," says Winner.

At the time of the Center's previous article on charter schools, the issue of whether charter schools could receive fine and forfeiture monies collected by the state and made available to the local education agencies was in doubt. Lawsuits had been filed by charter schools against the Asheville City Schools and Durham County Public Schools. Those suits since have been settled in the charter schools' favor, clearing them to receive fines and forfeiture monies. A pro rata share of funding now is automatically distributed to charter schools in each county based on the percentage of students who attend charter schools from those counties, says Gene Bruton, an accountant in the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's Business Services Division. This proportionate share of funding follows the student wherever the student attends school, Bruton says.

## **The Question of the Cap on the Number of Charter Schools**

**I**n February 2005, Sen. Shaw introduced the Charter Schools Managed Growth Act (Senate Bill 490) in the N.C. General Assembly.<sup>28</sup> The bill, which never got out of the Senate Education/Higher Education Committee in the 2005–06 session, would have authorized the State Board of Education to approve up to 10 additional charter schools per year above the present cap of 100. "The traditional wisdom at the time we passed the initial charter law was that it would take us 10 years to reach the cap of 100 schools," Shaw says. "We've reached that, and there are many counties that want charters that don't have them. We want controlled growth." Of North Carolina's 100 counties, 54 do not have charter schools.

Sen. Eddie Goodall (R-Union), a co-sponsor of S.B. 490, also introduced his own bill that would eliminate the cap entirely.<sup>29</sup> "I prefer no cap at all, but an increase of at least 10 a year would be better than nothing," Goodall says. "We are eligible for \$6.2 million of federal funds for new charters. It is incomprehensible to me that we would turn this money down."

But Sen. Linda Garrou (D-Forsyth) takes the position that public schools generally do not get enough resources, and the existing resources should not be spread thinner by authorizing more charter schools. "My concern is that we're so limited with the amount of dollars for public schools," say Garrou.

*"You're making the assumption that federal funds will always flow, and we all know that's not necessarily true. The [charter] schools will require ongoing resources, and the money won't last."*

— LEANNE WINNER,  
DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT RELATIONS,  
NORTH CAROLINA SCHOOL  
BOARDS ASSOCIATION

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## Other Studies of Charter Schools'

### Academic Performance

**H**ow do charter schools compare to traditional public schools in terms of academic performance? The question has been fiercely debated among researchers. Beginning in the late 1990s, they have concluded everything from charters performing better than traditional public schools on tests of student performance to those same schools falling far behind the traditional schools on proficiency tests. That means the picture is less than clear. Certain states have been studied carefully and others less so, but what bearing do all of these studies have on North Carolina's decision to either expand or maintain its charter system?

Caroline M. Hoxby of Harvard University and the National Bureau of Economic Research conducted one of the most highly debated studies. Entitled *Achievement in Charter Schools and Regular Public Schools in the United States: Understanding the Differences*, Hoxby concluded that on the whole, "charter students are 5.2 percent more likely to be proficient in reading and 3.2 percent more likely to be proficient in math on their state's exams."<sup>1</sup> She used the proficiency exams for each state and compared the scores from elementary charter schools that were "matched" with local traditional elementary schools. The "matched" schools approach compared the academic performance of two schools in a geographic region that were similar in both racial and socio-economic make-up of their student bodies.

Though positive for charter schools on the whole, Hoxby's study found North Carolina charters to be far behind the national average, and in both reading and math, North Carolina charter schools lagged 4 percent behind their traditional school counterparts.<sup>2</sup> Several parties have tried to refute Hoxby's findings and her methodology. In fact, the National Charter School Research Project, a research group focused on unbiased measurement of all facets of charter schools, rated this specific study as "poor" because her model type had "no regression used."<sup>3</sup>

In another study by researchers Robert Bifulco and Helen F. Ladd of Duke University, which focused primarily on North Carolina, the results were also "discouraging for charter school supporters." Students in grades 3 through 8 were found to make "considerably smaller achievement gains in charter schools than they would have in traditional public schools."<sup>4</sup> Their study used individual information from the North Carolina Education Research Data Center, and followed the progression of 3<sup>rd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> graders, marking their academic achievement

"We get a lot of concern from people that we are not funding our public schools to the amount we want to." Of further concern, says Garrou, is academic performance at some charter schools. "I'm not seeing the results that would make me want to look at raising that cap," she says.

