

Charter School Annual Report 2019
Executive Summary

North Carolina state statute requires an annual reporting of charter school performance, impact on district schools, best practices and other factors. The North Carolina State Board of Education (SBE), Charter Schools Advisory Board (CSAB), and Office of Charter Schools (OCS) welcome this opportunity to reflect on the successes and challenges encountered in the charter sector over the past year, and to chart a path towards high academic outcomes for all students as embodied in the first two purposes of the charter legislation.

The demand for charter schools continues to grow, as evidenced by the growth in charter enrollment. More than 110,000 North Carolina students are enrolled in charter schools, totaling 7.6% of the total public school population. Self-reported data from the state's charter schools indicate that 65,000 students were on waitlists for charter school admission.*

This report gives updates on charter school enrollment, academic performance, best practices, and the impact of charter school on districts. It also highlights the benefits of our State receiving the competitive Federal Charter School Program Grant of \$26 million, and a further supplemental grant of \$10 million, over 5 years.

As the charter school movement in North Carolina continues to grow it is important to do further analysis on the counties' financial savings as counties do not pay for any facility costs. Charter schools continually operate with less per pupil government funding than district schools, with capital expenditures accounting for much of the disparity in funding. Charter school facility investments funded outside of the county tax base is conservatively estimated at over \$1 billion. Relatedly, as district per pupil funding varies across the state, the amount of local funding per charter school student also varies.

The North Carolina State Board of Education and the North Carolina General Assembly have each provided critical supports to ensure accountability, oversight, and autonomy in the state's 196 charter schools. We look forward to continued partnership to high-quality expanded choices in the charter sector as charter schools meet measurable student achievement results through its performance based accountability systems.

*Figure may include duplicates, as students are often waitlisted at multiple charter schools.

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Legislation and Historical Background

In 1996, the North Carolina General Assembly passed the Charter School Act, thereby authorizing the establishment of “a system of charter schools to provide opportunities for teachers, parents, pupils, and community members to establish and maintain schools that operate independently of existing schools, as a method to accomplish all of the following:

1. Improve student learning;
2. Increase learning opportunities for all students, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for students who are identified as at-risk of academic failure or academically gifted;
3. Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods;
4. Create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning at the school site;
5. Provide parents and students with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system;
6. Hold the schools established under this Part accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results and provide the schools with a method to change from rule-based to performance-based accountability systems.”

Current statute sets the parameters for how the system of charter schools must operate. The law includes the following sections:

- Purpose of charter schools; establishment of North Carolina Charter Schools Advisory Board and North Carolina Office of Charter Schools
- Eligible applicants; contents of applications; submission of applications for approval
- Opportunity to correct applications; opportunity to address Advisory Board
- Fast-track replication of high-quality charter schools
- Final approval of applications for charter schools
- Review and renewal of charters
- Material revisions of charters
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- Charter school exemptions
- Charter school operation
- Civil liability and insurance requirements
- Open meetings and public records
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- Nondiscrimination in charter schools
- Student discipline
- Driving eligibility certificates
- General operating requirements
- Display of the United States and North Carolina flags and the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance
- Course of study requirements
- Employment requirements

- Identification of low-performing and continually low-performing schools
- Causes for nonrenewal or termination; disputes
- Dissolution of a charter school
- State and local funds for a charter school
- Notice of the charter school process; review of charter schools
- Operation of NC Pre-K programs

Finally, G.S. 115C-218.110 directs that the State Board “shall report no annually no later than February 15 to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on the following:

- 1) The current and projected impact of charter schools on the delivery of services by the public schools.
- 2) Student academic progress in charter schools as measures, where available, against the academic year immediately preceding the first academic year of the charter schools’ operation.
- 3) Best practices resulting from charter school operations.
- 4) Other information the State Board considers appropriate.”

This report addresses this legislated reporting requirement.

Charter School Oversight in North Carolina

North Carolina State Board of Education

Codified in NC General Statute as Article 14A of Chapter 115C (115C-218, *et al.*) the charter schools law assigns the State Board of Education the sole authority of charter school oversight in North Carolina, including but not limited to the approval of charter applications, the approval of material revisions to the charter agreement, and the renewal of charter agreements.

North Carolina Charter Schools Advisory Board

In 2013, the North Carolina Charter Schools Advisory Board (CSAB) was created in statute, with four expressed powers and duties:

- A. To make recommendations to the State Board of Education on the adoption of rules regarding all aspects of charter school operation, including timelines, standards, and criteria for acceptance and approval of applications, monitoring of charter schools, and grounds for revocation of charters.
- B. To review applications and make recommendations to the State Board for final approval of charter applications.
- C. To make recommendations to the State Board on actions regarding a charter school, including renewals of charters, nonrenewals of charters, and revocations of charters.
- D. To undertake any other duties and responsibilities as assigned by the State Board.

The CSAB is comprised of 11 voting members; four appointed by the North Carolina Senate, four appointed by the North Carolina House of Representatives, two appointed by the State Board of Education, and the Lieutenant Governor or the Lieutenant Governor’s designee. The Superintendent of Public Instruction or the Superintendent’s designee, serves as the secretary of the board and a nonvoting member. Appointed members serve four-year terms, and are limited to serving no more than eight consecutive years. In 2019, three new members were appointed to the

CSAB to fill vacant positions: Jeannette Butterworth, Joel Ford, and Rita Haire. The entire slate of CSAB members, their date of appointment, and their term is below.

Table 1. 2019 Charter School Advisory Board Members

Appointed By	First Name	Last Name	County	Start Date of Current Term	End Date of Current Term	Appointment
State Board of Education	Cheryl	Turner	Mecklenburg	2019	June 30, 2023	June 2019 SBE
State Board of Education	Alex	Quigley	Durham	2017	June 30, 2021	July 2017 SBE
Superintendent - (Non-Voting)	Joe	Maimone	Wake	2017	June 30, 2021	Superintendent
Lt. Governor	Steven	Walker	Wake	2017	December 31, 2020	Lt. Governor
House	Bruce	Friend	Wake	2017	June 30, 2021	SL 2018-139
House	Lindalyn	Kakadelis	Mecklenburg	2017	June 30, 2021	SL 2017-75
House	Lynn	Kroeger	Union	2017	June 30, 2021	SL 2017-75
House	Heather	Vuncannon	Randolph	2019	June 30, 2023	SL 2019-122
Senate	Sherry	Reeves	Pamlico	2017	June 30, 2021	SL 2017-75
Senate	Jeannette	Butterworth*	Henderson	2019	June 30, 2021	SL 2018-139
Senate	Rita	Haire*	Davidson	2017	June 30, 2021	SL 2019-233
Senate	Joel	Ford*	Mecklenburg	2017	June 30, 2021	SL 2019-122

*Indicates board members who were appointed to fill unexpired term vacancies in 2019. Their terms will expire in 2021.

Office of Charter Schools

N.C. General Statute 115C-218(c) stipulates the establishment of the NC Office of Charter Schools, staffed by an executive director and additional personnel to carry out necessary duties. Pursuant to state statute, the Office of Charter Schools has the following powers and duties:

- A. Serve as staff to the Advisory Board and fulfill any tasks and duties assigned to it by the Advisory Board.
- B. Provide technical assistance and guidance to charter schools operating within the State.
- C. Provide technical assistance and guidance to nonprofit corporations seeking to operate charter schools within the State.
- D. Provide or arrange for training for charter schools that have received preliminary approval from the State Board.

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- E. Assist approved charter schools and charter schools seeking approval from the State Board in coordinating services within the Department of Public Instruction.
 - 1. Assist certain charter schools seeking to participate in the NC prekindergarten program in accordance with G.S. 115C-218.115.
- F. Other duties as assigned by the State Board.

The Office of Charter Schools is currently staffed by six consultants, a program assistant, and an executive director, with office responsibilities divided into multiple workflows, each managed by an individual consultant. The current division of workflows within the office is as follows (listed alphabetically):

Table 2. Office of Charter School Workflows/Responsibilities

Workflow	Responsibilities
1. Amendments/Risk Assessment/CSAB Planning	Facilitates process of obtaining approval for any modifications to a school's charter agreement, manages grievances and complaints from stakeholders, conducts site visits to schools falling out of academic, operational, or financial compliance, and organizes CSAB and SBE meetings.
2. Applications	Facilitates the new school application process, provides training to applicants, hires and trains external evaluators, provides updates to CSAB members.
3. Communications	Manages all internal and external communication between the Office of Charter Schools and the general public.
4. Performance Framework	Facilitates the yearly collection and audit of documents from schools to ensure compliance with NC statute, SBE policy, and the Charter Agreement.
5. Planning Year/Ready-to-Open Process	Provides training to newly approved schools prior to opening, reviews documentation to ensure compliance with statute, policy, and the Charter Agreement, provides CSAB with progress newly approved schools make towards a successful open.
6. Professional Development	Plans and provides ongoing in-person and virtual training to currently operating schools.
7. Renewals	Facilitates the charter renewal process.

In addition, OCS consultants provide general guidance and technical support to each charter school in the state. Best practices indicate that in order to provide the highest quality oversight and support, the ratio of charter office staff to schools should be approximately one consultant to eight schools. North Carolina currently has 196 charter schools in operation, and the Office of Charter Schools is staffed by six consultants, which results in a ratio of one consultant providing support to approximately 33 schools.

Charter School Student Enrollment

State statute originally capped at 100 the number of charter schools that could operate in the state in a given school year, but the N.C. General Assembly removed that ceiling in August 2011. Since then, the number of charter schools in the state has grown from 100 to 196 (as of September 2019). 194 are brick-and-mortar charter schools operating in 67 different local education agencies, and two are virtual charter schools. Both virtual charter schools have brick-and-mortar headquarters in Durham county.

According to the second month Average Daily Membership (ADM) figures certified in November 2019, 116,316 students are now being served by charter schools. This represents 7.6% of the total public school population (1,526,144).

**Table 3. Charter School Student Demographics
2018-2019 School Year**

Race/Ethnicity/Gender	Charter		Traditional		All	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total White	59,703	54.0%	671,727	47.3%	731,430	47.8%
Total Black	28,676	26.0%	355,201	25.0%	383,877	25.1%
Total Hispanic	11,845	10.7%	262,894	18.5%	274,739	17.9%
Other	10,240	9.3%	131,459	9.2%	141,699	9.3%
Male	55,189	50.0%	730,619	51.4%	785,808	51.3%
Female	55,275	50.0%	690,662	48.6%	745,937	48.7%
Total Enrollment	110,464	100.0%	1,421,281	100.0%	1,531,745	100.0%

A Closer Look at Racial/Ethnic Diversity in Charter Schools

N.C. General Statute 115C-218.45(e) states, “within one year after the charter school begins operation, the charter school shall make efforts for the population of the school to 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.”

To give appropriate insight on the extent to which charter schools reasonably reflect the areas in which they are located, significant research would need to be conducted to disaggregate the racial and ethnic breakdown of traditional schools and charter schools serving diverse communities within all LEAs in the state.

Special Population Student Enrollment

Students with Disabilities

In the 2018-19 school year, charter schools enrolled 11,455 students with disabilities, which represented 10.34% of the total charter school enrollment at that time. During the same period,

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Charter/District Comparisons

White Student Enrollment

Out of 185 schools that were in operation last year, 47 schools (25%) had a White student enrollment within 10% points of the White student enrollment of the district in which the school is located.

When comparing White student enrollment to the non-Hispanic White demographics of the general population, the percentage of charter schools with an enrollment within 10% points of the general population is 36.8% (68 schools).

Black Student Enrollment

Seventy-nine schools (43%) had a Black student enrollment within 10% points of the Black student enrollment of the local district.

Seventy-seven schools (42%) had a Black, non-Hispanic student enrollment within 10% points of the general population of their geographic county.

district schools enrolled 176,837 students with disabilities, which represented 12.53% of total district school enrollment (not including enrollment at DOJ, NC HHS, and NC DJJ schools).

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English Learners

Based on the October 1, 2018 headcount, charter schools enrolled 3,612 English Learners, and LEAs enrolled 112, 745 English Learners.

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Economically Disadvantaged Students

It is important to note that the ED student data (collected through NCDPI Testing and Accountability Services) is self-reported by charter schools. While charter schools do certify to NCDPI that the numbers they report are accurate, some schools have expressed concern that since they must ask families to self-report income information to verify ED status, the figures may underrepresent the true ED population in a given school and across all charter schools. Charter schools that do not participate in the National School Lunch Program, and therefore do not have that participation rate to use as a proxy for ED status, may be most likely to report figures that underrepresent the true ED population at their schools. Improvements to this data collection are being implemented through the Direct Certification System.

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At its December meeting, the CSAB dedicated a significant amount of time to discussing the challenges of defining economically disadvantaged, identifying economically disadvantaged students enrolled in charter schools, and the solutions other states have implemented to solve this issue. A DPI official led the discussion and began by clarifying that free- and reduced-price lunch eligibility is no longer the definition of economically disadvantaged. In terms of federal or state reporting, economically disadvantaged is a subcategory and individual-level data is required to report this figure. If schools are not participating in a Community Eligibility Program (CEP) or participating in the NSLP, then they will not have that data. Even if schools ask parents to self-report that information, self-reported data cannot be validated by DPI, which is a requirement for federal reporting and auditing. DPI has applied for a grant for a longitudinal data study to figure out how to calculate the economically disadvantaged population. OCS, CSAB, and DPI continue to work together to more accurately capture the percentage of economically disadvantaged students enrolled in charter schools, particularly those charter schools that do not participate in the National School Lunch Program.

