

## **Executive Summary**

Wake Preparatory Academy (“WPA”) has submitted a charter amendment request to relocate its proposed campus approximately 1.4 miles (0.9 miles as the crow flies) from Wake County to Franklin County. The expected student enrollment remains unchanged. However, because the relocation requires a Local Education Agency (“LEA”) change, Franklin County Schools (“FCS”) was requested to submit an impact statement (“Statement”) to the Office of Charter Schools (“OCS”) and the Charter School Advisory Board (“CSAB”).

The Statement approved by the FCS Board of Education (“FCSBE”) operates as a thesis in opposition to all North Carolina charter schools. The Statement does not mention the estimated impact WPA’s proposed education model and expected student population will have on FCS in Southwest Franklin County.

When addressing WPA’s proposed impact, FCS focused primarily on demographics and a current local desegregation order. Pursuant to G.S. § 115C-218.45(e), WPA must comply with the desegregation order. The Statement proceeds to attack two independent charter schools located within Franklin County as a premise for its opposition to WPA in general and Charter One’s student demographics in Arizona in comparison to FCS’s student population. The Statement did not compare Charter One’s student makeup to their respective LEAs. Neither did the Statement mention the demographics of Charter One’s affiliated North Carolina schools, Bonnie Cone Classical Academy (“BCCA”) and Aristotle Preparatory Academy (“APA”), both of which exceed the local LEA’s economically disadvantaged populations and enrolled non-Caucasian students. WPA will be the only charter school in Franklin County to offer a Weighted Lottery, Free and Reduced Lunch, and Busing, all of which will significantly remove barriers to students who are economically disadvantaged.

FCS’s Statement is unfortunately misdirected and inaccurate. Because the LEA change is minimal in distance, WPA is removing barriers to entry, and Charter One’s affiliated demographic makeup is in contrast to the Statement’s claims, the direct impact on FCS will be minimal and compliant with the desegregation order.

## **Formal Request to Relocate**

The Wake Preparatory Academy Board requests unanimous approval of our charter amendment. Our attached response to the impact statement details area of disagreement.

We request approval of the amendment request based upon the following reasons:

1. We are relocating the school 1 mile from the location in Wake Forest.
2. We are required by NC State Statute to comply with the desegregation order.
3. The Charter School Advisory Board and State Board of Education approved the initial Wake Preparatory Academy charter application which included a weighted lottery, participation in the national school lunch program and transportation.
4. We were denied site plan approval by the Town of Wake Forest. We appealed the decision in Wake County Superior Court. The court supported the decision by the Town of Wake Forest and Wake Prep is appealing the decision to the NC Court of Appeals.
5. Impact statement did not include schools that operate in NC with Charter One as the EMO. BCCA demographics reflect a population of less than 45% white in Huntersville, NC. Aristotle Prep demographics reflect a population of less than 5% white in West Charlotte.



Paige Sayles, Chair  
FCS Board of Education

Rhonda Schuhler, Ed.D  
Superintendent

April 12, 2021

Mr. Dave  
Machado Office  
of Charter  
Schools6307  
Mail Service  
CenterRaleigh,  
NC 27699-6307

Dear Mr. Machado and Members of the Charter School Advisory Board,

This impact statement is being submitted on behalf of the Franklin County Schools Board of Education (FCSBOE). We strongly oppose the request by Wake Preparatory Academy to shift its proposed location from Wake County, as originally approved, to Franklin County. We are adamantly against this for a number of reasons, enumerated below. **The greatest concern that we have is that if this request is honored, it takes an additional step towards resegregation of schools in Franklin County.**

- As mentioned in the “Executive Summary” provided by the Office of Charter Schools, the distance from the original intended site in Wake County to the new site in Franklin County is a distance of 1.4 miles. Wake Preparatory Academy has strong student interest in the immediate area of approximately 5,000 families on an interest list. This distance of location change, forced upon the school due to political and legal issues from the Town of Wake Forest, is so minimal, that essentially the same student body will be served. Said more simply, the 1.4-mile relocation change will serve the same percentage of students from both Wake and Franklin Counties.
- 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. The General Assembly removed the requirement that LEAs submit impact statements for SBE’s consideration.

### **The Issue of Resegregation in Franklin County**

As a result of *Harold Douglas Coppedge, et al., United States of America v. The Franklin County Board of Education*, the district has operated under a series of desegregation orders (including orders issued in 1967, 1968, 1970, 1978, 1994, 1996, and 2003) that require the FCSBOE to “eliminate the vestiges of discrimination.”

- Because the student body will remain unchanged, and Franklin County was mentioned as a County that Wake Prep may pull from in the original application, which was approved 2 years ago, Franklin County Schools had the opportunity to submit an impact statement at that time but chose not to.

- It is unfortunate that the Superintendent's "greatest concern" is that if Wake Prep moves approximately 1.4 miles north that this will take an additional step towards resegregating schools in Franklin County. This concern has no basis as minority-led Wake Prep Board will be the only school in Franklin County to employ a weighted-lottery.
- Wake Prep, Charter One, and all other parties named by Superintendent Schuyler in this impact statement are disappointed and frustrated at this political declaration. The Superintendent made no effort in reaching out to Wake Prep's Board, the Board Chair, or any other party named throughout the impact statement.
- Let's be clear. Wake Prep and Charter One absolutely disagree with and condemn these accusations of segregation.

In accordance with this order, the FCSBOE has been operating under federal guidance intended to ensure desegregation of schools. Areas of focus have most recently included desegregation of staff, quality of education (academic achievement, advanced course offerings and enrollment, special education programming, and student dropouts), student discipline, and student assignment to schools. The district has made significant progress in a number of areas. As a result of this progress, on December 18th, 2018, a "Joint Motion for Declaration of Partial Unitary Status" (filed by the United States and Franklin County Board of Education) was granted.

- If the Superintendent and members of the Franklin County Board of Education are honest and genuine that resegregation is their "greatest concern," then minimal communication from the Superintendent or the Board is reasonably expected. It's disappointing that no credible research was completed. They even neglected to include direct impact data on Wake Prep (the school that actually submitted the relocation request). Wake Prep would be the first and only charter school in the county to use a weighted lottery, provide a free and reduced lunch program, and provide bussing. The addition of Wake Prep to Franklin County will have the opposite effect of the Superintendent's biased assumptions.

The Court currently has jurisdiction over the assignment of students engaged in the Districts' majority-to-minority transfer program through the 2024-25 school year. Students have been given an opportunity to participate in this reassignment program in an attempt by the Federal government to ensure that student assignment within the District is as racially balanced as is practicable, providing families with the opportunity for transfer to a school in which they represent a minority of the current school population.

- Wake Prep and Charter One agree that this is great progress by FCS and congratulate them on their efforts. We feel that by finally adding a school of choice to the county that holds an economically disadvantaged weighted lottery, provides bussing, and provides a free and reduced lunch program would be looked favorably upon by all authoritative entities. In fact, we wonder why, after 53 years of being under the Desegregation Order and 20+ years of charter schools in the state, that it took the county this long to welcome a school that is dedicated to serving all students.

In addition, the District is still under obligation and oversight with regard to the administration of discipline and the gifted and talented program. This oversight includes regular reporting to the Department of Justice (DOJ), as well as receiving feedback on practices from DOJ legal counsel and responding with appropriate measures to address areas of concern.

The FCSBOE is concerned that despite 53 years of efforts to ensure that our schools are demonstrating a level of accountability and commitment to diversity and equity in our practices, this work could be undone with the growing presence of charters in our county. We currently have two charter schools within Franklin County- Crosscreek Charter and Youngsville Academy. These charter schools reside in the district, and are, by definition, considered to be public schools. They receive state and local funding. Their original charters indicated that they would recruit students representatively. This is also required by North Carolina General Statute § 115C-218.45, which states:

*Admission requirements: “[w]ithin 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. The school shall be subject to any court-ordered desegregation plan in effect for the local school administrative unit.”*

- The accusation and interpretation of statute from the Superintendent and Members of the Franklin County Board of Education that the current charter schools in Franklin County are not following the law is a serious allegation and should be addressed to the charter schools themselves and their authorizer. The claims against these charter schools and supposed guilt by association with Wake Prep is disingenuous to the process and the credibility of this impact statement.