The Charter Schools Advisory Committee agrees with raising, but not eliminating, the cap. "I believe the proposal to add 10 schools a year would be prudent," Fedewa says. "The Committee has recommended this to the State Board of Education, and the Board said they would support this. We've been in a holding pattern since the last action [by the General Assembly]. The cap is discouraging people from applying."

Moyer says the Office of Charter Schools could easily handle a limited number of new charters. "I believe the cap needs to go up," Moyer says. "Looking at our staff, if we could add 9 or 10 new schools a year, we could do a good job. I personally don't favor eliminating the cap. You need to have controlled growth."

as they moved through those grades. The researchers studied student gains on standardized tests, using standard deviations as their means of measuring the results. Their initial findings showed that "... a student enrolled in charter schools for 5 years would score nearly one-half of a standard deviation lower in reading and nearly eight-tenths of a standard deviation lower in math than they would if they remained in traditional public schools."<sup>5</sup> This means that students in charter schools are significantly farther behind in both reading and math than if they had attended traditional public schools for five years.

A 2003 study of California charter schools by the highly respected RAND Corporation yielded results that carried nationwide implications. *Charter School Operations and Performance: Evidence from California* was authored by 11 noted researchers who studied charter schools in California. According to these researchers, charter schools can be evaluated in terms of whether they both (1) "improve learning of pupils over time" and (2) "outperform conventional public schools."<sup>6</sup> In the California study, researchers used both methods and found that on average charters do tend to improve learning over time, as both traditional and charter schools "have experienced growth in student performance in recent years." But in terms of outperforming traditional schools, the study found, "Charter schools generally have comparable or slightly lower test scores..."<sup>7</sup>

—Aisander Duda

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Caroline M. Hoxby, *Achievement in Charter Schools and Regular Public Schools in the United States: Understanding the Differences*, Program on Education Policy and Governance, Cambridge, Mass., December 2004, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> See NCSRP listing of Achievement Studies at Web Site [www.ncsrp.org/cs/csr/print/csr\\_docs/achstud.htm](http://www.ncsrp.org/cs/csr/print/csr_docs/achstud.htm).

<sup>4</sup> Robert Bifulco and Helen F. Ladd, "Results from the Tar Heel State," Hoover Institution, Stanford, Calif., 2005, p. 10.

<sup>5</sup> Robert Bifulco and Helen F. Ladd, "The Impacts of Charter Schools on Student Achievement: Evidence from North Carolina," Terry Sanford Institute of Public Policy, Durham, N.C., August 2004, pp. 19–20.