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As of November 2019, charter schools enrolled 22,069 economically disadvantaged students, which represents 18.8% of total charter school enrollment. ↓

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Eliminating Barriers to Access

Weighted Lotteries

The ability to conduct a weighted lottery is codified in G.S. 115C-218.45(g1). Charter schools may not discriminate in their admissions process on the basis of race, creed, national origin, religion, or ancestry; however, they are allowed to utilize additional controls to enroll underserved populations, if supported by the school's mission.

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In 2018, North Carolina was awarded a federal Charter Schools Program grant to increase educationally disadvantaged student access to high quality charter schools in the state. One stipulation that North Carolina wrote into the grant application is that subgrantees would agree to

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implement a weighted lottery. In 2019, the Office of Charter Schools saw a marked increase in the number of schools asking to amend their charter to include the use of a weighted lottery. Prior to 2019, six charter schools requested and received permission to implement a weighted lottery. In 2019, that number increased to 21, with nine schools being approved to amend their charter to include a weighted lottery, and six schools receiving approval to use weighted lotteries after requesting permission in their original charter applications.

There has also been a marked increase in the number of schools including a weighted lottery in their initial charter application. In 2017, 14 applications were approved, and only one requested the use of a weighted lottery. In 2018, 11 applications were approved, and none requested the use of a weighted lottery. In 2019, the first year that grant funds were available to newly approved charter schools, fifteen applications were approved, and five schools requested the use of a weighted lottery in the initial charter application.

The full list of schools with approval to implement weighted lotteries is below.

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Table 4. Charter Schools Requesting to Implement Weighted Lotteries

<u>School Name</u>	<u>Amendment/Policy Approval</u>	<u>Original App or Amendment?</u>
<u>Central Park School for Children</u>	<u>Jan-13</u>	<u>Amendment</u>
<u>Community School of Davidson</u>	<u>Mar-16</u>	<u>Amendment</u>
<u>Charlotte Lab School</u>	<u>Jan-17</u>	<u>Amendment</u>
<u>GLOW Academy</u>	<u>Jan-17</u>	<u>Amendment</u>
<u>Raleigh Oak Charter School</u>	<u>Jul-18</u>	<u>Original App</u>
<u>The Exploris School</u>	<u>Oct-18</u>	<u>Amendment</u>
<u>Moore Montessori Community School</u>	<u>Jan-19</u>	<u>Amendment</u>
<u>Movement East Charter School</u>	<u>May-19</u>	<u>Amendment</u>
<u>IC Imagine</u>	<u>May-19</u>	<u>Amendment</u>
<u>Willow Oak Montessori</u>	<u>Jul-19</u>	<u>Amendment</u>
<u>MINA Charter School of Lee County</u>	<u>Jul-19</u>	<u>Amendment</u>
<u>Evergreen Community Charter</u>	<u>Jul-19</u>	<u>Amendment</u>
<u>Pocosin Innovative Charter</u>	<u>Jul-19</u>	<u>Amendment</u>
<u>Alamance Community School</u>	<u>Oct-19</u>	<u>Original App</u>
<u>Tillery Charter Academy</u>	<u>Nov-19</u>	<u>Amendment</u>
<u>Wake Preparatory Academy</u>	<u>Nov-19</u>	<u>Amendment</u>
<u>East Voyager Academy</u>	<u>Nov-19</u>	<u>Amendment</u>
<u>Hobgood Charter School</u>		<u>Original App</u>
<u>North Raleigh Charter Academy</u>		<u>Original App</u>
<u>Wendell Falls Charter</u>		<u>Original App</u>
<u>Wilmington School of the Arts</u>		<u>Original App</u>

Transportation

N.C. General Statute 115C-218.40 states that a charter school “may provide transportation enrolled at the school. The charter school shall develop a transportation plan so that transportation is not a barrier to any student who resides in the local school administrative unit in which the school is located.”

In 2017, S.L. 2017-57 appropriated \$2.5 million to the Charter School Transportation Grant. Grant awards were available to schools where 50% or more of the student population was economically disadvantaged. These grant funds were not renewed for the following year. Providing transportation is a costly endeavor for charter schools, and those providing transportation receive minimal financial resources to do so. The charter schools providing transportation are often the schools with the most racially and socioeconomically diverse student populations. The dearth of transportation funds provided to charter schools often forces schools to make significant financial trade-offs. Adequate transportation funding is critical to ensuring that charter schools are accessible to all students, regardless of their ability to provide their own transportation to and from school.

As of November 2019, 98 charter schools (50% of all charter schools in the state) indicated that they provide bus transportation for students.

61% of schools that have been open for 1-5 years provide bus transportation.

41% of schools that have been open for 6-10 years provide bus transportation.

50% of schools that have been open for 11-15 years provide bus transportation.

33% of schools that have been open for 16-20 years provide transportation.

58% of schools that have been open for 21+ years provide bus transportation.

Child Nutrition

Charter schools in North Carolina are not required to participate in the National School Lunch Program, however, similar to the transportation plan provision, they are required to have a plan that ensures that every child who needs lunch provided will receive a meal. During the application interview process, the CSAB asked detailed questions about how the school will provide lunch for all students who need it.

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As of November 2019, 61 charter schools (31% of all charter schools) are participants in the National School Lunch Program, and the remainder have alternative plans to provide lunch. Often times, smaller charter schools find the amount of paperwork required to participate in the NSLP prohibitive, and opt to provide lunch for students through other means.

The Francine Delaney New School for Children has been lauded for its innovative approach to providing lunch for its students. The school has partnered with local grocers and provides a monthly voucher to the parents of students qualifying for free or reduced priced lunch. The vouchers are then used to buy lunch for students to bring to school.

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2019 Charter Sector Growth and Sustainability

2018 Charter Application Updates

During the 2018 application cycle, thirty-five applications were submitted for new charter schools—sixteen applications were submitted for Fast-Track Replication or Acceleration. The Office of Charter Schools screened each application for completeness, and the applicant groups with incomplete applications were given five days to submit or clarify incomplete items. Of the thirty-five applications submitted, six applications were withdrawn prior to receiving a recommendation from the CSAB. Of the remaining 29 applications, fifteen received favorable recommendations from the CSAB and were approved by the State Board of Education. Three of the fifteen schools requested and received approval to open on an accelerated timeline. Each of the approved schools is listed below.

Table 5. Charter Schools Approved in 2018 Application Cycle

School Name	County	Approved Special Request
Alamance Community School	Alamance	N/A
Achievement Charter Academy	Harnett	N/A
CE Academy	Wake	N/A
CFA Community Public Charter	Gaston	Acceleration
Doral Academy of North Carolina	Wake	Replication
Elaine Riddick Charter	Perquimans	N/A
Hobgood Charter Academy	Halifax	Acceleration
MINA Charter School of Lee County	Lee	N/A
North Raleigh Charter Academy	Wake	Replication
Pocosin Innovative Charter School	Washington	Acceleration
Revolution Academy	Guilford	N/A
Robert J. Brown Leadership Academy	Guilford	N/A
Wake Preparatory Academy	Wake	Replication
Wendell Falls Charter Academy	Wake	Replication
Wilmington School of the Arts	New Hanover	N/A

The three schools approved to open on an accelerated timeline successfully opened in August/September 2019, and 11 of the 12 approved schools are in their planning year. One school, Robert J. Brown Leadership Academy, elected to relinquish their charter prior to beginning the planning year process.

2019 Charter Application Updates

Prior to the 2019 charter application cycle, the CSAB recommended a number of changes to the application timeline and process to the State Board of Education. Among them, a separate, earlier deadline for Fast-Track and Acceleration applications, and a stipulation that applications requesting Fast-Track or Acceleration only be considered for opening on an accelerated timeline, as opposed to being considered to open on a traditional timeline, should they not meet the requirements for Fast-Track Replication or Acceleration. The State Board of Education approved the recommended changes to the charter application timeline and process at its April 2019 meeting.

During the 2019 application cycle, five applications were submitted for Fast-Track Replication or Acceleration, and fourteen applications were submitted for the Traditional timeline. Of the five

Moved up [2]: Weighted Lotteries

The ability to conduct a weighted lottery is codified in G.S. 115C-218.45(g1). Charter schools may not discriminate in their admissions process on the basis of race, creed, national origin, religion, or ancestry; however, they are allowed to utilize additional controls to enroll underserved populations, if supported by the school's mission.

In 2018, North Carolina was awarded a federal Charter Schools Program grant to increase educationally disadvantaged student access to high quality charter schools in the state. One stipulation that North Carolina wrote into the grant application is that subgrantees would agree to implement a weighted lottery. In 2019, the Office of Charter Schools saw a marked increase in the number of schools asking to amend their charter to include the use of a weighted lottery. Prior to 2019, six charter schools requested and received permission to implement a weighted lottery. In 2019, that number increased to 21, with nine schools being approved to amend their charter to include a weighted lottery, and six schools receiving approval to use weighted lotteries after requesting permission in their original charter applications. The full list of schools with approval to implement weighted lotteries is below.

Table 4. Charter Schools Requesting to Implement Weighted Lotteries

School Name

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applications submitted to open on an accelerated timeline, one received approval from the State Board of Education. The CSAB has conducted a preliminary review of the fourteen applications submitted for the Traditional timeline, and nine were invited for full interviews. The CSAB will conduct full interviews and forward their recommendations to the SBE by their April meeting, per SBE policy CHTR-012. The SBE will make final decisions regarding approval by August 15.

Eleven of the nineteen applications were for schools in urban districts and surrounding areas:

- Mecklenburg County (6 applicants)
- Wake County (2 applicants)
- Guilford County (2 applicants)
- Durham County (1 applicants)

Charter Application Approval Rate Trends

The charter application approval rate over the past five years has increased from 14% of applications being approved in 2014 to 43% percent of applications being approved in 2019.

2014: 71 applications submitted; 10 approved (14% approval rate)

2015: 40 applications submitted; 14 approved (35% approval rate)

2016: 28 applications submitted; 8 approved (29% approval rate)

2017: 38 applications submitted; 14 approved (37% approval rate)

2018: 29 applications submitted; 11 approved (38% approval rate)

2019: 35 applications submitted; 15 approved (43% approval rate)

The 2019-2020 application cycle interview phase will conclude in January 2020, and the CSAB's preliminary recommendations will be forwarded to the SBE thereafter.

2019 Ready-to-Open Updates

In 2018-19, 16 schools participated in the Planning Year process. Two of the sixteen schools requested a one-year delay, and were approved delay their opening until 2020. Fourteen schools completed the Planning Year process and were deemed Ready-to-Open. These schools opened in the fall of 2019. Of the fourteen schools that opened, ten opened with fewer than 75% of their approved ADM. The chart contained in Appendix A outlines each of the fourteen schools that opened, the approved year 1 maximum enrollment, the initial year 1 enrollment requested in the charter application, the self-reported enrollment as of September 2019, the school's breakeven enrollment number, their actual month 1 funded ADM, and the funded percentage of the school's approved or amended maximum enrollment.

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2019 Charter Renewal Updates

Thirty-two schools were considered for renewal in 2019. The SBE-approved renewal policy is in Appendix B. Of the 32 schools considered for renewal, the CSAB recommended a ten-year renewal for 21 schools, a seven-year renewal for two schools, a five-year renewal for one school, a three-year renewal for 7 schools, and non-renewal for one school. With the exception of two schools, the SBE accepted all of the CSAB's recommendations. The two ALS alternative high schools were recommended to receive 10-year renewals but were approved for 7-year renewals by the NC State Board of Education, with the stipulation that the OCS develop a framework for evaluating the success of schools with alternative status.

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Table 6. 2019 Charter Renewals

SBE-Approved Renewal Term	School Name
10 Years	American Renaissance School Anderson Creek Academy Cardinal Charter Envision Science Academy Evergreen Community Forsyth Academy Greensboro Academy Invest Collegiate - Imagine Quest Academy Raleigh Charter High School Research Triangle Charter South Brunswick Charter The Franklin School of Innovation The Mountain Community School Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy Vance Charter School Wake Forest Charter School Wayne Preparatory Academy Wilson Preparatory Academy
7 Years	Bradford Preparatory School Commonwealth High School (Alternative High School) Pioneer Springs Community School Stewart Creek High School (Alternative High School)
5 Years	The Capitol Encore Academy
3 Years	A.C.E. Academy Carter Community Charter Dillard Academy Haliwa-Saponi Tribal School Lakeside Charter Academy Reaching All Minds Academy United Community Charter
Non-Renewal	Charlotte Learning Academy

2020 Charter Renewal Updates

Nineteen schools are being considered for renewal in 2020. The CSAB voted on renewal recommendations for each school in December 2019, and their recommendations will be forwarded to the SBE in January 2020.

Charter School Closure and Relinquishment Updates

Due to low academic performance, Charlotte Learning Academy was recommended for a nonrenewal of its charter and closed effective June 30, 2019.

The non-profit board operating Hope Charter Academy voted to relinquish their charter effective June 30, 2019.

Anson Charter requested a second delay and was denied by the CSAB. The school's governing board subsequently voted to relinquish their charter, and the SBE approved the relinquishment at its April 2019 meeting.