Local charter school data suggests that this has not happened. This is illustrated in **Figure 1**. We would also argue that the Wake Preparatory Academy application provides no indication that they acknowledge this statute or the concerns regarding racial and ethnic representation that it is intended to support, or that they have a means and method for ensuring compliance. Additionally, the processes identified at the state level as they apply to management of charter schools demonstrate a lack of oversight to ensure that any intent to address racial/ethnic balance within the school community is being met or will be met going forward.

- This accusation is very concerning. The Wake Prep application does in fact acknowledge this statute and is referenced approximately four (4) times throughout. When Superintendent Schuyler was approached and made aware about her research error in the monthly board meeting dated Tuesday April 12<sup>th</sup>, she stated, to the effect, that “well, this is a long statute and I feel they weren’t specific enough.”

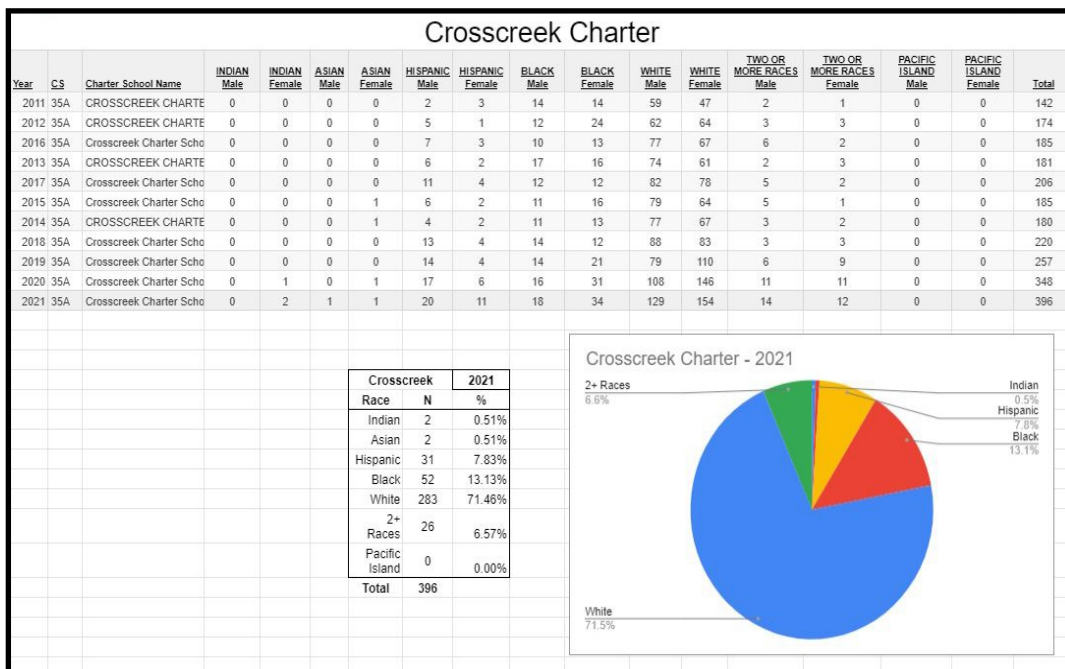
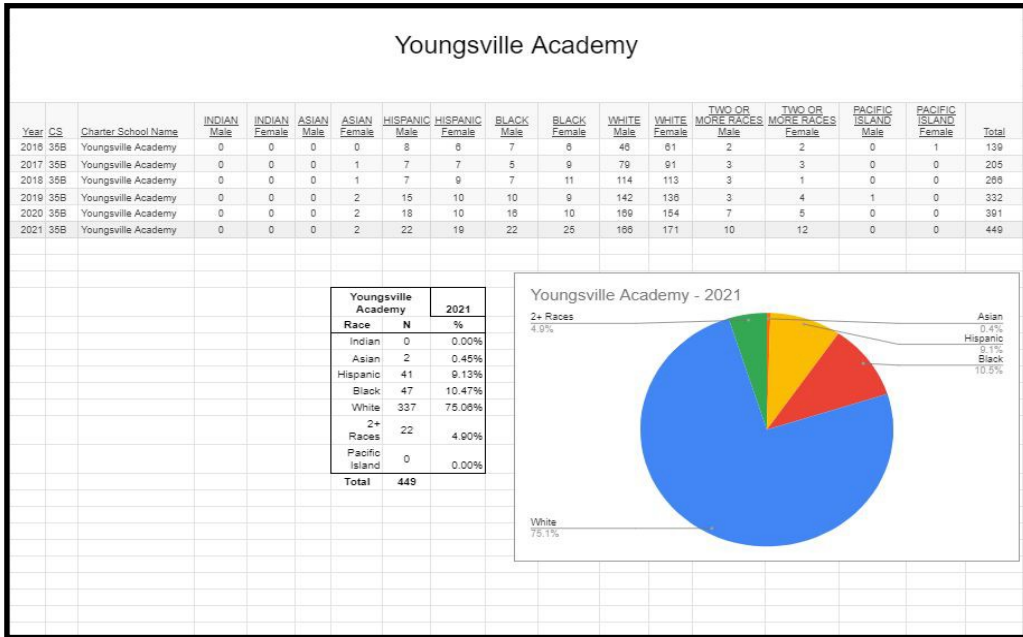
See **Figure 1** below:

### **Charter Schools Housed in Franklin County**

*These charter schools are currently located in Franklin County. They receive state and local funds,*

are considered a public school, yet they do not operate under the purview of the existing DOJ Consent Order and their programs run counter to our efforts to desegregate our schools.