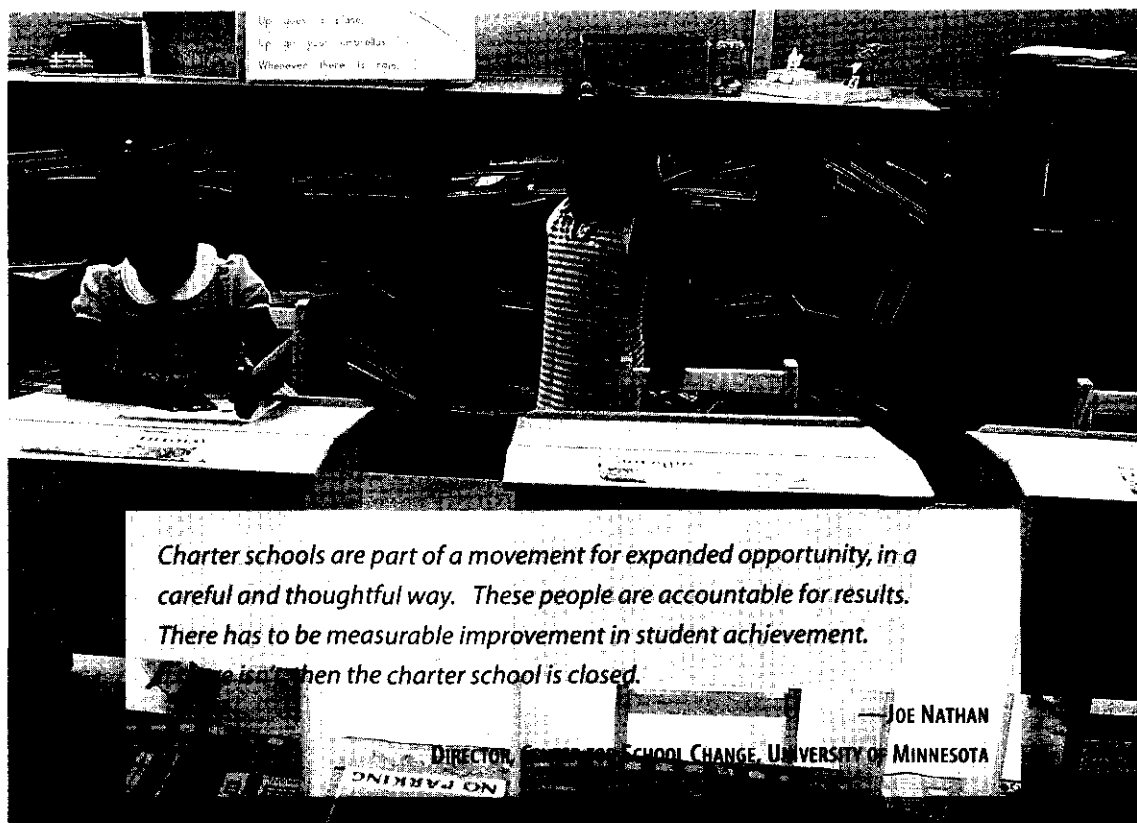
<sup>6</sup> RAND Education, *Charter School Operations and Performance: Evidence from California*, RAND Publishing, Santa Monica, Calif., 2003, pp. 175–176.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

The State Board of Education supports an increase of 8–10 charter schools based on the premise that some 80 of the 100 charters schools operating in the state are "very successful," says Rebecca Garland, State Board of Education executive director. "Raising the cap 8 to 10 percent would be comfortable for them," she says. However, that's less than the 10-schools-per-year increase for multiple years recommended by the advisory committee and sought by the N.C. Office of Charter Schools.

Roger Gerber of the League of Charter Schools wants no constraints on the growth of charter schools. "I want to see the cap eliminated," Gerber says. "Last year, there were 17 applications for three spots, and there's only one available now. The demand for new charters is there. Why shouldn't we give people a choice?"

However, Winner of N.C. Schools Boards Association says the association opposes raising the cap at all for three reasons. First, she says charter schools were intended by statute to be small, experimental schools that could serve as laboratories



for trying innovations that could be taken to the traditional public schools. “The mechanism for sharing information and innovation has never happened,” says Winner. Secondly, at a time when state level resources are stretched thin, each charter school requires almost as much staff time and administrative support from the state as an entire local school district. Meanwhile, local school districts are “crying for resources” from the state, Winner says. Third, resources provided to the schools do not necessarily align with the services they provide. For example, a school for children ages kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade receives funds from the career technical education fund even though career technical education services begin in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, says Winner.

\* \* \*

There are some shining jewels among the state’s charter schools that suggest unrealized promise for the experiment as a whole. There may be more gems that deserve the chance to shine. But in the final analysis, the state must assure that parents who exercise school choice have the opportunity to choose among schools that have a chance of providing the “sound basic education” that the State Constitution requires for all North Carolina’s children.