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2019 Legislative Updates

S.L. 2019-51: Created a term “public school unit” in Chapter 115C to include all types of public schools in the state, including charter schools.

S.L. 2019-82: Amended G.S. 115C-218.85(a) and now requires charter schools to provide financial literacy instruction as required by the State Board of Education, including required professional development for teachers of the financial literacy course.

S.L. 2019-122: Appointed Joel Ford to the Charter School Advisory Board to fill the unexpired term of Alan Hawkes, and re-appointed Heather Vuncannon for another full term.

S.L. 2019-165: Made various changes to laws related to education. Officially changed the reporting date for the annual charter school report to February 15.

S.L. 2019-222: Appropriated funds for school safety. School resource officer grants are to be made available to qualifying school units – including charter schools – to improve school safety.

S.L. 2019-71: Modified teacher licensure requirements.

S.L. 2019-154: Adopted a 15-point scale in the determination of school performance grades.

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Office of Charter School Updates

NC ACCESS Grant

In 2018, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) was awarded a Public Charter Schools Program (CSP) grant from the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) of approximately \$26,600,000. The CSP grant is currently being used to implement the North Carolina Advancing Charter Collaboration and Excellence for Student Success (NC ACCESS) Program to:

1. Increase the number of educationally disadvantaged students attending high-quality charter schools and expand the number of high-quality charter schools available to educationally disadvantaged students;
2. Develop a cohort of one hundred (100) charter school leaders who can develop and demonstrate best practices in serving educationally disadvantaged students; and
3. Broadly disseminate best practices in serving educationally disadvantaged students and foster collaboration in the charter school community and between charter schools and ~~district~~ schools.

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NC ACCESS Progress to Date:

1. ACCESS team has been fully staffed and consists of a Grant Administrator, Program Coordinator, Technical Assistance Specialist, and Finance Administrator.
2. Nine subgrants, totaling \$3.4 million, were awarded in the first application cycle. This includes three Planning and Implementation subgrants, four Implementation subgrants, and one Expansion subgrant.
3. ACCESS Fellowship was launched. Four workshops have been held; three in-person and one virtual. Topics covered include school culture and design, parent and community engagement, leadership and empowering teacher leaders, intentional marketing and recruitment, and addressing adverse childhood experiences and the socioemotional learning needs of students.
4. ACCESS team applied for and received \$10 million supplemental grant to further expand the reach of the program, and to support low-performing charter schools across the state. Team will now be able to award 10 additional subgrants (60 instead of 50) over the life of the CSP grant.
5. ACCESS team is piloting a Visiting Fellows program for leaders of low-performing schools. These leaders will participate in the ACCESS fellowship and have access to all resources and support provided through that initiative.
6. ACCESS team received approval to expand the eligibility criteria to better serve schools and to expand the reach of the program.

Epicenter

S.L. 2017-57 mandated that funds be used to support the purchase of a Web-based electronic records and data management system to automate and streamline reporting and accountability requirements to assist the Office of Charter Schools in complying with annual reporting obligations. OCS has adopted Epicenter for this purpose and has worked with representatives from the National Charter Schools Institute to train school leaders on the use of the platform. Over the past year, each workflow within OCS has transitioned to the Epicenter platform. All charter-related documents are now submitted or collected via the Epicenter portal. OCS

consultants are working with multiple divisions within NCDPI that have expressed interest in also collecting and reviewing documentation through Epicenter.

Professional Development

The Office of Charter Schools continues to welcome feedback in order to better serve the professional learning needs of the charter school community and its stakeholders. Some of the opportunities this year included:

- Office of Charter Schools Huddle West, July 2019 at Gray Stone Day School;
- Office of Charter Schools Charter School Leadership Institute, October 17 & 18, 2019, at Envision Science Academy;
- Leading & Learning Day (formerly known as LP/CLP training), September 26, 2019, at Healthy Start Academy, Durham;
- *For Counselors By Counselors*: A network of support and professional learning for NC charter school counselors. This collaborative cohort works to unify knowledge and offer superior counselor support to students in our charter network;
- *Quick Takes*: 15 minute pre-recorded webinars in topics of interest to the charter community;
- Online professional development and renewal newsletters, through S'more have been very well received and widely read;
- Increased collaboration and professional learning within and across NC DPI divisions;
- Number of Twitter/Social Media followers has increased and professional learning is actively promoted on our Twitter feed;
- Epicenter is now being used as a resource for professional learning as well through an application called *OCS Professional Learning Resource Center*, which will serve as a 'library' of professional learning resources;
- Charter School Teacher of the Year is Ms. Ashley Bailey of Roxboro Community School;
- NCCAT inaugural Beginning Teacher of the Year award had three (3) charter school teachers in the running for Beginning Teacher of the Year.

Charter School Academic Performance

The sixth legislative purpose of charter schools outlined in G.S. 225C-218 is to “hold schools established under this Part accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results and provide the schools with a method to change from rule-based to performance-based accountability systems.” This section of the Annual Report examines the student achievement results of North Carolina’s charter schools. Please note that this reporting includes data from North Carolina’s two virtual charter schools, which are both currently in pilot status.

With the exception of schools operating under an alternative status, all public schools are assigned School Performance Grades (A-F) based on test scores, and for high schools, additional indicators that measure college and career readiness. School Performance Grades are based on student proficiency (80%) and growth (20%).

Table 7. 2018-19 School Grades for Charter and Non-Charter Schools

Grade	Charter		Non-Charter		All	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
A	20	11%	183	7%	203	8%
B	59	32%	686	28%	745	29%
C	53	29%	991	40%	1044	41%
D	34	18%	426	17%	459	18%
F	12	7%	79	3%	89	4%
I	2	1%	12	1%	14	1%
N/A	0	N/A	3	.1%	3	.1%
Alternative	4	2%	90	4%	94	4%
Total A-F	178	97%	2362	96%	2540	
Total A and B	79	44%	869	37%	948	37%
Total D and F	46	26%	502	21%	548	22%
Total Schools	184		2467		2651	

A “Closer Look” at Charter School Academic Proficiency and Growth

The chart below depicts trends in charter school SPGs over the past five years. The percentage of charter schools earning Ds and Fs increased slightly from 2017-18 to 2018-19. The percentage of charter schools earning As and Bs also increased over the past year.

Table 8. 2018-2019 Charter School Performance Grade Trends

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Grade	2014 – 15		2015 – 16		2016 – 17		2017 - 18		2018-19	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
A^{+NG}	12	8.5%	12	7.7%	11	6.7%				
A	7	4.9%	5	3.2%	5	3.1%	15	8.9%	20	11%
B	50	35.2%	45	29.0%	55	33.7%	55	32.7%	59	32%
C	31	21.8%	50	32.3%	51	31.3%	60	35.7%	53	29%
D	24	16.9%	29	18.7%	28	17.2%	29	17.4%	34	18%
F	18	12.7%	14	9.0%	13	8.0%	8	4.8%	12	7%
Total	142		155		163		167		178	

Figure A below depicts the charter school performance grade trends since 2014-2015. Table 9 presents the trends in charter schools earning a grade of C or higher over the past five years. This percentage was on the rise from 2014-15 until the most recent year, when the percentage of charter schools earning a C or higher decreased 6.1 percentage points. Figure B visually depicts the trends of charter schools earning a C or higher over the past five years. Table 10 contains the percentages of charter schools earning grades of D or F over the past five years, and Figure C visually depicts this trend.

Figure A. School Performance Grade Trends: Number of A & B Charter Schools Since 2014-2015

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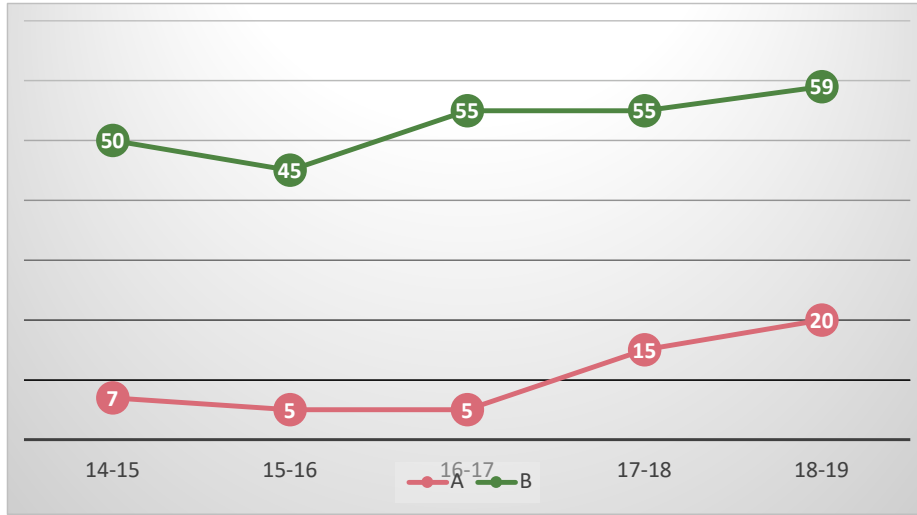


Table 9. School Performance Grade Trends: Schools Earning a C or Higher

	2014 – 15	2015 – 16	2016 – 17	2017 – 18	2018-19
Percentage of C or Better Charter Schools	70.4%	72.3%	74.8%	77.8%	71.7%

Figure B. Bar Graph of School Performance Grade Trends of Charter Schools Earning a C or Higher Over Past Five Years

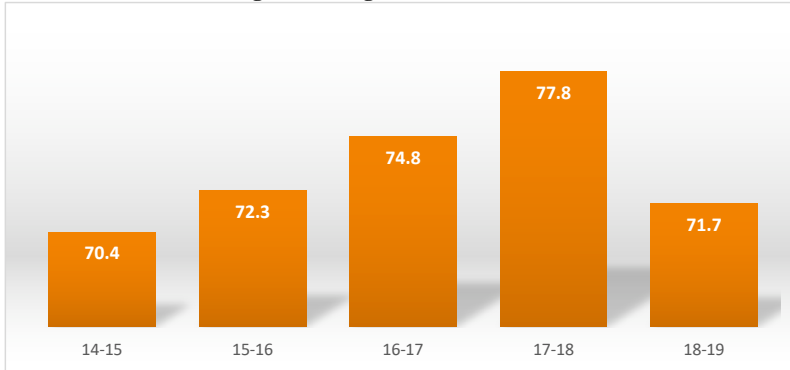
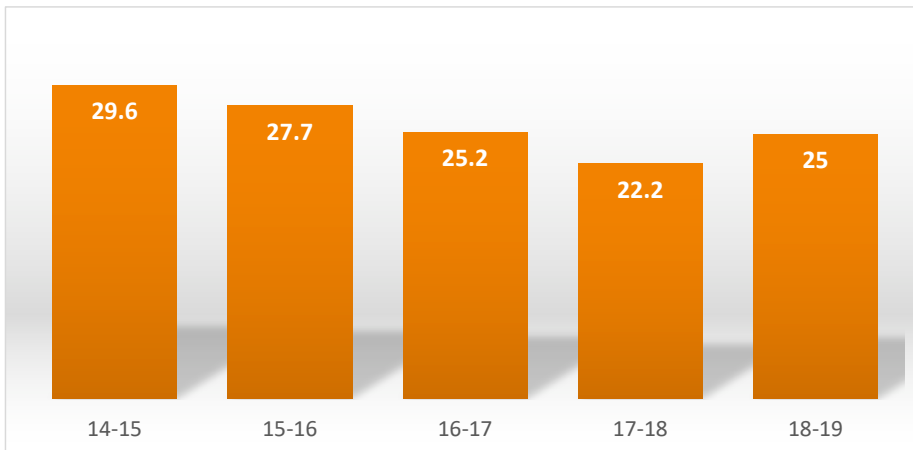


Table 10. School Performance Grade Trends: Charter Schools Earning a D or F

	2014 – 15	2015 – 16	2016 – 17	2017 – 18	2018-19
Percentage of D and F Charter Schools	29.6%	27.7%	25.2%	22.2%	25%

Figure C. School Performance Grade Trends: Charter Schools Earning a D or F



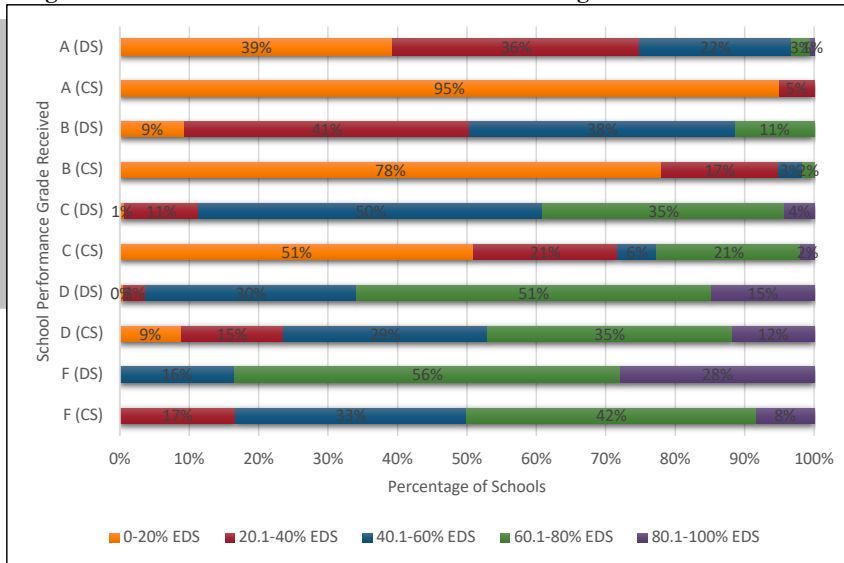
Additional Context for Charter School Performance Grades

As discussed previously, school performance grades are based on a formula of 80% proficiency and 20% growth. To provide additional context around charter school performance, the next several graphs describe the percentage of economically disadvantaged students tested at charter schools earning school performance grades, as well as the average length of time charter schools earning school performance grades have been in operation.