**FIGURE 1: Breakdown by Race/Ethnicity: Internal Charter Schools**

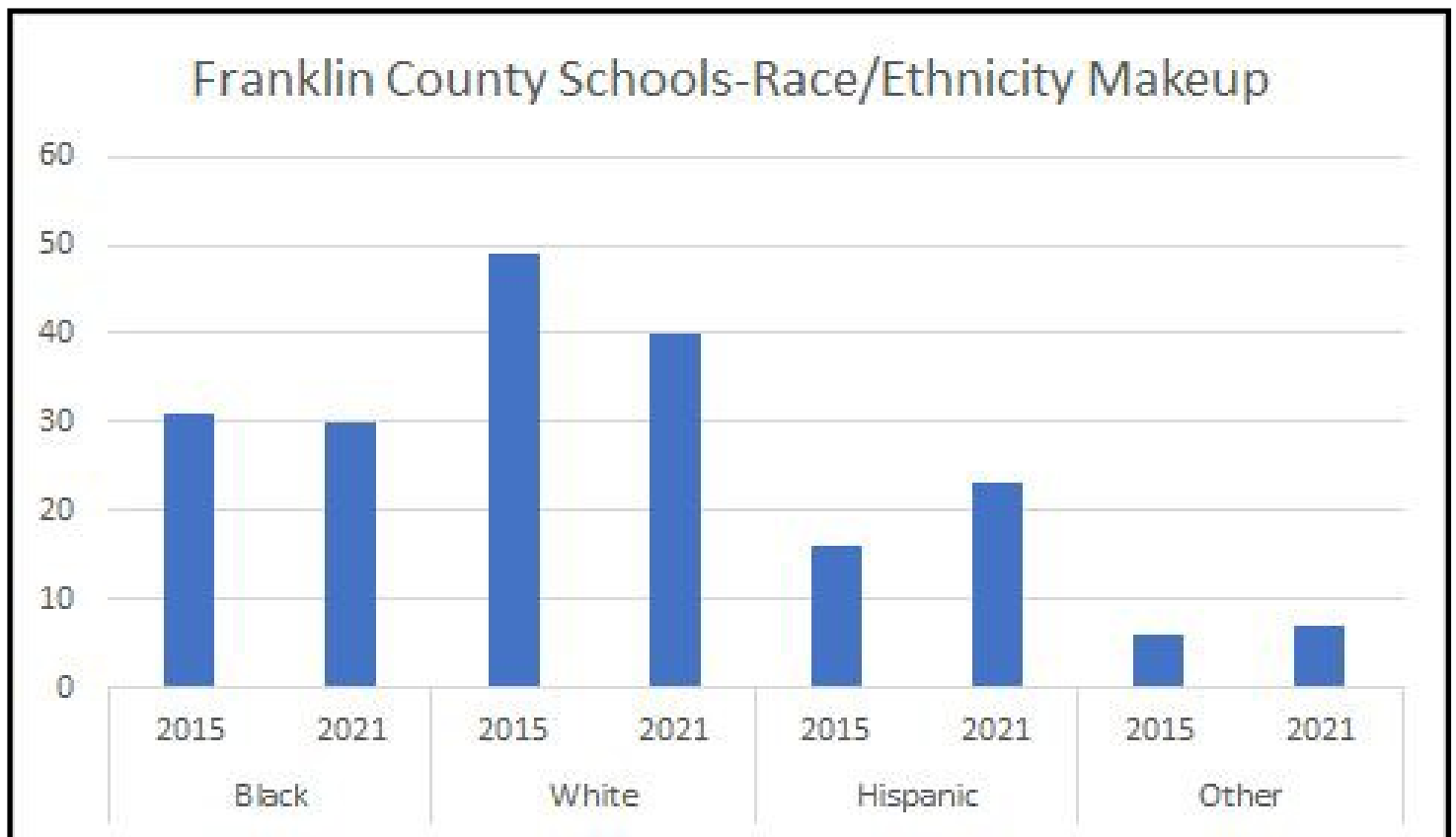


- The above figures show data from two (2) independent charter schools that have no affiliation with Wake Prep whatsoever. Two unrelated charter school's demographic data are not relevant to an impact statement about Wake Prep. In fact, this raises questions to the genuineness of the Superintendent's claims. Her assertions do not address Wake Prep's impact on FCS.

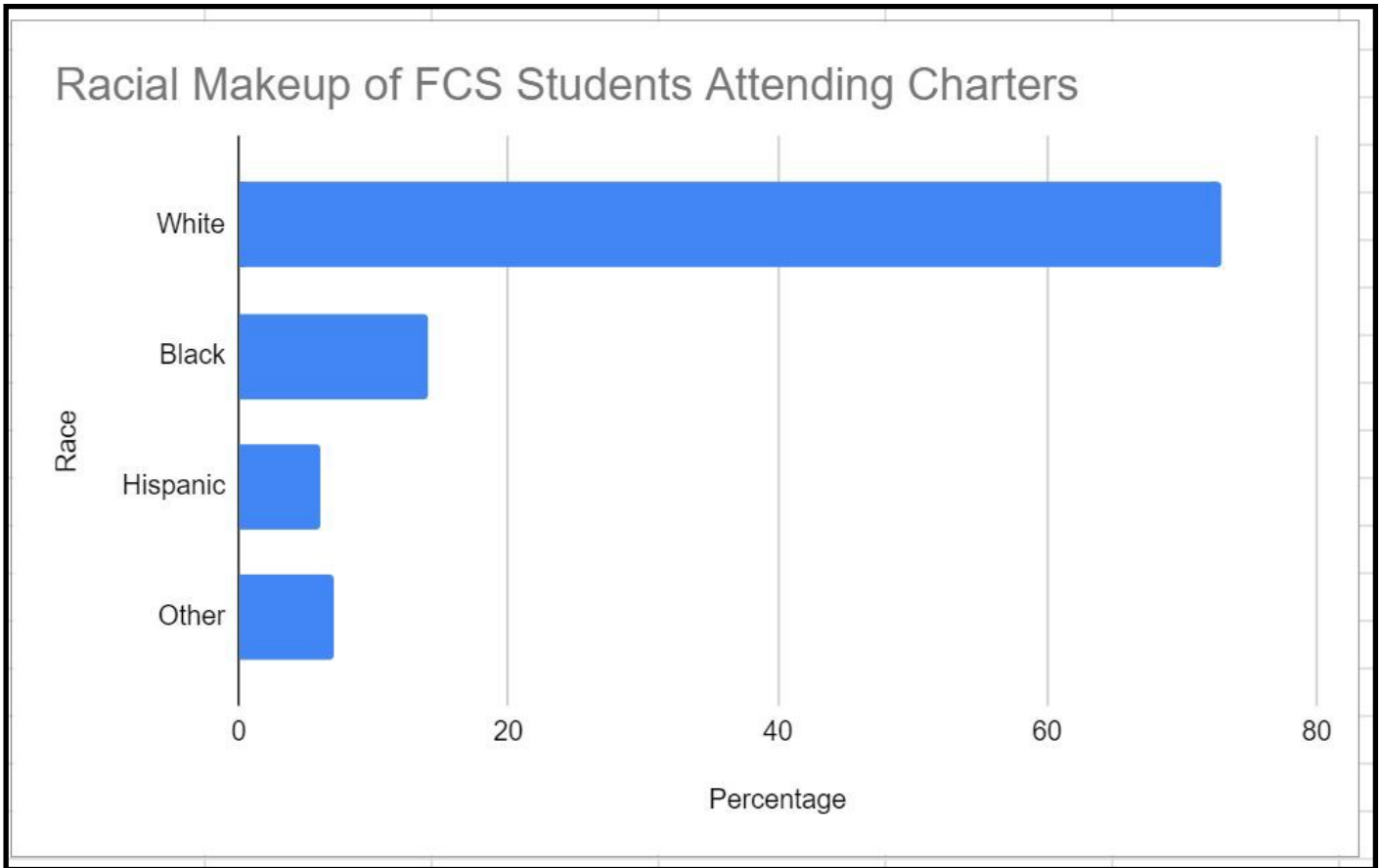
## Overall Charter School Impact on Franklin County Schools' Desegregation Efforts

The reach of charters extends beyond just those housed in Franklin County. We currently have students who are Franklin County residents who are enrolled in 31 different charter schools in the county and within the surrounding area(s). The racial makeup of these external charter schools mirrors that of the internal charters (Crosscreek Charter, Youngsville Academy). See **Figure 2a** for a comparison of student demographics prior in spring of 2020-21 as compared to spring of 2015, when the charter school impact was just beginning to be felt. See **Figure 2b** for a breakdown of the students who are leaving Franklin County Schools to attend charters based upon race/ethnicity. See **Figure 3a**, and **Figure 3b** for an illustration of the demographic breakdown of area charter schools and the population makeup of those they serve.