**Table 8. Number of Charter Schools in 2006 by State and Strength of Laws Governing Charter Schools, As Evaluated by the Center for Education Reform, Which is Pro-Charter Schools**

State	Allows Charter Schools	Number of Charter Schools in State	Strength of Charter Law**	Rank in Strength of Charter Law	Grade of Charter Law	Number of Charter Schools Allowed
1. Alabama	No	0				
2. Alaska	Yes	20	18.8	34	D	60
3. Arizona	Yes	449	46	1	A	Unlimited
4. Arkansas	Yes	11	17	35	D	12 New*
5. California	Yes	592	35.75	15	B	550, 100 per year*
6. Colorado	Yes	116	39	9	B	Unlimited
7. Connecticut	Yes	15	23	30	C	24
8. Delaware	Yes	15	44.45	4	A	Unlimited
9. District of Columbia	Yes	43	44.75	3	A	20 per year*
10. Florida	Yes	326	39.25	8	B	Unlimited
11. Georgia	Yes	49	25	26	C	Unlimited
12. Hawaii	Yes	27	20	33	C	25 New, 23 Conversion*
13. Idaho	Yes	23	23.7	27	C	6 per yr.*
14. Illinois	Yes	41	27	24	C	60
15. Indiana	Yes	29	39.25	7	B	Unlimited
16. Iowa	Yes	7	6.5	40	F	10
17. Kansas	Yes	25	13	39	D	30
18. Kentucky	No	0				
19. Louisiana	Yes	16	26.25	25	C	42
20. Maine	No	0				
21. Maryland	Yes	15	14.5	37	D	Unlimited
22. Massachusetts	Yes	57	40.3	6	A	120
23. Michigan	Yes	233	44.45	5	A	Unlimited
24. Minnesota	Yes	126	45.25	2	A	Unlimited
25. Mississippi	Yes	1	2.3	41	F	6
26. Missouri	Yes	26	36	14	B	Unlimited
27. Montana	No	0				
28. Nebraska	No	0				
29. Nevada	Yes	20	23	30	C	20 State, Unlimited Local*
30. New Hampshire	Yes	6	28	23	C	Unlimited
31. New Jersey	Yes	52	32.5	17	B	Unlimited
32. New Mexico	Yes	51	30	20	B	100
33. New York	Yes	51	38.3	10	B	100 New*
34. North Carolina	Yes	100	37.25	12	B	100
35. North Dakota	No	0				
36. Ohio	Yes	277	37.5	11	B	225
37. Oklahoma	Yes	13	29	21	C	Unlimited
38. Oregon	Yes	62	34.75	16	B	Unlimited

**Table 8, continued**

State	Allows Charter Schools	Number of Charter Schools in State	Strength of Charter Law**	Rank in Strength of Charter Law	Grade of Charter Law	Number of Charter Schools Allowed
39. Pennsylvania	Yes	103	36.75	13	B	Unlimited
40. Rhode Island	Yes	11	15	36	D	20
41. South Carolina	Yes	26	28.75	22	C	Unlimited
42. South Dakota	No	0				
43. Tennessee	Yes	12	20.75	32	C	10 per year
44. Texas	Yes	259	30.75	19	B	215*
45. Utah	Yes	39	23	28	C	Unlimited
46. Vermont	No	0				
47. Virginia	Yes	5	13.1	38	D	Unlimited
48. Washington	Yes	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	45*
49. West Virginia	No	0				
50. Wisconsin	Yes	188	32.05	18	B	Unlimited
51. Wyoming	Yes	3	21.75	31	C	Unlimited
Totals	Yes = 42	3,568	State Has Cap on Total Schools Allowed = 22			

\* Arkansas law allows 12 new charter schools to open, while also allowing unlimited conversions from private to charter. In California, the current cap of 550 increases by 100 schools each year (i.e. next school year 650), allowing for gradual growth. D.C. schools are allowed only 20 charter openings a year, with no long-term, numerical limit. Hawaii's charter law allows a maximum of 25 new charter schools and 23 converted charters. Six charter schools a year may be opened in Idaho, with no school district receiving more than one in a given year. A cap of 21 schools is in effect in Nevada, but they also allow unlimited new charter schools that serve high-risk students. New York charter law provides 100 new charter openings with unlimited conversions from private schools. The Texas cap of 215 does not include university-operated schools. Washington's legislature passed a law to authorize charter schools and funding of them, but this was defeated in a citizen referendum in November 2004. The proposed cap would have been 45 schools, with 5 schools added per year.