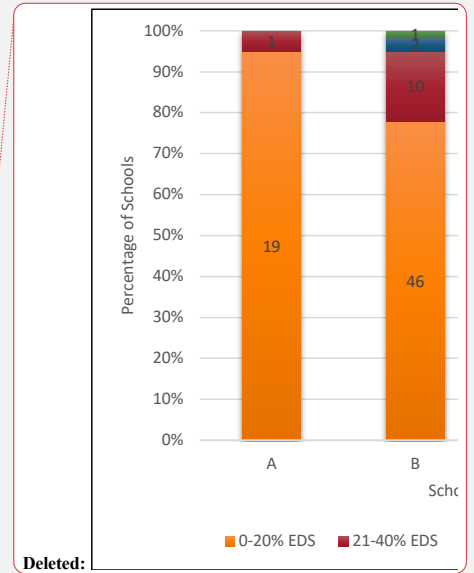
School Performance Grades and Economically Disadvantaged Students

Figure D depicts the total number of charter schools receiving A-F letter grades. Within each bar, color-coded sections indicate the percentage of economically disadvantaged students tested at each school earning a particular letter grade. At the bottom of the graph is a key outlining the percentage of ED students each color represents.

Figure D. School Performance Grades and the Percentage of ED Students Tested



Of the 20 charter schools earning an A in 2018-2019, 19 (95%) served 20% or fewer economically disadvantaged students. Within this 19 schools, thirteen served student populations that were fewer than 5% EDS. Southeastern Academy served the largest percentage of ED students of all charter schools earning an A, at 39.3% EDS.



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Of the 183 district schools earning an A in 2018-2019, 72 (39%) served 20% or fewer economically disadvantaged students; 65 (36%) served 20.1-40% EDS; 40 (22%) served 40.1-60% EDS; 5 (3%) served 60.1-80% EDS; and 1 (.5%) served greater than 80% EDS.

Of the 59 charter schools earning a B, 46 (or approximately 78%) served student populations that were 20% or fewer EDS. Ten of the 59 schools served between 20.1 – 40% EDS, and three served greater than 40% EDS (Alpha Academy – 49.3%, Bethel Hill Charter – 44%, and Sallie B. Howard – 61.1%).

Of the 686 district schools earning a B, 64 (9%) served 20% or fewer EDS; 282 (41%) served 20.1-40% EDS; 262 (38%) served 40.1-60% EDS; and 78 (11%) served 60.1-80% EDS.

Of the 53 charter schools earning a C, 27 (51%) served 20% or fewer EDS. Eleven schools (21%) served between 20.1 – 40% EDS, 3 (6%) served between 40.1 – 60% EDS, and 11 (21%) served between 60.1 – 80% EDS. One school, Maureen Joy Charter, served greater than 80% ED students, with an ED population of at least 95%.

Of the 991 district schools earning a C, 6 (.6%) served 20% or fewer EDS; 107 (11%) served 20.1-40% EDS; 491 (50%) served 40.1-60% EDS; 345 (35%) served 60.1-80% EDS; and 42 (4%) served greater than 80% EDS.

Of the 34 charter schools earning a D, three (10%) served 20% or fewer EDS. Five schools (15%) served between 20.1 – 40% EDS, and ten (29%) served between 40.1 – 60% EDS. Twelve schools (35%) served between 60.1 – 80% EDS, and four schools (12%) served greater than 80% EDS.

Of the 426 district schools earning a D; 2 (.5%) served 20% or fewer EDS; 14 (3%) served 20.1 – 40% EDS; 129 (30%) served 40.1 – 60% EDS; 218 (51%) served 60.1 – 80% EDS; and 63 (15%) served greater than 80% EDS.

Of the twelve charter schools earning an F, two (17%) schools served 20.1 – 40% EDS, four schools (33%) served 40.1 – 60% EDS, five schools tested 61 – 80% EDS, and one school (8%) served greater than 80% EDS.

Of the 79 district schools earning an F, 13 (16%) served 40.1 – 60% EDS; 44 (56%) served 60.1 – 80% EDS; and 22 (28%) served greater than 80% EDS.

School Performance Grades and Length of Time in Operation

The bar graph in Figure E depicts the number of schools earning grades A-F and contains color-coding to identify the length of time schools earning each particular grade have been in operation.

Deleted: Twenty charter schools earned an A in 2018-2019, as shown in the first column in the graph above. Of those twenty schools, nineteen (95%) tested between 0-20% economically disadvantaged students. For example, School A earned an A letter grade, and is one of the 19 schools that tested between 0-20% economically disadvantaged students. If School A tested 100 students, between 0-20 of the tested students were identified as economically disadvantaged.

Within the 0-20% EDS category of schools earning an A, thirteen of the nineteen schools tested student populations that were fewer than 5% EDS. Southeastern Academy tested the largest percentage of ED students of all schools earning an A, at 39.3% EDS.

Of the 59 charter schools earning a B, 46 (or approximately 78%) tested student populations that were between 0 – 20% EDS. Ten of the 59 schools tested between 20.5 – 40% EDS, and three tested greater than 40% EDS (Alpha Academy – 49.3%, Bethel Hill Charter – 44%, and Sallie B. Howard – 61.1%).

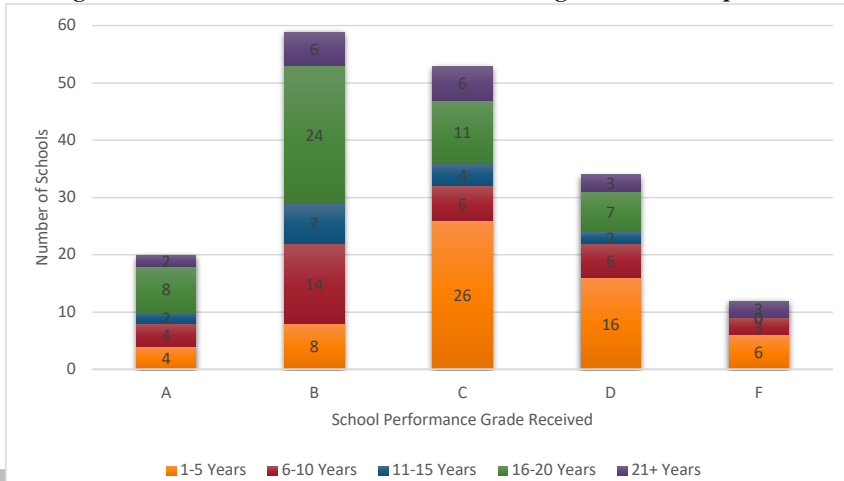
Of the 53 charter schools earning a C, 27 (51%) tested between 0 – 20% EDS. Eleven schools (21%) tested between 20.5 – 40% EDS, four tested between 40.5 – 60% EDS, and ten tested between 60.5 – 80% EDS. One school, Maureen Joy Charter, tested greater than 80% ED students, with an ED population of at least 95%.

Of the 34 charter schools earning a D, three (10%) tested between 0 – 20% EDS. Five schools tested between 20.5 – 40% EDS, and ten (29%) tested between 40.5 – 60% EDS. Four schools (12%) tested greater than 80% EDS, and twelve schools (35%) served between 60.5 – 80% EDS.

On the far right of the chart is the bar depicting the number of schools that earned an F letter grade. Of the twelve schools earning an F, none of them tested between 0-20% EDS. Two schools tested 21-40% EDS, four schools tested 41-60% EDS, five schools tested 61-80% EDS, and one school tested 80-100% EDS.

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Figure E. School Performance Grades and the Length of Time in Operation



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Of the twenty schools earning an A, four (20%) have been in operation for 1-5 years, four (20%) have been in operation for 6-10 years, and twelve (65%) have been in operation for 11 years or more.

Of the 59 schools earning a B, 37 schools (64%) have been in operation for 11 years or more. Eight of the 59 (3%) have been in operation for 1-5 years, and 14 of the 59 (32%) have been in operation for 6-10 years.

Of the 53 schools earning a C, 26 (49%) have been in operation for 1-5 years, six (11%) have been in operation for 6-10 years, four (8%) have been in operation for 11-15 years, 11 (21%) have been in operation for 16-20 years, and 6 (11%) have been in operation for 21 years or more.

Of the 34 schools earning a D, sixteen (47%) have been in operation for 1-5 years. Six (18%) schools earning a D have been in operation for 6-10 years, two (6%) have been in operation for 11-15 years, seven (21%) have been in operation for 16-20 years, and 3 (9%) have been in operation for 21 years or more.

Of the 12 schools earning an F, 6 (50%) have been open for 1-5 years, 3 (25%) have been open 6-10 years, and 3 (25%) have been open for 21 years or more.

2018-2019 Charter School Academic Growth

The section below examines charter school growth compared to non-charter schools, charter school growth trends over the past five years, the demographics of charter schools compared to their growth scores, and growth scores in comparison to the length of time schools have been in operation.

In a comparison of charter and non-charter academic growth, more non-charters met and exceeded growth in 2018-2019 than did charters. 69.4% of charter schools met or exceeded growth whereas 73.6% of district schools met or exceeded growth. A higher percentage of charters failed to meet growth (30.2%) compared to non-charter schools (26.5%). However, as Figure F shows, the percentage of charter schools meeting or exceeding growth increased from 2017-18 to 2018-19, breaking a four-year slide in growth scores.

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Table 11. 2018-19 Charter and Non-Charter Growth Comparison

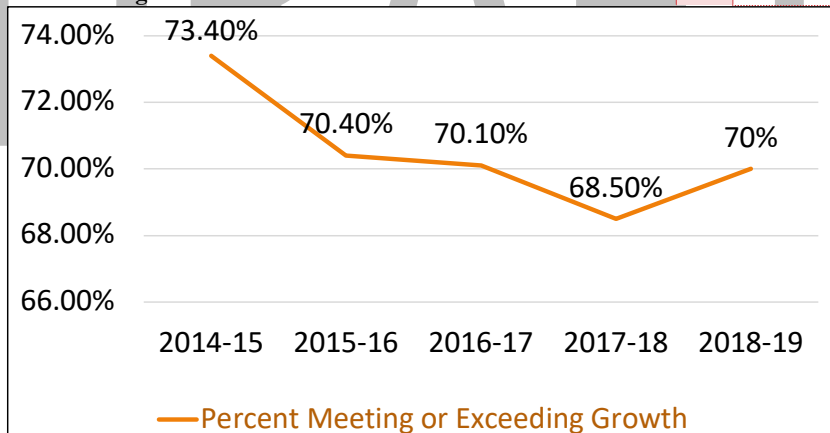
Growth Status	Charter		Non-Charter		All	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Exceeded	48	26.8%	647	27.4%	695	27.3%
Met	77	43%	1095	46.2%	1172	46%
Not Met	54	30.2%	627	26.5%	681	26.7%

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*May not equal 184. Alternative schools and those with insufficient data did not receive a growth score.



Figure F. Charter School Growth Trends Over Past Five Years

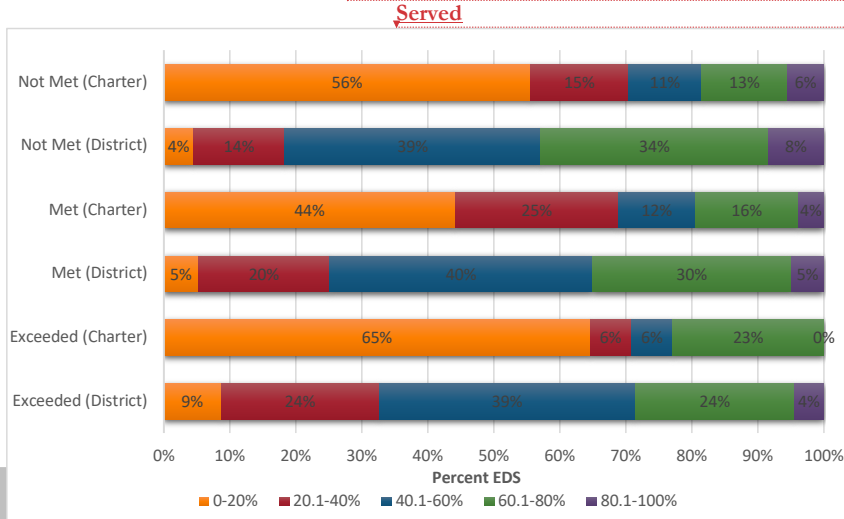


Commented [DA5]: Question for Ashley – the percentage of charters meeting/exceeding growth in the table above doesn't match the figures in this graph. Can you confirm that the 70% is correct?

School Growth Status Compared to Percentage of ED Students Tested

Figure G illustrates the growth status achieved by North Carolina's charter schools and the percentage of economically disadvantaged students tested at each school.