**FIGURE 2a: Student Demographics Comparison- 2015 to 2021**



**FIGURE 2b: Race/Ethnicity of Students Leaving Franklin County Schools to Attend Charters**



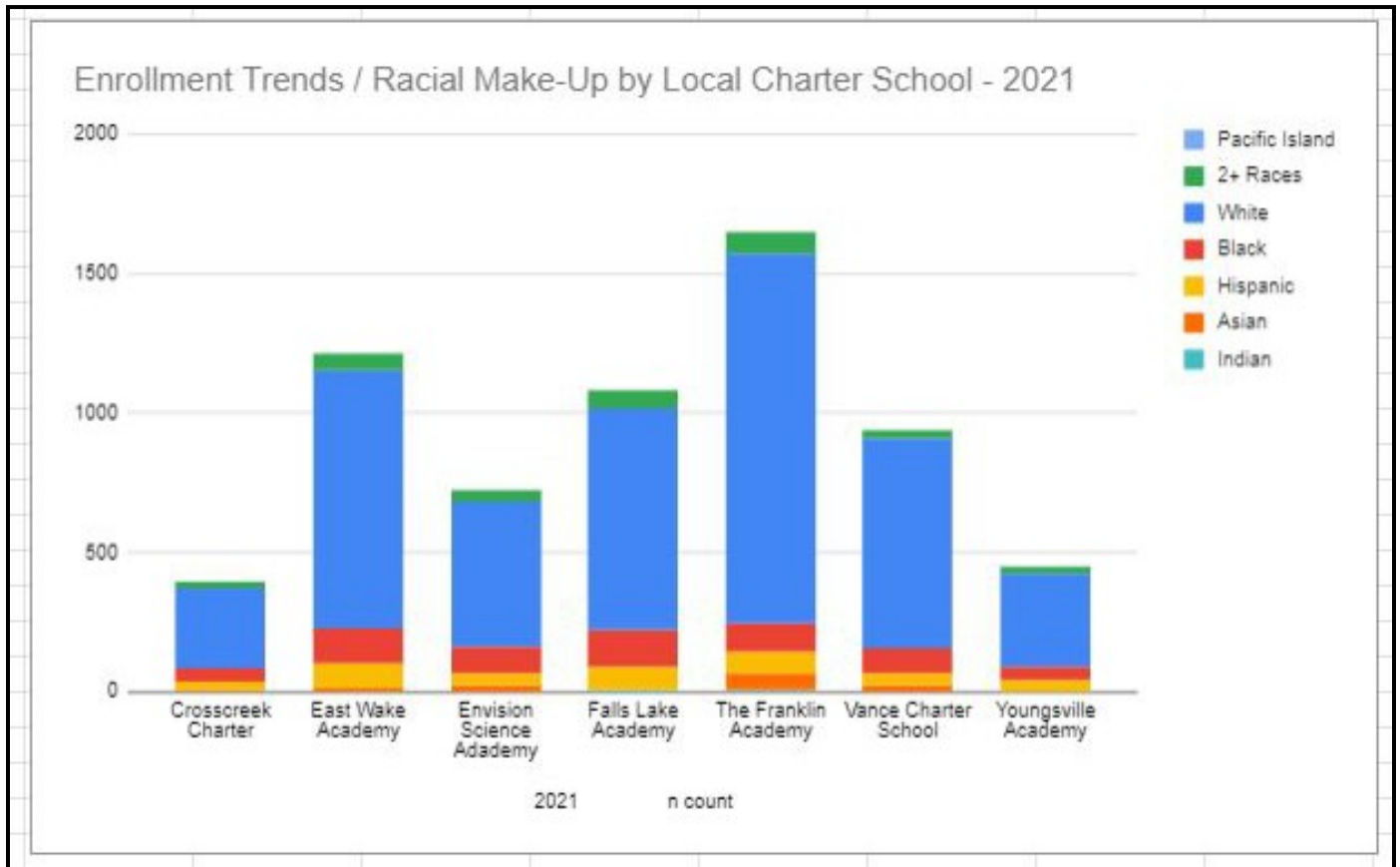
**FIGURE 3a: Charter Schools with Highest Number of Franklin County Schools’ Students Enrolled in Their Program(s) (Inside and Outside of County)**

*This data represents the overall enrollment of the area charter schools with greatest Franklin County enrollees. As indicated, the data demonstrates a disproportionate representation of white students as compared to the general population of the community (as evidenced by the data represented above).*

2021 PERCENT	Crosscreek Charter	East Wake Academy	Envision Science Academy	Falls Lake Academy	The Franklin Academy	Vance Charter School	Youngsville Academy	Total Percent
Indian	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	0.2%	0.1%	0.0%	0.17%
Asian	0.5%	0.8%	3.3%	0.5%	3.9%	2.7%	0.4%	2.06%
Hispanic	7.8%	7.7%	6.1%	7.6%	4.6%	4.0%	9.1%	6.27%
Black	13.1%	10.4%	13.2%	11.8%	6.2%	9.8%	10.5%	9.96%
White	71.5%	76.0%	71.5%	73.3%	80.4%	80.4%	75.1%	76.48%
2+ Races	6.6%	5.1%	5.8%	6.5%	4.5%	2.9%	4.9%	5.02%
Pacific Island	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.05%

### FIGURE 3b: Breakdown by Race/Ethnicity

This chart is an additional visual representation on the race/ethnicity breakdown of the charter schools that receive the greatest number of potential FCS students, both inside and outside of county.



- Figures 2a, 2b, 3a, and 3b, are all different ways of showing that white franklin county families would rather attend charter schools in a different county than what Franklin County has to offer. While this may be concerning on a public policy level, the relevance of these figures for a local LEA impact statement is low at best. How it applies and has relevance to a charter school that would employ a weighted lottery, busing, and free-and reduced lunch program questions the authenticity of their claims.
- One has to question, if the Superintendent and the Board had their wish and “eliminated charter schools” and the “segregation” they allegedly cause, and these students were forced to return to their default school option, then the demographic make-up would show Franklin County’s white population being much higher than it actually is.
- The Superintendent and the Board seem to be speaking out of both sides of their mouth. They want desegregation in their county (a noble desire) and claim that charter schools promote segregation yet attempt to block a charter that would remove barriers for economically disadvantaged students by being the only charter to provide busing, free and reduced lunch, and a weighted lottery.

### The Cumulative Effect of Charter Schools and Resegregation of Franklin County

**Schools** Based upon the data provided, there is a clear indication that charter schools that reach into our community (both the two internally and the 29 externally) are drawing primarily from our white student population. As charter school enrollment increases in our county, we

anticipate that the trend towards resegregation will continue to escalate. We cannot afford as a community to let this happen. Wake Preparatory Academy anticipates enrollment at 1605 students, with 20% of those coming from Franklin

County. There is no basis for the 20% number, as the weighted lottery does not allow for consideration of the county in which the student resides as part of the process. We are concerned that with the program being housed in-county, the percentage could rise much higher. This, coupled with the projected expansion of internal charter school programs in our county, has the potential to significantly impact our efforts to ensure desegregation of schools.

- This is a false and presumptuous statement. The 20% was based off of internal marketing efforts, internal interest lists of the school, and historical population data. While we don't believe that moving the school 1.4 miles north will increase the Franklin County student population, the same cannot be said about the efforts from the Superintendent and the Board in their attempt to block school choice. The contention and debate that they are initiating has caused much more interest in Franklin County Residents. In fact, the interest list continues to soar.
- Wake Prep and Charter One are confident that they will bridge the gap.

## Lack of Standards and Accountability for Existing Franklin County Charters

Wake Preparatory Academy has identified metrics for enrollment, including a goal of 20% of students from Franklin County, and 80% from Wake County. Additionally, they have stated in their application that:

*“Our plans and budget reflect a similar student population to WCPSS. Students in WCPSS are: 46% white; 23% black; 17.17% Hispanic; 8.8% Asian; and 3.8% multiracial. Over 31% participate in the free and reduced-priced lunch program, 13% are EC, and 7% are ELLs.”*

Note that the plan addresses Wake County’s population. Franklin County’s demographics are different, although this data was not addressed in the Wake Preparatory Academy application. Students in FCS are: 40% white; 30% black; 23% Hispanic, and 7% multiracial. 47% participate in the free-reduced-priced lunch program, 12% are EC, and 6.5% are ELLs.

- The Superintendent neglects to consider that the identified metrics for enrollment will hardly be impacted by a change in location of just 1.4 miles (.9 miles as the crow flies) from the original property. It is also important to note that the target cities for student enrollment will be Wake Forest and Youngsville. Although Youngsville is in Franklin County, their demographics differ substantially from the impact statement’s claims and do not fit the Superintendent’s narrative. In actuality, the local demographics are 55% white; 28% black; 13% Hispanic; and 0.7% Asian.