\*\* The strength of a state's charter schools law rating is from an evaluation by the Center for Education Reform, a Washington, D.C. think tank which advocates for charter schools and school choice. The group evaluates charter schools on factors such as whether a state has multiple chartering authorities, whether schools have a guaranteed source of per pupil funding, whether a school may be started without evidence of local support, whether schools have legal and operating autonomy, and the number of schools a state allows. States were awarded a letter grade as well as an overall score and ranking. For complete results, see CER's Ranking of the Nation's Strongest to Weakest Laws and CER's State By State Charter Law Profiles, on the Worldwide Web at [www.edreform.com](http://www.edreform.com). Mailing address: Center for Education Reform, 1001 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 204, Washington, DC, 20036. Phone: (202) 822-9000.



## ***Charter School Resources***

### **North Carolina Resources**

#### **North Carolina Department of Public Instruction**

Office of Charter Schools  
Jack Moyer, Director  
6303 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699-6303  
919-807-3302  
email: [jmoyer@dpi.state.nc.us](mailto:jmoyer@dpi.state.nc.us)

#### **The League of Charter Schools**

Roger Gerber, Director  
200 Stags Trail  
Chapel Hill, NC 27516-7310  
919-967-1029  
[www.charterleague.org](http://www.charterleague.org)  
e-mail: [roger@charterleague.org](mailto:roger@charterleague.org)

#### **Public Impact**

Bryan C. Hassel, Co-Director  
Emily A. Hassel, Co-Director  
504 Dogwood Drive  
Chapel Hill, NC 27516  
919-967-5102  
email: [info@publicimpact.com](mailto:info@publicimpact.com)

#### **North Carolina Center for Nonprofits**

1110 Navaho Drive, Ste. 200  
Raleigh, NC 27609  
919-790-1555  
[www.ncnonprofits.org](http://www.ncnonprofits.org)  
email: [info@ncnonprofits.org](mailto:info@ncnonprofits.org)

#### **Self-Help Community Facilities Fund**

Jane Ellis  
Charter Schools Loan Officer  
919-956-4407 or 800-478-7428  
email: [jane.ellis@self-help.org](mailto:jane.ellis@self-help.org)  
Hugh Deaner  
Charter School Loan Officer  
919-956-4687 or 800-478-7428  
email: [hugh.deaner@self-help.org](mailto:hugh.deaner@self-help.org)  
301 W. Main St.  
Durham, NC 27701

### **National Resources**

#### **US Charter Schools**

[www.uscharterschools.org](http://www.uscharterschools.org)  
email: [uscharterschools@wested.org](mailto:uscharterschools@wested.org)

#### **National Alliance for Public Charter Schools**

1101 14th Street, NW, Ste. 801  
Washington, DC 20005  
202-289-2700  
[www.publiccharters.org](http://www.publiccharters.org)  
email: [dennis@publiccharters.org](mailto:dennis@publiccharters.org)

#### **National Association of Charter School Authorizers**

1125 Duke Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
703-683-9701  
[www.charterauthorizers.org](http://www.charterauthorizers.org)  
email: [info@charterauthorizers.org](mailto:info@charterauthorizers.org)

#### **National Charter School Clearinghouse**

P.O. Box 11864  
Tempe, AZ 85284-0032  
480-907-5900  
[www.ncsc.info](http://www.ncsc.info)  
email: [info@ncsc.info](mailto:info@ncsc.info)

#### **National Charter Schools Institute**

2520 S. University Park Drive, Ste. 11  
Mount Pleasant, MI 48858  
989-774-2999  
[www.nationalcharterschools.org](http://www.nationalcharterschools.org)  
email: [info@nationalcharterschools.org](mailto:info@nationalcharterschools.org)

#### **Center for Education Reform**

1001 Connecticut Ave, NW, Ste. 204  
Washington, DC 20036  
202-822-9000  
[www.edreform.com](http://www.edreform.com)  
email: [cer@edreform.com](mailto:cer@edreform.com)

#### **American Academy for Liberal Education — Charter School Accreditation**

1050 17th St NW, Ste. 400  
Washington, DC 20036  
202-452-8611  
[www.aalecharters.org](http://www.aalecharters.org)  
email: [charters@aale.org](mailto:charters@aale.org)

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> N.C.G.S. 115C-238.29

<sup>2</sup> N.C.G.S. 115C-238.29F(g)(5)

<sup>3</sup> House Joint Resolution 2486 of the 2005 General Assembly, Regular Session 2006.