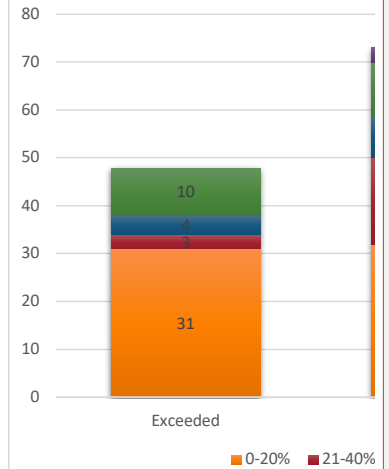
Figure G. 2018-2019 Charter/District School Growth Status and Percentage of ED Students



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Of the 54 charter schools that did not meet growth, 30 schools (56%) served 20% or fewer EDS; eight (15%) served between 21-40% EDS; six (11%) served between 41-60% EDS, seven (13%) served between 61-80% EDS, and three (6%) served greater than 80% EDS.

Of the 627 district schools that did not meet growth, 28 (4%) served fewer than 20% EDS; 87 (14%) served 20.1-40% EDS; 243 (39%) served 40.1-60% EDS; 216 (34%) served 60.1-80% EDS; and 53 (8%) served greater than 80% EDS.

Of the 77 charter schools that met growth, 34 schools (44%) served 20% or fewer EDS; 19 (25%) served 21-40% EDS; nine (12%) served 41-60% EDS; 12 (16%) served 61-80% EDS; and three (4%) served greater than 80% EDS.

Of the 1095 district schools that met growth, 57 (5%) served 20% or fewer EDS; 218 (20%) served 20.1-40% EDS; 436 (40%) served 40.1-60% EDS; 330 (30%) served 60.1-80% EDS; and 54 (5%) served greater than 80% EDS.

Of the 48 charter schools that exceeded growth, 31 schools (65%) served 20% or fewer EDS; 3 (6%) served 21-40% EDS; 3 (6%) served 41-60% EDS; and 11 (23%) served 61-80% EDS.

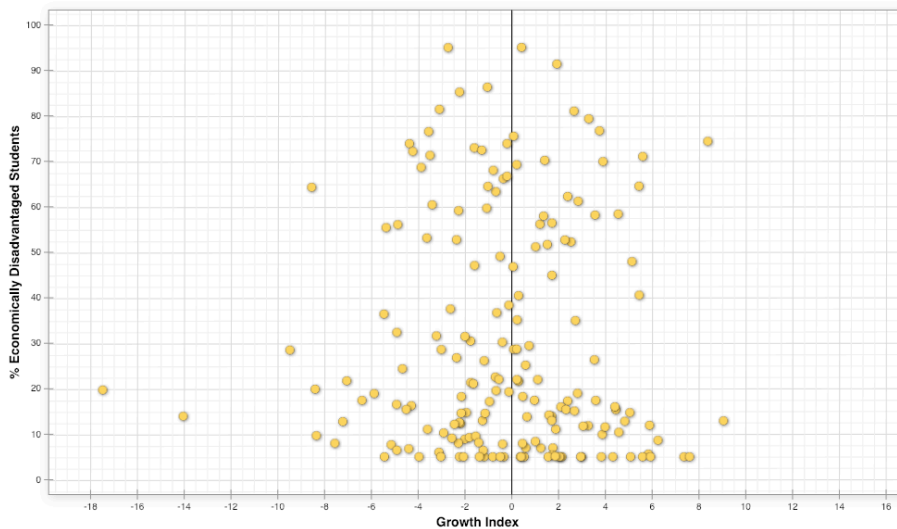
Of the 647 district schools that exceeded growth, 56 (9%) served 20% or fewer EDS; 155 (24%) served 20.1-40% EDS; 251 (39%) served 40.1-60% EDS; 156 (34%) served 60.1-80% EDS; and 29 (22.1%) served greater than 80% EDS.

High Academic Growth with Disadvantaged Student Populations

One of the six legislative purposes of charter schools in North Carolina is to increase learning opportunities for all students, particularly those who are identified as at-risk of academic failure. One measure of excellence for charter schools is achieving high academic growth with a student population that is economically disadvantaged. The figure below illustrates the growth index achieved by each school compared to the percentage of economically disadvantaged students who were assessed in EOC or EOG assessments in 2018-2019.

It is important to note that the ED% in the chart below is reflective of the percentage of economically disadvantaged students in tested grades only as opposed to the school as a whole. Further, because charter schools are not required to participate in the National School Lunch Program, there is no standard manner in which to accurately capture the EE student population enrolled in charter schools. This may result in ED populations being largely underreported amongst charter schools.

Figure H. Academic Growth with Economically Disadvantaged Students



Based on this data, five schools had an ED population (in tested grades) of at least 70% and exceeded growth by achieving an EVAAS growth score of greater than +2:

- Wilmington Preparatory Academy (81.01% ED in tested grades; +2.66 growth score)
- Sugar Creek Charter (79.31% ED in tested grades; +3.29 growth score)
- CIS Academy (76.67% ED in tested grades; +3.75 growth score)
- PreEminent Charter (74.36% ED in tested grades; +8.38 growth score)
- Healthy Start Academy (71.03% ED in tested grades; +5.6 growth score)

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Of the 73 that met growth, 32 schools (44%) tested between 0 – 20% EDS; 18 (25%) tested 21-40% EDS; nine (12%) tested 41-60% EDS; 11 (15%) tested 61-80% EDS; and three (4%) tested greater than 80% EDS.

Of the 54 schools that did not meet growth, 30 schools (56%) tested between 0 – 20% EDS; eight (15%) tested between 21-40% EDS; six (11%) tested between 41-60% EDS, seven (13%) tested between 61-80% EDS, and three (6%) tested greater than 80% EDS.

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KIPP Durham College Preparatory nearly met the 70% ED and +2 growth score threshold; the school had 69.9% ED students in tested grades and earned a +3.9 growth score.

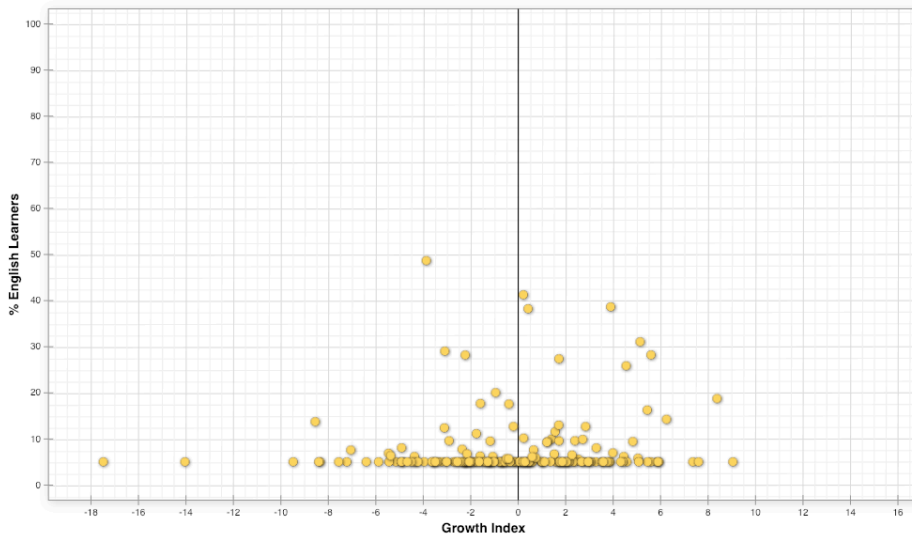
Academic Growth with English Learners

The figure below illustrates the growth index achieved by each school compared to the percentage of English Learners who were assessed in EOG or EOC assessments in 2018-2019.

Based on this data, four schools had a tested EL population of at least 25% and exceeded growth by achieving an EVAAS score of greater than +2:

- KIPP Durham College Preparatory (38.6% EL tested population; +3.9 growth score)
- Torchlight Academy (31.02% EL tested population; +5.14 growth score)
- Healthy Start Academy (28.17% EL tested population; +5.6 growth score)
- Sallie B. Howard School of the Arts (25.82% EL tested population; +4.55 growth score)

Figure I. Academic Growth with English Learners



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Academic Growth with Students with Disabilities

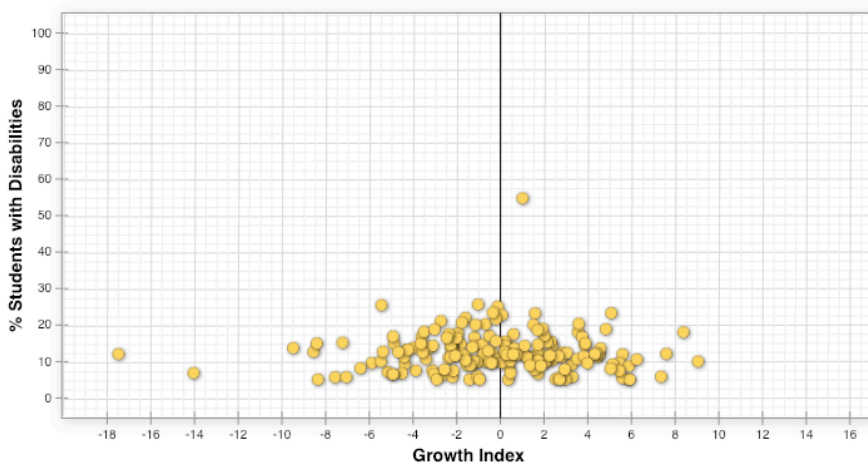
The figure below illustrates the growth index achieved by each school compared to the percentage of students with disabilities who were assessed in EOG or EOC assessments in 2018-2019.

Based on this data, eight schools had a tested SWD population of at least 15% and exceeded growth by achieving an EVAAS score of greater than +2:

- Arapahoe Charter School (18.02% SWD tested population; +3.56 growth score)
- CIS Academy (16.67% SWD tested population; +3.75 growth score)
- Island Montessori Charter School (20.29% SWD tested population; +3.59 growth score)

- Magellan Charter (15.21% SWD tested population; +2.14 growth score)
- Mountain Discovery Charter (15.38% SWD tested population; +2.32 growth score)
- PreEminent Charter (17.95% SWD tested population; +8.38 growth score)
- Quest Academy (17.02% SWD tested population; +2.02 growth score)
- United Community School (18.8% SWD tested population; +4.83 growth score)

Figure J. Academic Growth with Students with Disabilities



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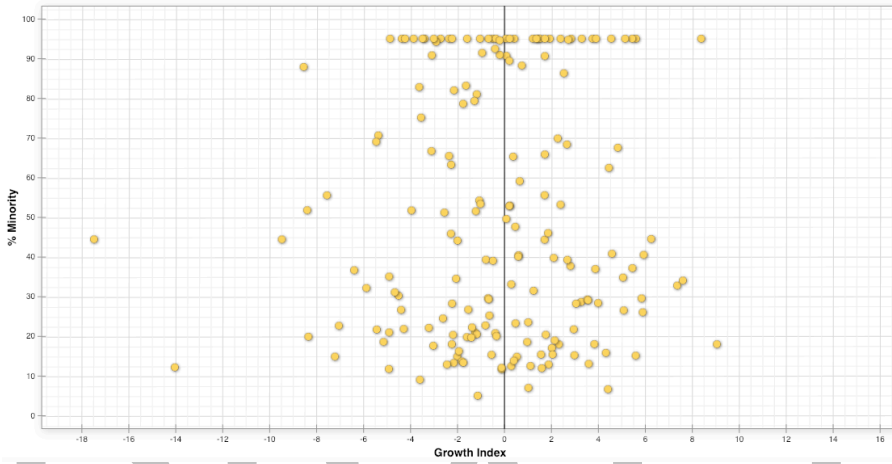
Academic Growth with Students of Color

The figure below illustrates the growth index achieved by each school compared to the percentage of students of color who were assessed in EOC or EOG assessments in 2018-2019.

Based on this data, eleven schools had a tested student of color population of at least 70% and exceeded growth by achieving an EVAAS score of greater than +2:

- Alpha Academy (86.3%; +2.53)
- CIS Academy (95%; +3.75)
- Guilford Preparatory Academy (95%; +2.39)
- Healthy Start Academy (95%; +5.6)
- Henderson Collegiate (94.74%; +2.72)
- KIPP Durham College Preparatory (95%; +3.9)
- PreEminent Charter (95%; +8.38)
- Quality Education Academy (95%; +2.84)
- Research Triangle Charter (95%; +5.44)
- Sugar Creek Charter (95%; +3.29)
- Torchlight Academy (95%; +5.14)

Figure K. Academic Growth with Students of Color



Charter Academic Growth And Length of Time in Operation

Figure L depicts the number of charter schools not meeting, meeting, and exceeding growth, and the length of time that schools have been in operation.

Figure L. Charter School Growth Status and Length of Time in Operation



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Of the 48 schools that exceeded growth, nine (19%) have been in operation for 1-5 years; 8 (17%) have been in operation for 6-10 years; three (6%) have been in operation for 11-15 years; 21 (44%) have been in operation for 16-20 years; and seven (15%) have been in operation for 21 years or more.

Of the 73 schools meeting growth, 21 (29%) have been in operation for 1-5 years; 15 (21%) have been in operation for 6-10 years; seven (10%) have been in operation for 11-15 years; 21 (29%) have been in operation for 16-20 years; and nine (12%) have been in operation for more than 20 years.