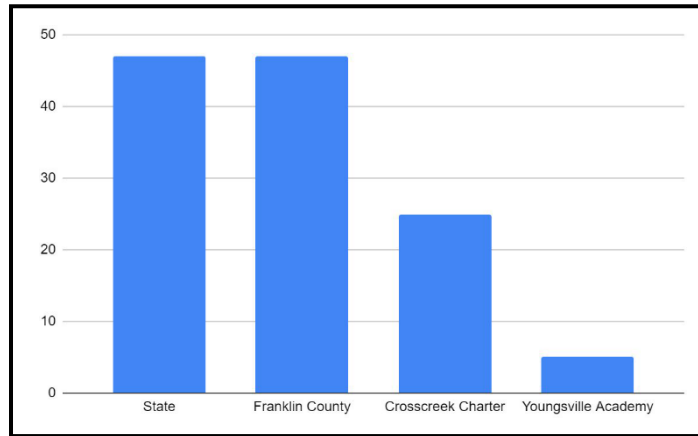
The goals that have been established as percentages served in various categories- county of residence, race/ethnicity, economically disadvantaged, EC, and ELL, do not have any basis in reality in terms of a tangible plan for meeting these targets, nor is there any plan for monitoring these goals versus the reality of these metrics once charter schools are approved. Data regarding the projections versus the reality for race/ethnicity have already been shared in **Figure 1**. In addition, there is no evidence that any efforts are being made to recruit economically disadvantaged students to local charters, and if those efforts are being made, little evidence of success. This is especially true of Youngsville Academy, where their charter application emphasizes attracting at-risk students and only 5% of students are identified as economically disadvantaged after over five years in operation. See

- WPA’s "Tangible Plan" is to provide busing, a weighted lottery, and participate in the free and reduced lunch program. Once again, Superintendent Schuyler is making baseless accusations with no honest effort to seek the truth.
- The Superintendent is attempting to present historical data from two completely separate charter schools with no affiliation to WPA and attribute that data as a forecast of what WPA will do. We cannot speak to the historical data of separate entities. We can only reiterate our plan of providing busing, including a weighted lottery, and participating in the free and reduced lunch program. All three of these efforts will directly result in increased enrollments from economically disadvantaged families.

**Figure 4:**

# FIGURE 4: Percentage of Economically Disadvantaged Students

Data based on NC Report Card 2018-19



Youngsville Academy’s initial application identified a 25% gap between white and black students, and stated that:

*“We aim to help close the significant achievement gap that exists in Franklin County Schools. The following chart\*, with data provided by Education First NC School Report Cards, details the EOG and NCLB performance within Franklin County Public Schools. There is more than a 25% gap between white student and black student performance, with a significant gap also existing between white and Hispanic performance. Direct Instruction, the instructional methodology we will adopt, has been shown to significantly reduce the achievement gap.”*

*\*Chart was referenced but no chart provided in application.*

There is no evidence to examine to determine whether Youngsville Academy has begun to close those existing achievement gaps, as there are not enough students enrolled in either the black or Hispanic subgroups to prevent that data from being personally identifiable. There is also no “EC” or “ELL” subgroup at Youngsville Academy. As a result, there are only two subgroups noted for Youngsville Academy on the NCDPI School Report Card- “white” and “all.”

There are also few specifics on how this work to identify and bring students at risk of academic failure into the school environment is taking/will take place, either at existing charters such as Youngsville Academy or a potential charter like Wake Preparatory Academy. Transportation is a barrier for economically disadvantaged students, and a few drop locations and/or an online carpool document does not begin to eliminate this barrier. Youngsville Academy specifically stated in their application that they would begin to transport students in year four. Five years in, students in need of transportation are encouraged to carpool (according to the YA website). Families applying online must hand-deliver their applications to the front office of the school.

- Youngsville Academy's application and subsequent adherence to said application is irrelevant when discussing the impact WPA will have on Franklin County Schools. We agree with the Superintendent's assertion that transportation is a barrier for economically disadvantaged students. To remedy that, we have a transportation plan in place to provide busing for those students.

In terms of meal access, there is little to indicate that existing charters have specific and proactive plans in place to connect with students to provide free and reduced lunches. Youngsville Academy allows families to bring their lunch or purchase through the My Hot Lunchbox program. There is a generic free/reduced lunch application, dated 2018-19, posted on the website. Youngsville Academy does not participate in the state’s free/reduced lunch program. The website does state that they will assist families who are at or below 130 percent of the poverty level, but it is unclear what that assistance includes. It is evident based upon the existing meal structure for students that this plan is not financially viable for many families. See **Table 1** below.

**TABLE 1: My Hot Lunchbox- Weekly Lunch Schedule for Youngsville Academy Students**

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Chick-fil-A	Rosalini's Pizza and Subs	Rosalini's Pizza and Subs	Papa John's	Moe's Southwest Grill
\$ 7.39	\$ 6.44	\$ 6.44	\$ 1.54 (per slice)	\$ 6.02

\*Least expensive entree, side and drink chosen from all vendors. Papa John's does not offer sides or drinks.

Additional requirements further disenfranchise economically disadvantaged families, including the expectation that uniforms be purchased through Lands End, Tommy Hilfiger, or French Toast.

- Again, WPA is not associated with Youngsville Academy. To assume similar outcomes based on nothing more than both being a Charter School is disingenuous and manipulative. WPA will participate in the free and reduced lunch program to alleviate the needs of those economically disadvantaged families.

Wake Preparatory Academy's "weighted" application is intended to address the issue of economic disadvantage, but there is little in the way of specifics on how this will be managed. The application notes that transportation will be provided, but this consists of encouraging carpooling and the potential for two or three pickup spots for those who live more remotely. This still requires transportation for students to get to and from the pick-up location, essentially eliminating those who do not have the means and method of doing so from participating in the Wake Preparatory Academy program.

- The assumptions made by the Superintendent factually incorrect. The Superintendent relied solely on her own interpretation of our application and made no effort to reach-out for clarification. The statement "transportation will be provided" literally means that WPA will utilize buses for the pick-up and drop off of its students. Any encouragement to parents to carpool is simply a means of maximizing the school's ability to focus busing efforts on the on those who truly need it.

And the issues associated with transportation and access for economically disadvantaged students go hand in hand. Provision of meal access without a reliable and consistent opportunity to ride a bus to and from school is a barrier to many students.

- We agree and are confident we can remedy those obstacles for our students.

## **A Flawed Process**

In an attempt to better understand the process for “greenlighting” charter schools, FCS conducted a review of the application process for Youngsville Academy. The application, approved in 2013 by the Charter School Advisory Board, and later by the State Board of Education, was initially reviewed by a committee that provided ratings in a variety of areas. Each identified area was marked as “excellent,” “adequate,” and “inadequate.” In a number of subcategories, the majority of ratings were “inadequate.” There were no “excellent” ratings in any subcategory. The application was not revised to address inadequacies, and instead these inadequacies were resolved through a verbal interview process, and the school was approved by the Charter School Advisory Board and advanced to the State Board of Education for approval. This lack of documentation of resolved identified inadequacies (with at least half of the committee providing this deficient rating) in areas such as “Goals of Charter,” “Exceptional Children,” “Transportation,” and “Student Conduct and Discipline” were never addressed in writing prior to receiving the approval of the Charter School Advisory Board.

In the case of Wake Preparatory Academy, the application review process indicates a series of “pass” and “fail” ratings, with some Charter School Advisory Board review members weighing in to express concerns regarding issues of mission and goals of the school, staffing, and conflict of interest with potential

“double-dipping” due to the partnership between Charter One and Schoolhouse Development, both of which are owned in part by Glenn Way. None of these concerns were addressed directly through an amendment to the charter application in order to gain approval. Instead, these concerns were addressed “verbally.” The lack of clarity, in writing, of the goals and intended outcomes of charter schools lays a foundation that allows for little future accountability and oversight.

Once a charter school is approved, the annual “Charter School Performance Framework” report is completed. This report includes no narrative, and is simply a 4 page document with a status marking in each category. This framework focuses on compliance with basic requirements for adhering to the laws and rules that govern charter schools in North Carolina. Section B, “Operational Renewal Monitoring Criteria,” is marked with a “-” in each category, with no status identified. This is the section that focuses on “consistently implementing the mission and educational program in the approved charter application,” among other designations in this category. This document appears to rely on self-reporting and is little more than a basic compliance check.

Based upon the lack of programmatic oversight and commitment to ensuring that charter schools are

meeting their goals, specifically in regards to targets for reaching students that proportionally represent their school communities, we have little confidence that the identified focus of meeting the needs of a diverse student population in Franklin County will be accomplished by Wake Preparatory Academy.