<sup>4</sup> *The ABCs of Public Education: 2004–05 Growth and Performance of North Carolina Schools, Executive Summary*, Division of Accountability Services, N.C. Department of Public Instruction, Raleigh, N.C., Feb. 27, 2006, p. 2. The following is the link for the ABCs for charter schools in North Carolina in 2005–06: <http://abcs.ncpublicschools.org/abcs/abcVol11List.jsp?pYear=2005-2006&pList=5&pListVal=12&GO=Go>.

<sup>5</sup> Robert Bifulco and Helen F. Ladd, *The Impacts of Charter Schools on Student Achievement: Evidence From North Carolina*, Terry Sanford Institute of Public Policy, Duke University, Durham, N.C., August 2004, pp. 5–6.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* at p. 6.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* at p. 23.

<sup>8</sup> George M. Holmes, et al., “Friendly Competition—Does the presence of charters spur public schools to improve?” *Education Next*, the Hoover Institution, Stanford University, Stanford, Calif., Winter 2006, pp. 69–70.

<sup>9</sup> *Evaluation of the Public Charter Schools Program, Final Report, 2004*. Prepared for the U.S. Department of Education, Office of the Deputy Secretary,

Policy and Program Studies Service, by SRI International, Washington, D.C., 2004, Appendix E-6, p. 125.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* at p. 53.

<sup>11</sup> N.C.G.S. 115C-238.29.

<sup>12</sup> John Manuel and Mike McLaughlin, “The Charter School Experience in North Carolina,” *North Carolina Insight*, North Carolina Center for Public Policy Research, Raleigh, N.C., Vol. 20, Nos. 1–2, July 2002, p. 62.

<sup>13</sup> In 2004–05, the percentage of traditional public schools making expected or high growth as indicated by state accountability testing fell to 70 percent from the previous year’s 75 percent, while charter schools improved to 64 percent from the previous year’s 57 percent.

<sup>14</sup> The Charter School Achievement Panel, *Key Issues In Studying Charter Schools And Achievement: A Review And Suggestions For National Guidelines*, Center on Reinventing Public Education, University of Washington, Seattle, Wash., National Charter School Research Project White Paper Series, No. 2, May 2006, p. 10.

<sup>15</sup> Bryan Hassel, *Charter School Achievement: What We Know*, Public Impact, Chapel Hill, N.C., for the Charter School Leadership Council, July 2005, p. 7.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* at p. 1.

<sup>17</sup> George W. Noblit and Dickson Corbett, *North Carolina Charter School*

*Evaluation Report*, prepared under contract for the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, Raleigh, N.C., November 21, 2001, p. 1–4.

<sup>18</sup> N.C.G.S. 115C-238.29F(g)(5).

<sup>19</sup> Manuel and McLaughlin, note 12 above, p. 42.

<sup>20</sup> *Department of Education Statistical Research Section, Pupils in Membership by Race and Sex, Charter Schools 2003–04*. Unpublished document provided by N.C. Office of Charter Schools.

<sup>21</sup> *Evaluation of the Public Charter Schools Program*, note 9 above, p. 57.

<sup>22</sup> Robert Bifulco and Helen F. Ladd, *School Choice, Racial Segregation and Test-Score Gaps: Evidence from North Carolina’s Charter School Program*, forthcoming in the *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management, Washington, D.C., pp. 10–12 and 18–19.

<sup>23</sup> N.C.G.S. 115C-238.29A(3).

<sup>24</sup> N.C.G.S. 115C-238.29F(e)(1).

<sup>25</sup> Senate Bill 212 of the 2005 General Assembly. See p. 9–10 for a discussion of 2007 bills.

<sup>26</sup> Senate Bill 490 of the 2005 General Assembly.

<sup>27</sup> N.C.G.S. 18C-164(c)(2)

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> Senate Bill 213 of the 2005 General Assembly.