Of the 54 schools not meeting growth, 29 (54%) have been in operation for five years or fewer; 9 (17%) have been in operation for 6-10 years; five (9%) have been in operation for 11-15 years; eight (15%) have been in operation for 16-20 years; and five (9%) have been in operation for greater than 20 years.

Table 12. Number and Percentage of Schools At or Above 60% Grade Level Proficient and College/Career Ready

	Charter		Non-Charter		All	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Schools At/Above 60% GLP (Level 3, 4, or 5)	104	56%	1068	44%	1172	45%
Schools At/Above 60% CCR (Level 4 or 5)	46	25%	350	15%	396	15%

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Academic Performance: Low-Performing and Continually Low-Performing Schools

S.L. 2016-79 defines Low-Performing and Continually Low-Performing Charter Schools as the following:

1. Low-Performing charter schools are those that receive a school performance grade of D or F and a school growth score of “met expected growth” or “not met expected growth.”
2. Continually Low-Performing charter schools are those that have been designated by the State Board as Low-Performing for at least two of the last three years.

In 2018-19, 47 total schools were identified as either Low-Performing or Continually Low-Performing. Thirty-eight schools were identified as Continually Low-Performing, and forty-two schools were identified as Low-Performing. There was considerable overlap between the Low-Performing and Continually Low-Performing lists. Of the 42 Low-Performing schools, 31 were also Continually Low-Performing. Two of these schools were closed at the end of the 2018-19 school year. Of the 38 Continually Low-Performing Schools, five were not identified as Low-Performing because they received a grade higher than a D and either met or exceeded growth in 2018-19.

The number of LP/CLP charter schools increased from 34 in 2017-18 to 47 in 2018-19.

Table 13. Low-Performing/Continually Low-Performing Charter School Trends

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
LP Schools	37 (22.6%)	28 (16.8%)	42 (23.6%)
CLP Schools	20 (12.3%)	28 (16.8%)	38 (21.3%)
<u>CLP Charter Schools</u>			38 (22.8%)
<u>Recurring LP District Schools</u>			423 (18.5%)

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Table 14. Total Low-Performing/Continually Low-Performing Charter School Trends

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Total LP/CLP Schools	37	34	47

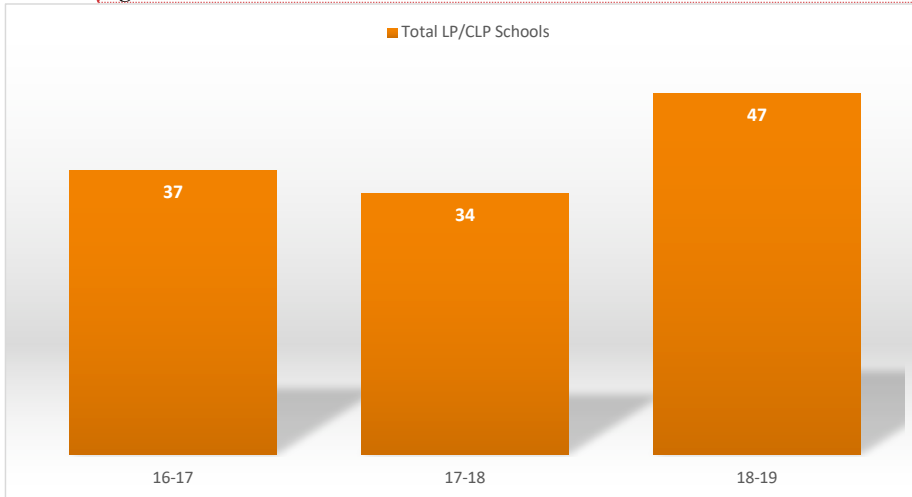
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Figure M. Total Number of LP/CLP Charter Schools - Three Year Trend



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In order to hold charter schools accountable for student achievement results, the CSAB requires every school on the Low-Performing or Continually Low-Performing list to appear before them and present a plan for school improvement. CSAB members ask pointed questions about the efficacy of school plans and often encourage schools to establish student achievement goals that are feasible and ambitious. Every school identified as Low-Performing or Continually Low-Performing receives a site visit from the OCS Risk Assessment team. Schools consistently appearing on the Low-Performing monitoring list are also at risk of possible charter termination or non-renewal. Additional information on OCS-provided supports for Low-Performing and Continually Low-Performing Schools is located in Appendix C.

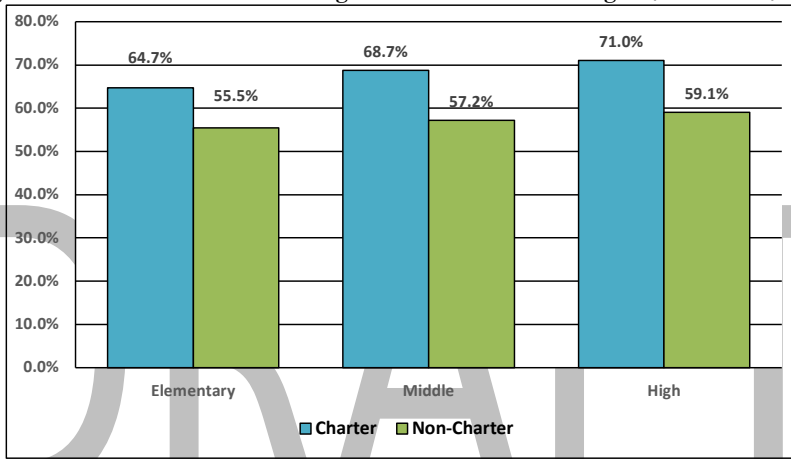
Academic Performance: Grade Level Proficiency Across Subject Areas and Subgroups

The next several charts depict charter school student proficiency in English/Language Arts, Math, Science, and the ACT, both overall and within specific subgroups. The number of students captured within each subgroup score is located in Appendix D.

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English Language Arts
Charter Schools and Non-Charter Schools
All Students Comparisons 2019

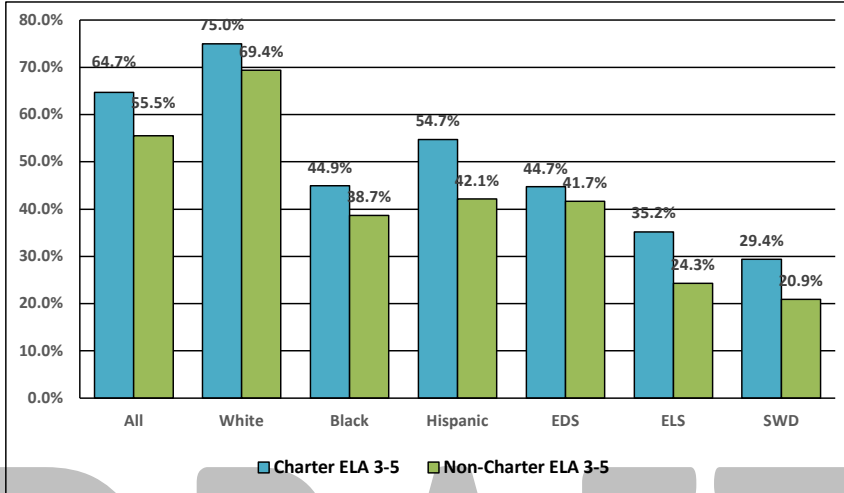
Figure N. Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on English/ELA EOC/EOG



English Language Arts
Charter Schools and Non-Charter Schools
Elementary Subgroup Comparison

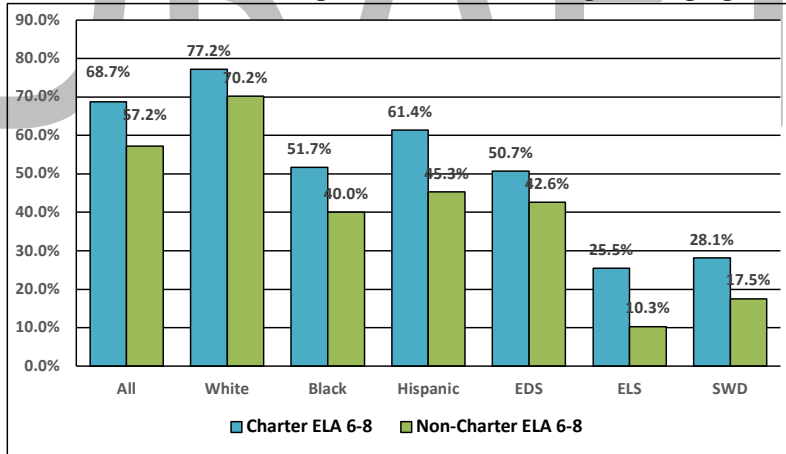
Figure O. Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on English Language Arts EOG

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Middle School Subgroup Comparison

Figure P. Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on English/Language Arts EOG

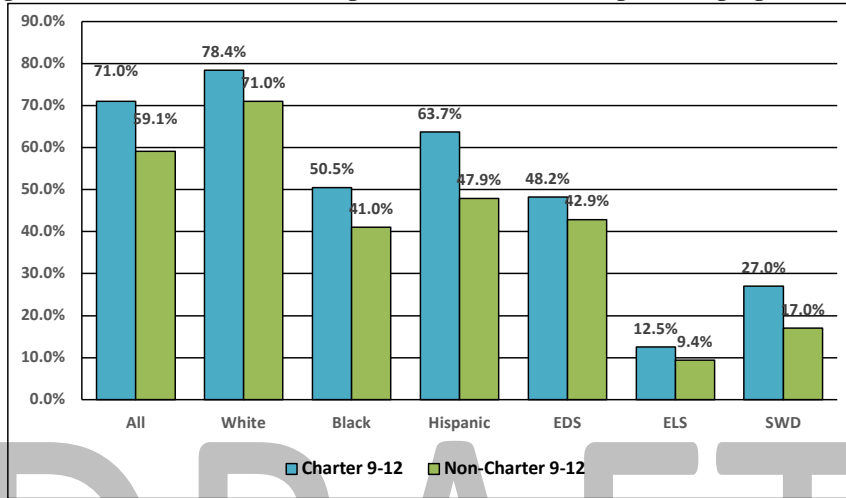


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High School Subgroup Comparison

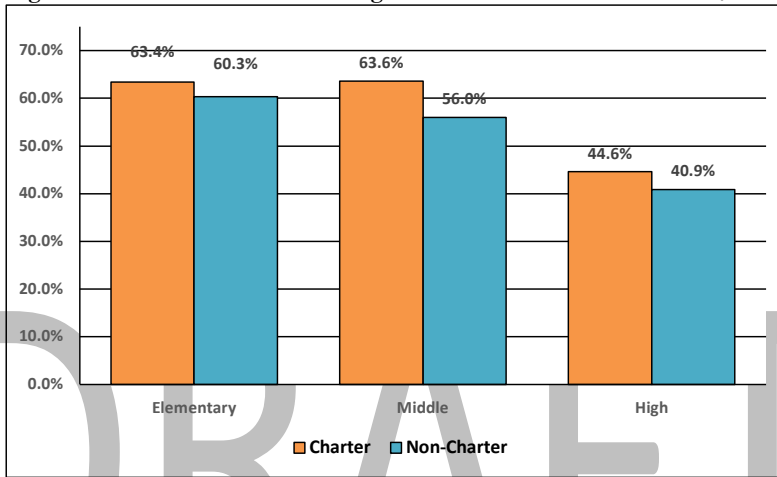
Figure Q. Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on English/Language Arts EOC



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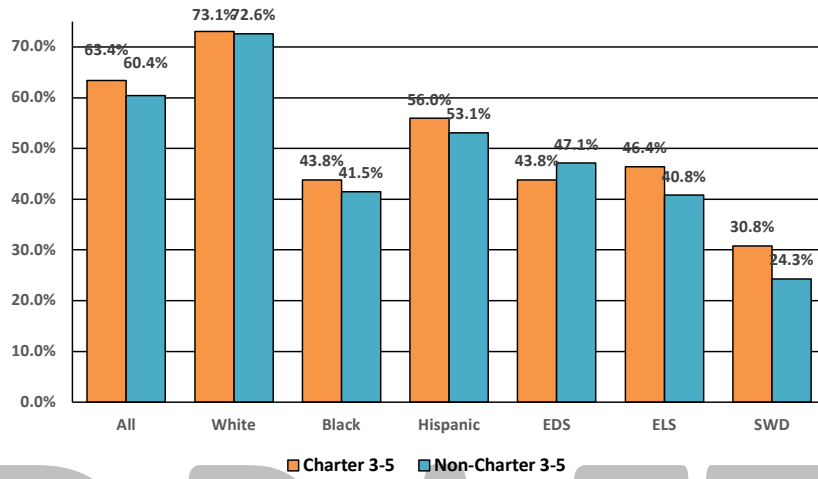
Mathematics Performance
Mathematics
Charter Schools and Non-Charter Schools
All Students Comparisons 2019

Figure R. Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on Math EOC/EOG



Mathematics
Charter and Non-Charter Schools
Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on Math EOC/EOG

Figure S. Elementary School Subgroup Comparison



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Figure T. Middle School Subgroup Comparison