- The above section is irrelevant and not applicable to a local impact statement. The legal process for creating a charter school is State law. How the Superintendent and her staff *believes* about the process by which WPA was legally approved as a Charter School by the SBE is immaterial. This section should not have been included as it demonstrates no credible evidence of local impact.

## **Wake Preparatory, Charter One, American Leadership Academy, and Schoolhouse**

**Development** Wake Preparatory Academy is being sponsored by Charter One, a charter school management company based in Arizona and owned by Glenn Way, a pioneer of for-profit charter schools who has made millions of dollars generated by taxpayer-funded charter initiatives. Way's initial venture, American Leadership Academy, paved the way for Charter One. He is also a partner in Schoolhouse Development and Schoolhouse Development East, both of which purchase and develop properties and sell or lease them to charter schools managed by American Leadership Academy (or Charter One) for profit, with the funding revenue stream coming from taxpayers.

According to Hui (2019), "The N.C. Charter Schools Advisory Board recommended that state approval be given to Wake Preparatory Academy, a K-12 charter school that wants to open in Wake Forest in 2020. It would be the first charter school in North Carolina for Glenn Way, an Arizona businessman who has made millions of dollars building, selling and leasing properties to the charter schools he runs."

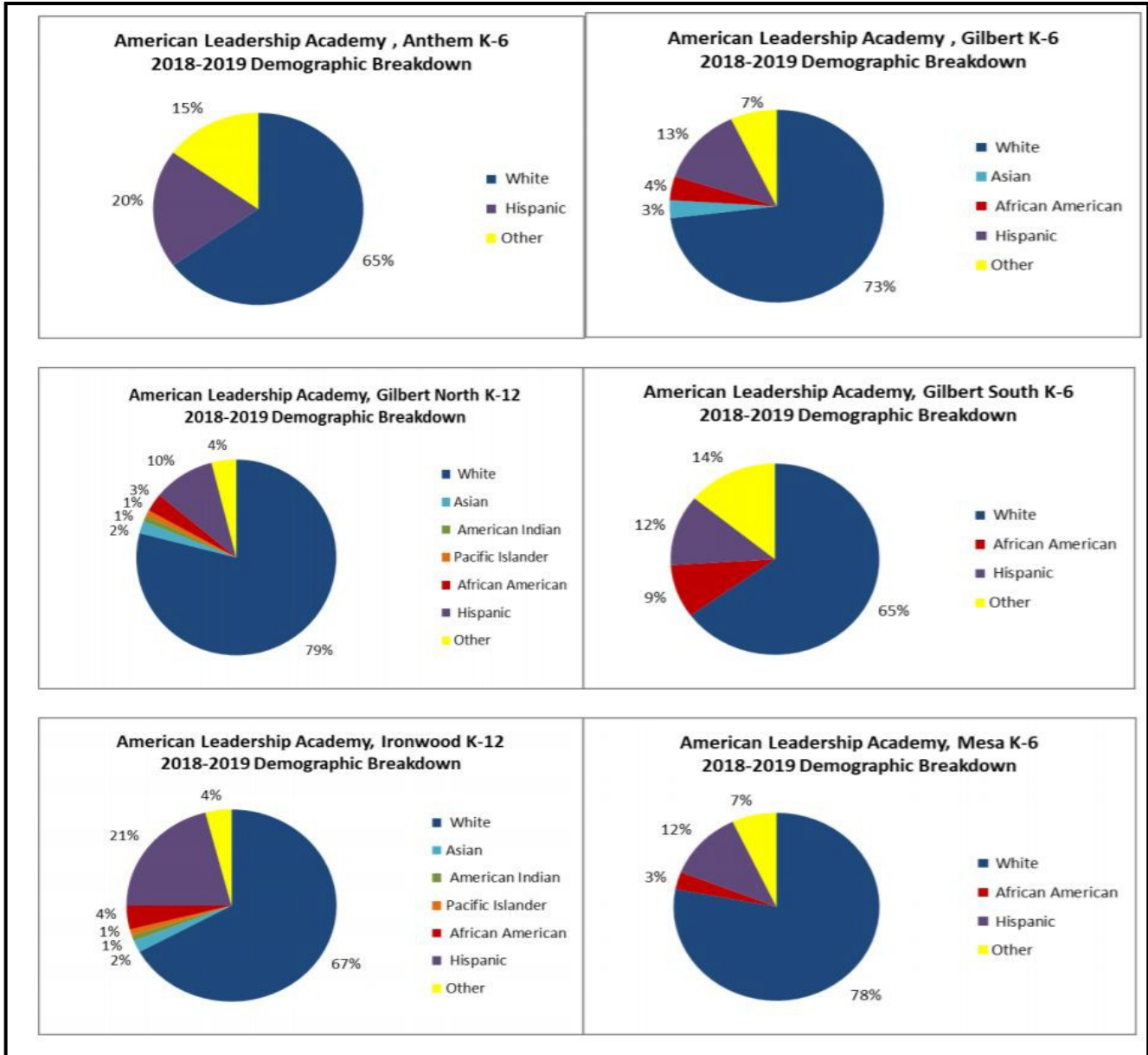
Hui goes on to draw the connection between Way and his various holdings, stating that "Charter One manages American Leadership Academy, a network of Arizona charter schools. Way, a former Utah state legislator, founded ALA and owns Charter One and Schoolhouse Development."

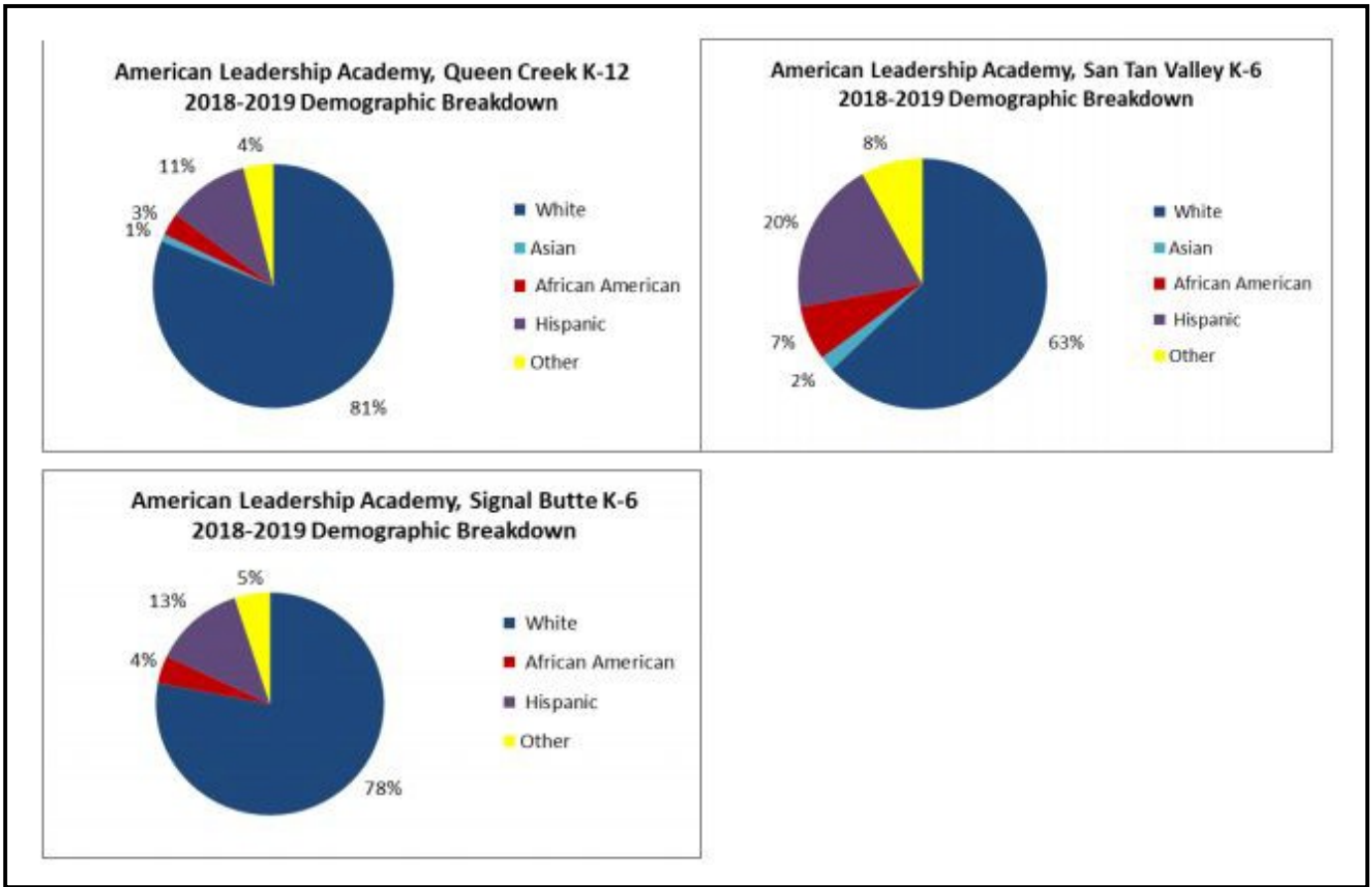
*"NC Charter School That Would Pay Millions to an Arizona Businessman Gets State Backing,"* Keung Hui, News & Observer, April 8, 2019.