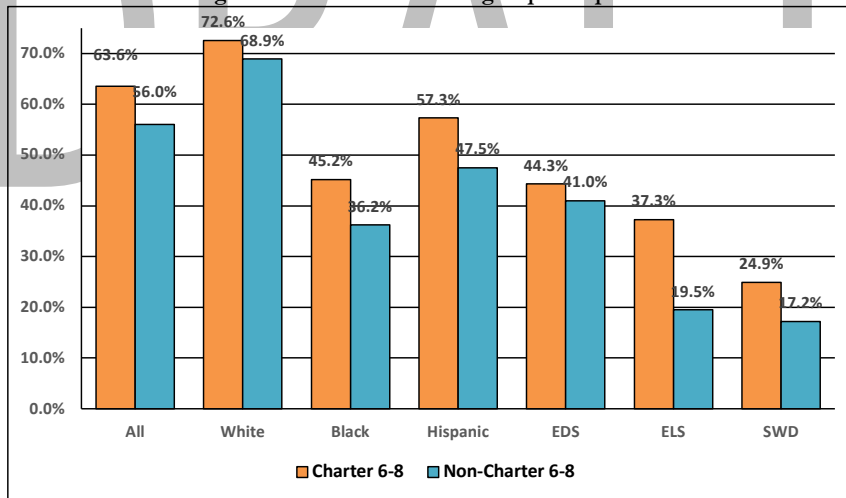
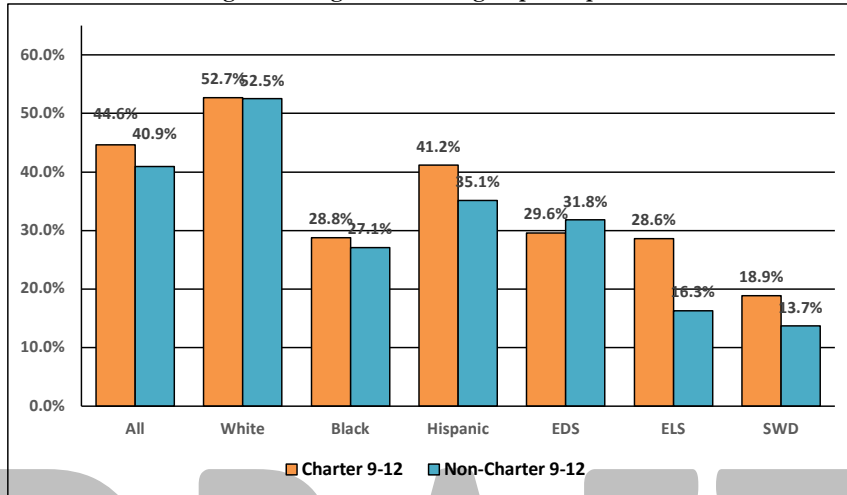


Figure U. High School Subgroup Comparison



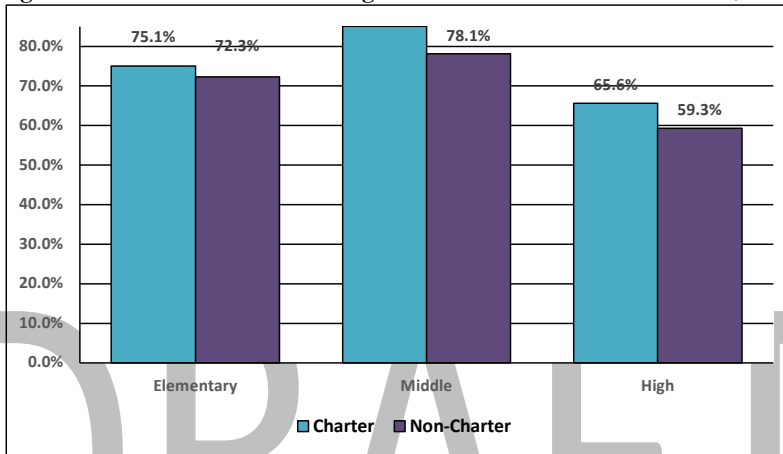
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Science Performance

Science
Charter Schools and Non-Charter Schools
All Students Comparisons 2019

Figure V. Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on Science EOC/EOG



Science
Charter and Non-Charter Schools
Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on Math EOC/EOG

Figure W. Elementary School Subgroup Comparison

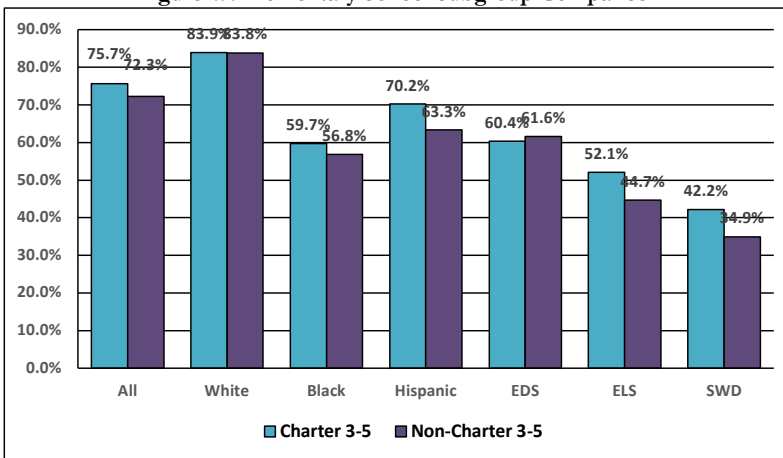


Figure X. Middle School Subgroup Performance

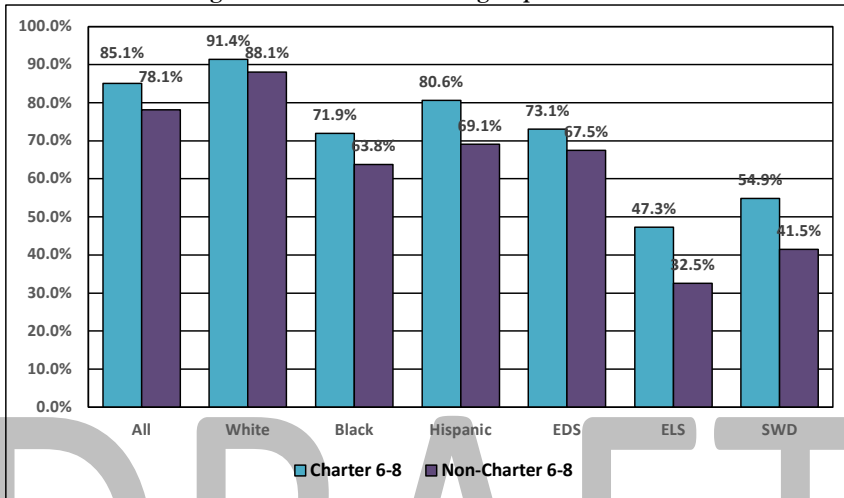
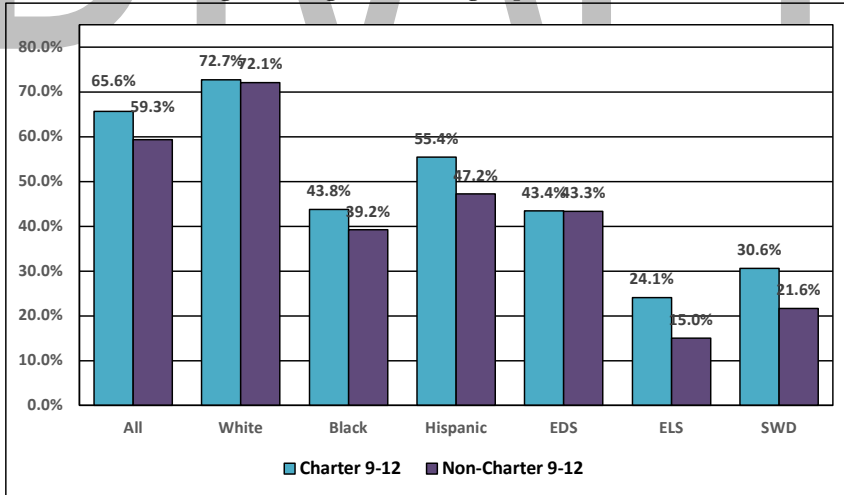
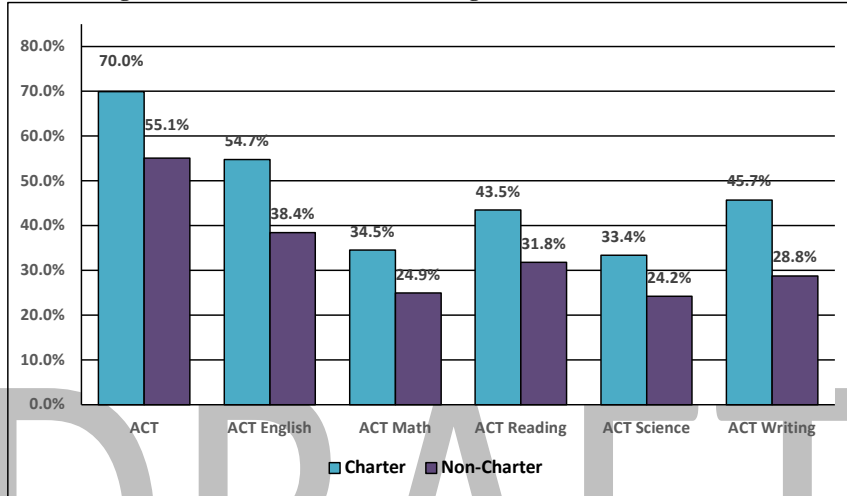


Figure Y. High School Subgroup Performance



ACT Performance
Charter Schools and Non-Charter Schools

Figure Z. Percent of Students Meeting UNC 2017 ACT Benchmark



**State Board of Education Strategic Plan
Goals and Measures for Charter Schools**

The State Board of Education sets targets for charter school academic performance, as measured by school performance grades, school growth, and Low-Performing/Continually Low-Performing status. The chart below shows charter schools' actual results relative to the State Board's goals and targets.

The Office of Charter Schools, Charter Schools Advisory Board, and State Board of Education are committed to providing the supports necessary to ensure that the charter sector is progressing towards the goals outlined in the SBE strategic plan.

Table 13. SBE Goals and Measures for Charter Schools

	Measure	2018-2019	
		Targeted	Actual
2.4.1	Percentage of charter schools receiving SPG of A or B	45.5%	43%
2.4.2	Percentage of charter schools meeting or exceeding expected annual academic growth	75%	69%
2.4.3	Percentage of charter schools meeting or exceeding all financial and operational goals as measured by the OCS' Performance Framework	90%	TBD
2.4.4a	Decrease number of Low Performing charter schools	25	42
2.4.4b	Decrease number of Continually Low Performing charter schools	8	38

Charter School Impact on Local Districts

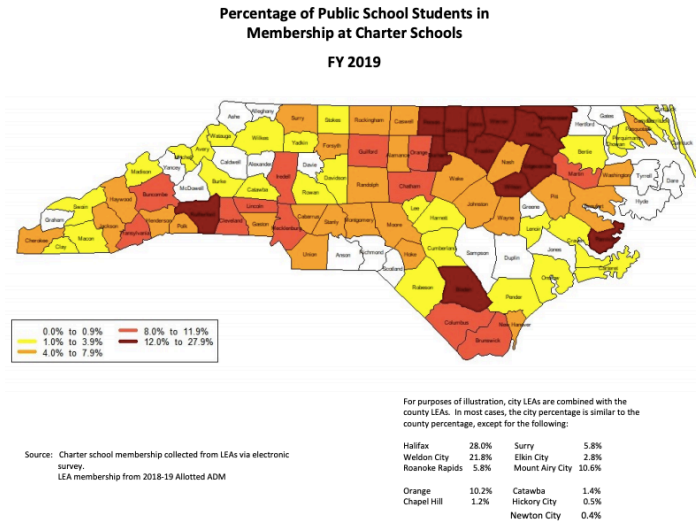
In 2018-2019, charter school average daily membership (ADM) accounted for 7.2% of the state's total ADM. Of the \$9.44 billion in state funding for public education, 7.1% (or \$674,314,240) was allotted to charter schools.

Table 14. Number of Charters Approved, Opened, Closed and Total State Funds Allotted

Year	Approved	Opened	Closed	Relinq w/o Opening	Total in Operation	Planning Allotted ADM	% of Total ADM	Total State Funds Allotted
1996-97	34	0	0	0	0			
1997-98	31	34	1	0	33	4,106	0.3%	\$ 16,559,947
1998-99	28	26	3	0	56	5,572	0.4%	\$ 32,143,691
1999-00	17	22	3	5	75	10,257	0.8%	\$ 50,104,210
2000-01	9	15	4	3	86	14,230	1.1%	\$ 64,213,491
2001-02	3	8	3	2	91	19,492	1.5%	\$ 77,177,902
2002-03	2	5	3	1	93	19,832	1.5%	\$ 87,233,744
2003-04	4	2	2	0	93	21,578	1.6%	\$ 94,286,726
2004-05	2	4	0	0	97	24,784	1.8%	\$ 110,888,050
2005-06	1	2	3	0	96	28,733	2.1%	\$ 132,089,910
2006-07	7	1	4	0	93	29,170	2.0%	\$ 144,299,621
2007-08	2	7	2	0	98	30,892	2.1%	\$ 169,871,326
2008-09	0	2	3	0	97	34,694	2.3%	\$ 191,751,412
2009-10	3	0	1	0	96	38,449	2.6%	\$ 187,726,898
2010-11	1	3	0	0	99	41,314	2.8%	\$ 200,058,046
2011-12	9	1	0	0	100	44,829	3.0%	\$ 228,291,552
2012-13	24	7	1	1	106	48,795	3.3%	\$ 255,396,318
2013-14	26	22	2	0	126	53,655	3.6%	\$ 304,459,644
2014-15	11	24	3	0	147	64,186	4.2%	\$ 366,455,982
2015-16	15	14	3	1	158	81,943	5.3%	\$ 444,131,335
2016-17	8	8	0	0	166	92,112	6.0%	\$ 513,450,126
2017-18	9	8	1	1	173	101,689	6.6%	\$ 580,772,383
2018-19	12	12	1	1	184	111,604	7.2%	\$ 674,314,240
	258	227	43	15				

Unlike local education agencies, charter schools are not bound to serve only the students residing within a particular county or district. Many charter schools serve students from multiple districts, which often poses challenges related to transportation and funding allocations. Given the large number of districts from which a charter school may enroll students, it is difficult to pinpoint the specific fiscal impact of a given charter school on its "home district." The map below illustrates the percentage of public school students in membership for each district in the state.