In terms of Charter One's track record, specifically as it pertains to meeting the needs of the at-risk and diverse population that it touts in the application, an examination of charters managed by Charter One demonstrates that there is an evident lack of diversity among the students they currently serve. American Leadership Academy, a precursor to Charter One based on Arizona (also owned by Way), demonstrates this lack of diversity in enrollment. See **Figure 5**.

- On its face, this would appear to raise concern as to the school's founding and management organization. The Charter School Advisory Board, together with the Office of Charter Schools performed in-depth due diligence on Charter One, its members, and affiliated schools approximately two years ago. CSAB and OCS are confident in Charter One's ability to provide high quality education in diverse and economically disadvantaged communities. Biased Google searches are not a credible basis for a statement of impact.

**FIGURE 5: American Leadership Academy Demographic Breakdown**





Source: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Arizona Online Instructional Program Amendment Request, on behalf of American Leadership Academy, May 13, 2020.

- Figure 5 shows demographic data from Charter One affiliated schools from a different state and compare that to Franklin County. They completely disregard the demographic makeup of the communities that those schools represent. They conveniently leave out the fact that these school's minority and EC populations are higher than that of the surrounding schools. The Superintendent also conveniently forgets to mention two of the other schools that Charter One manages in North Carolina.

**Aristotle** demographic data:

- o Black or African American: 79%
- o White: 4.6%
- o Hispanic: 4.6%
- o Two or More: 9.7%

**BCCA** demographic data:

- o Black or African American: 33.1%
- o Asian: 4.4%
- o White: 44.6%
- o Hispanic: 10.7%
- o American Indian/Alaska Native: 0.4%
- o Two or More: 6.4%

## Lack of Preparedness

Wake Preparatory Academy began planning for its Wake County location at least a year in advance, utilizing Womble Bond Dickinson (US) LLP to conduct a comprehensive site review in preparation for the recommendation to the Wake Forest Planning Board in October 2020. The land, for which Schoolhouse Development East was the vendee of a purchase contract for development of the property (the company whose owner is also an owner of Charter One) was the subject of considerable review and analysis in preparation for the Wake Forest Planning Board meeting. A subdivision master plan and a site master plan were developed. These plans included a review of community standards and long-range planning to ensure compliance with the vision and mission of the community, as well as detailed plans for the position of three distinctive buildings, entry and exit onto the property, and a focus on providing a planned community approach including sidewalks and greenways to create an accessible campus for those living nearby. An Enhanced Transportation Impact Analysis was conducted, and then reviewed by DOT for approval. As noted in the presentation to the Wake Forest planning board, “over the series of several months” there was a back-and-forth between the Administrator and Technical Review Committee. A review of the infrastructure was conducted by the City of Raleigh Public Utility to ensure adequate water and sewer access.

- This page is irrelevant and outside the authority of Franklin County Schools. FC School Board is to provide a “local impact statement” on Franklin County Schools. They do not have authority to submit an impact statement on behalf of DOT, Franklin County Planning and Inspections, Franklin County Economic Development, or Franklin County Utilities. Page 13 should not have been included in an Impact Statement.

To our knowledge, none of these steps have been taken for the newly identified Youngsville location. A preliminary search reveals no traffic impact analysis on the section of Hwy US 1 (managed by the NC Dept of Transportation) that would be used by this school. The travel safety for existing businesses and residents would be compromised significantly. This new site sits behind a commercially developed area directly off of Capital Blvd. in a congested area. It is zoned as “special use” and will require rezoning. At present, the detailed plan to develop walking and biking routes to school does not appear feasible based upon this new location. Water and sewer will need to be considered, and water limitations in Franklin County may prove to be a barrier.

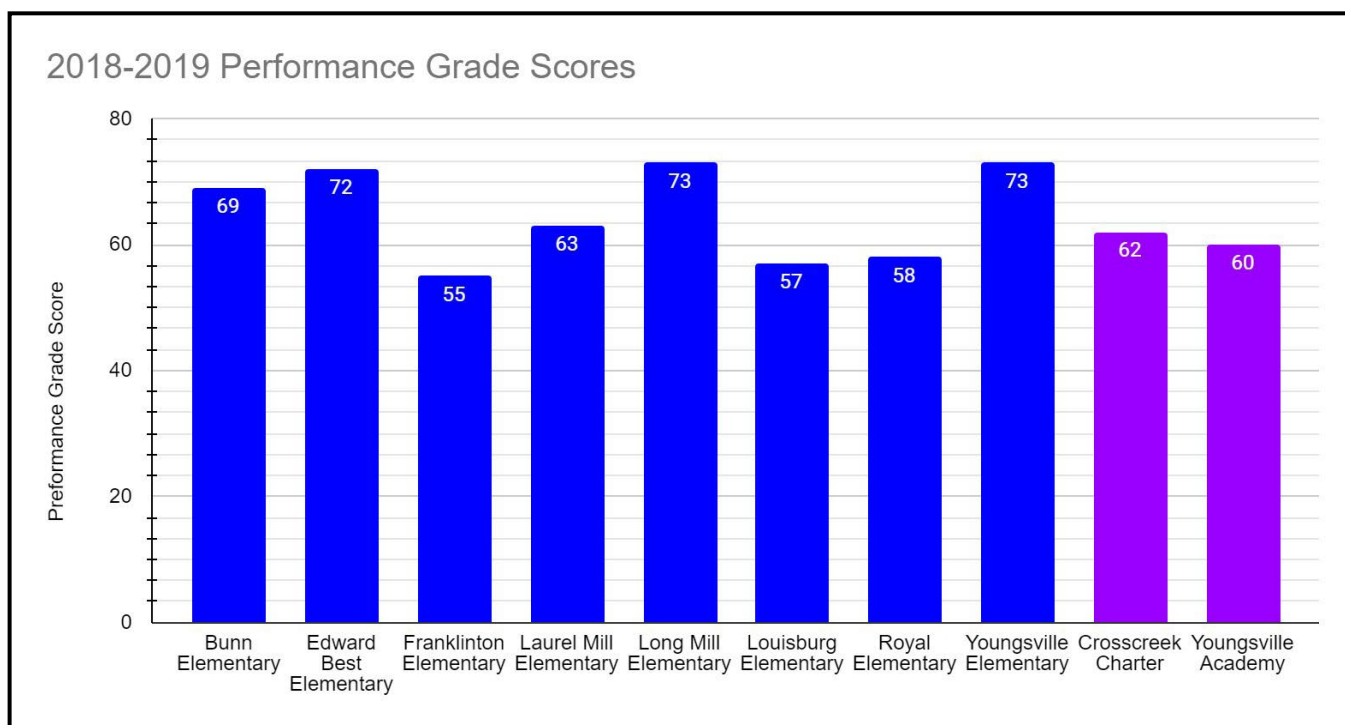
There are many details that would need to be worked through to determine whether this site is even a feasible location. Just as the substance of Wake Preparatory Academy’s application has not been adjusted to shift from Wake to Franklin County, the location has not been carefully examined and steps have not been taken to truly consider the feasibility of this location for a new school.