Figure AA. Percentage of Public School Students in Membership at Charter Schools



In 2018-2019, the individual LEAs with the highest percentages of charter school membership (compared to total district and charter ADM) were located predominantly in rural areas, with the exception of Durham Public Schools. The table below outlines the LEAs where charter membership is at least 13% of the total district and charter ADM. A table of percentage of charter membership for every LEA in NC is in Appendix E.

Table 15. LEAs with at Least 13% of Students Enrolled in Charter Schools

Region	LEA	Charter Membership	LEA Allotted ADM	Total LEA and CS	% of LEA
1	Halifax	959	2,472	3,431	28.0%
1	Northampton	530	1,651	2,181	24.3%
3	Vance	1,853	5,928	7,781	23.8%
1	Weldon City	251	899	1,150	21.8%
3	Person	1,134	4,449	5,583	20.3%
3	Durham Public	6,957	33,080	40,037	17.4%
3	Granville	1,500	7,511	9,011	16.6%
3	Warren	378	2,039	2,417	15.6%
2	Pamlico	230	1,250	1,480	15.5%
3	Wilson	1,834	11,554	13,388	13.7%
8	Rutherford	1,236	8,183	9,419	13.1%
3	Franklin	1,224	8,198	9,422	13.0%

In 2018-2019, the SBE Education districts with the highest percentages of charter school membership (compared to total district and charter ADM) were Regions 3 and 6. The table below

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outlines the total percentage of charter membership for each region. A map of the eight State Board of Education Districts is also below for reference.

Figure AB. North Carolina State Board of Education Districts

North Carolina State Board of Education Districts

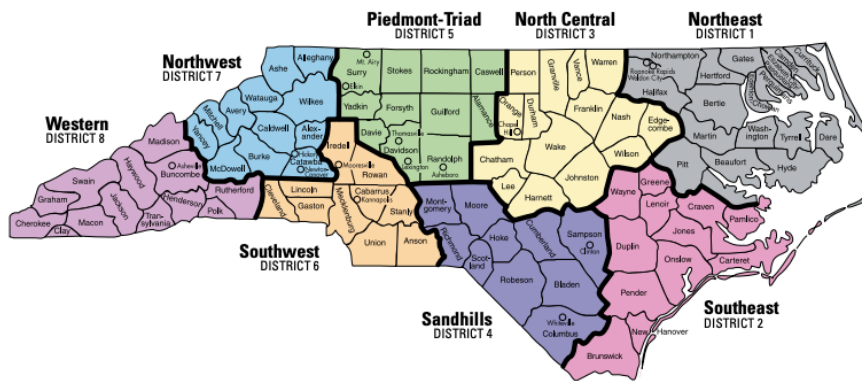


Table 16. SBE Districts/Regions and Total Charter Membership

Region	2019 Charter Membership	LEA Allotted ADM	Total LEA and CS	% of LEA
North Central – 3	35,420	352,216	387,636	9.1%
Southwest – 6	34,523	343,488	378,011	9.1%
Western – 8	6,123	81,266	87,389	7.0%
Northeast – 1	4,632	71,272	75,904	6.1%
Piedmont-Triad – 5	15,273	238,458	253,731	6.0%
Southeast – 2	5,293	140,320	145,613	3.6%
Sandhills – 4	4,804	134,812	139,616	3.4%
Northwest – 7	1,104	82,705	83,809	1.3%

Charter schools also have positive potential impacts on local districts, such as relieving overcrowding, supplementing educational offerings currently available to parents, and reducing the financial strain on districts of building new facilities. [Charter schools received a survey to gather square footage information, in order to estimate the amount of money districts have saved on facilities by not having to build schools to house students enrolled in charter schools. Preliminary survey results indicate that charter school square footage across the state totals approximately 11,000,000 square feet. If that figure is multiplied by a conservative estimate of \\$100 per square foot in building, renovation, and maintenance costs, charter schools may be saving districts almost \\$1](#)

billion dollars in capital improvements. Further analysis on facilities savings is necessary to confirm this figure.

Prior to 2013, the State Board of Education was required by legislation to solicit impact statements from LEAs when new applications for charters were being considered or when exiting charter schools wanted to grow beyond what was normally allowed within the statute. The General Assembly removed the requirement that LEAs submit impact statements, but the State Board has continued to consider comments from school districts in situations involving charter school enrollment growth.

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Ensuring Autonomy and Accountability

As schools of choice, charter schools are accountable to parents and guardians, who may withdraw their student(s) and re-enroll them elsewhere, should the school not meet their expectations. However, the North Carolina General Assembly and State Board of Education have approved several additional, concrete measures through which charter schools are held accountable to stakeholders:

- 1) Per General Statute 115C-218.25, all charter school boards are subject to the Open Meetings Laws and must publish the board meeting schedule on their website.
- 2) Per General Statute 115C-218.25, all charter schools are subject to the Public Records Act and must promptly comply with citizen requests.
- 3) Per General Statute 115C-218.90(b), all charter schools must adopt a criminal history check policy mirror that of the local school administrative unit in which the school is located. Further, all charter school board members must have criminal background checks.
- 4) Per General Statute 115C-218.85(3) and SBE policy CHTR-001, all charter schools are required to conduct the student assessments required by the SBE. Further, all charter schools are required to comply with North Carolina's Accountability Model, unless otherwise approved by the SBE. Currently, four charter schools have been approved for an alternative accountability model.
- 5) Per General Statute 115C-218.30 and SBE policy CHTR-006, every charter school is required to undergo an annual audit for both its finances and its compliance with applicable federal and state laws and policies. These audits conducted by an independent auditor approved by the Local Governance Commission, and the audit must be published on the school's website. (LGC Audit Requirements located in Appendix [F](#))
- 6) Per General Statute 115C-218.94 and SBE policy CHTR-010, every charter school identified as Low Performing or Continually Low Performing is required to come before the Charter School Advisory Board and outline their plan for improving student achievement.
- 7) Goal 2, Objective 2.4 of the SBE's Strategic Plan is to "Increase the number of schools meeting academic, operational, and financial goals." Annually, the Office of Charter Schools' Performance Framework serves as the standard mechanism for reporting on progress toward achievement of these goals. The framework provides a consolidated view of the school's performance relative to a list of academic, operational, and financial requirements. The academic elements of the Framework are all standard indicators provided by the State accountability system. The operational and financial elements of the Framework are all required by General Statute, State Board Policy, or the Charter Agreement. This yearly compliance review involves divisions across the entire Department of Public Instruction (such as Exceptional Children and Financial Business Services) and ensures that charter schools are also in compliance with federal reporting requirements. (Performance Framework Guidelines located in Appendix [G](#))
- 8) Per General Statute 115C-218.6 and SBE policy CHTR-007, every charter school is required to undergo a rigorous renewal process prior to having their charter term extended. Schools

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not meeting the expected academic, financial, and/or governance standards are subject to renewal terms of 7, 5, 3 years or non-renewal. (Renewal Policy and Framework located in Appendix B)

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Best Practices Resulting from Charter School Operations

Northeast Academy for Aerospace and Advanced Technologies “NEAAT” is a charter school physically located on the campus of Elizabeth City State University in Elizabeth City, North Carolina. NEAAT’s school operations provide several examples of best practices that may be transferred to other charter and district schools.

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- 1) NEAAT’s governing board has established a five-year strategic plan, complete with goals, objectives, and yearly milestones. The strategic plan includes an emphasis on an **exceptional school culture** through parent and community engagement, sustained extracurricular activities, demographics that mirror the geographic region, and stakeholder surveys; **college/career readiness** through academic pathways and internship opportunities, professional development for teachers, opportunities for students to present research, and an emphasis on helping students earn industry-recognized credentials/certifications; and the **long-term sustainability** of the school through a growing fund balance, multiple highly qualified candidates for each staffing vacancy, increased teacher retention, and collaborative projects with external partners such as other schools, districts, community organizations, etc.
- 2) NEAAT has demonstrated a commitment to **university/community partnerships**, as evidenced by its collaborative agreement with Elizabeth City State University. In addition to sharing physical classroom space, the university offers NEAAT students opportunities to utilize other campus resources related to NEAAT’s **unique school mission and academic pathways** – aerospace, computer science, and health sciences. The school has obtained sponsorships from organizations such as the William R. Kenan, Jr. Charitable Trust, the Golden Leaf Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Elizabeth City Foundation, and Sentara Albemarle Medical Center. Moreover, the school’s strategic plan contains objectives related to increasing signed partnership agreements and volunteer hours with community and business organizations, and designing/implementing high-quality project-based learning assignments that have been informed by business and community partners.

The **North Carolina Advancing Charter Collaboration and Excellence for Student Success (NC ACCESS)** program provided training to NC ACCESS fellows on **developing meaningful relationships and effective parent and community engagement** with educationally disadvantaged students and their families. Each subgrantee was charged with creating a plan to engage diverse populations during the school’s initial enrollment drive and throughout the grant period, and monitoring indicators were provided to ensure that the plans developed were intentional and comprehensive. At the conclusion of the training, the NC ACCESS team offered subgrantees an opportunity to submit a mini-proposal to implement a parent engagement activity. Groups submitting the strongest proposals were awarded \$500 towards project implementation.

IC Imagine was awarded a \$500 award to create a parent resource library (both online and physical) to support parents in multiple areas, including the use of social media, bullying, homework help, child/family wellness, literacy and core academic support at home, access to PowerSchool, and college entry. To engage parents with the resource center, the school will host an opening event with dinner for families. At the event, teachers and staff will show families how to access the resources, and then allow families time for exploration. Multiple community organizations, such as the Buncombe County Library and ECAC’s Western Office will partner with the school in the provision

of resources. Finally, IC Imagine will host a Parent Resource Orientation Night with dinner each semester to provide an overview of available resources, share information on community agencies/partners willing to assist, and to continue fostering relationships with families, teachers, and administrators.

Hiring a Diverse Teacher Workforce

The Fordham Institute released a report examining North Carolina teacher and student data from 2006-07 through 2012-13 to determine the frequency and impact of student-teacher race match in charter and district schools. The report included several key findings, including:

- 1) Charter and district schools served the same proportion of black students, but charter schools hired about 35% more black teachers.
- 2) Black students enrolled in charter schools are more likely to have a black teacher than their counterparts in district schools, but white students in district and charter schools are equally likely to have a white teacher.

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Charter Schools Receiving Special Awards and Recognition

In 2018-2019, Envision Science Academy was the only school in the state to be recognized as an NC Model STEM School of Distinction.

*Multiple charter schools were recognized by the CSAB for outstanding qualities:

- 1) Lake Norman Charter was recognized in Newsweek as one of America's Best STEM High Schools
- 2) East Wake Academy teacher Heather Futtrell was honored for her exceptional ability to teach and connect with students
- 3) Charter School Teacher of the Year Ashley Bailey from Roxboro Community School was recognized for her stellar accomplishments
- 4) Lincoln Charter School was recognized for outstanding sportsmanship and character
- 5) Henderson Collegiate and its founder/leader Eric Sanchez was recognized for outstanding student achievement

*U.S. News and World Report released a list of Top Ranked NC Schools based on six indicators: College Readiness, Math and Reading Proficiency, Math and Reading Performance, Underserved Student Performance, College Curriculum Breadth, and Graduation Rate. Several charter schools were among the highest rated:

- Raleigh Charter High School (#2)
- Woods Charter (#5)
- Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy (#7)
- Lake Norman Charter School (#9)
- Pine Lake Preparatory (#19)
- Franklin Academy (#20)
- Community School of Davidson (#22)
- Gray Stone Day School (#24)
- Gaston College Preparatory (#28)
- Research Triangle High School (#31)
- The Hawbridge School (#39)
- Union Academy (#46)
- Voyager Academy (#48)
- Longleaf School of the Arts (#51)
- Oxford Preparatory Academy (#52)
- Lincoln Charter (#53)
- East Wake Academy (#54)

*In a survey of the state's charter high schools, an estimated \$122 million dollars in scholarships were awarded to the graduating class of 2019. The number of reported graduates in the 88 charter high schools returning the survey was 3,432. That averages to \$35,548 per graduate.

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Appendices

[Appendix A Ready-to-Open Final Enrollment Report](#)

[Appendix B SBE Approved Renewal Policy](#)

[Appendix C OCS Supports for Low-Performing and Continually Low-Performing Schools](#)

[Appendix D Subgroup Size for Test Performance Reporting](#)

[Appendix E Charter Membership in NC LEAs](#)

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