## Franklin County Schools are Performing Well

One of the primary tenets of the charter school push in Franklin County (beyond closing achievement gaps and reaching economically disadvantaged students with the students they serve, which data has demonstrated has not happened), is the need to provide an academically challenging environment in which all students can succeed. A comparison of charter schools and public schools based in Franklin County demonstrates that Franklin County Schools are performing competitively with these charters, despite the fact that the district is serving a racially/ethnically diverse population with much greater percentages of economically disadvantaged, ELLs, and EC learners. See **Figure 6**.

- Poor performing school districts is not one of the legislative purposes of a charter school. This also appears to be derogatory toward minority populations.

**FIGURE 6: Comparative Performance of Local Charters and Franklin County Schools**



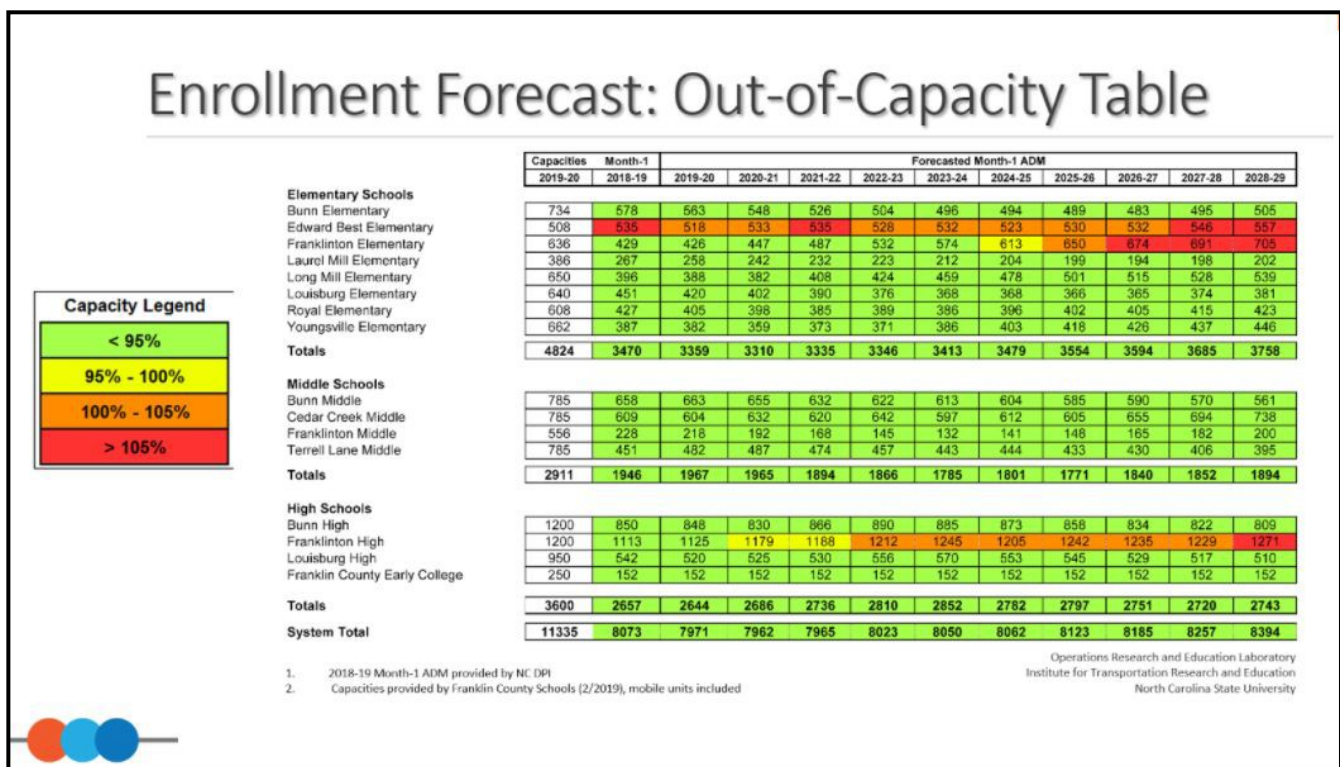
- This is irrelevant as it pertains to WPA's impact on FCS.

## There is Room for Enrollment Growth in Franklin County Schools

The Wake Preparatory Academy application, even in its most recent iteration, focuses primarily on Wake County. Once it was determined that a location in Wake County could not be secured and the location in Franklin County was under consideration, the application was only minimally amended to include a change of county name from “Wake” to “Franklin.” As part of Wake Preparatory Academy’s application, they emphasize the overcrowding of Wake County Schools as a challenge to which they will be able to respond with their programming. Student enrollment projections in Franklin County paint a different picture. In 2018, Franklin County Schools contracted with OrED at NCState to project for future growth. As you can see in **Figure 7**, there is room for growth in Franklin County Schools for the foreseeable future.

- Beginning of Paragraph 1 has nothing to do with a local impact statement.
- In the same board meeting in which this impact statement was approved, the Board proceeded to discuss the need for more buildings at the school campuses. The statement that “there is room for growth” is contradictory to the Board’s discussion.

**FIGURE 7: Projected Long-Term Enrollment in Franklin County Schools**




## Charter Schools in Franklin County are Impacting District Financial Ability to Meet Student Needs

The increasing financial burden of utilizing existing district funds to support additional schools and programs means that we are less effectively able to meet staffing, infrastructure, and student support needs that do not diminish as student enrollment shifts to charter schools. The impact of charter schools on our local budget can be found in **Figure 8**:

- As indicated by the FCS Budget below, charter school dollars are “pass through funds” and should have little impact on the district’s ability to “meet student needs.” This is because the money follows the student. More students mean more expenses. Less students, therefore, would mean less expenses. This statement demonstrates the school district’s need for a financially responsible charter school provider.

**FIGURE 8: FCS Budgetary Impact of Charter Schools**

Impact of Charter Schools on our budget 						
YEAR	FCS ADM	CS ADM*	COMBINED ADM	COUNTY APPROPRIATION	PPA	PAYMENT TO CS
2015-2016	8469	985	9454	\$14,472,841	\$1,531	\$1,508,035
2016-2017	8344	1121	9465	\$15,265,283	\$1,613	\$1,808,173
2017-2018	8163	1224	9387	\$16,365,283	\$1,744	\$2,134,656
2018-2019	8109	1438	9547	\$16,898,093	\$1,770	\$2,545,332
2019-2020	8109	1581	9690	\$20,349,831	\$2,100	\$3,320,100
2020-2021	8109	1739	9848	\$21,192,936	\$2,152	<b>\$3,742,328</b>
2021-2022 (Depend on ADM projections & county appropriations)	7821-8109	1623-1798	9,444-9,907	\$21,192,936 TBD	\$2,139- \$2,244	<b>\$4,034,712</b> (using highest ADM projections and current appropriation)

These are “pass through” funds that the district receives and redistributes to charter schools

\*Projections for planning purposes

In the Wake Preparatory Academy application, they reference a projection of a per pupil allotment of \$1500.00 in local funding. Our local per pupil allocation is currently \$2,218.61/student. At a rate of 321 students attending Wake Preparatory Academy per year, we would be looking at expending \$712,174 additionally in year one to support Wake Preparatory students. This is based upon an arbitrary 20% of attendees coming from Franklin County. There is no basis for this number except a guess from Wake Preparatory Academy, as the application process does not allow a “weighted”

approach to selection based upon residency. We anticipate that this number could be much higher.

This is also a projection for

year one only. Each year their program is projected to grow.

- As Wake Prep is in its 3rd year due to its delayed opening, this statement is false.

## **In Conclusion**

The charter school impact on Franklin County is evident. Over the past seven years, we have seen charters move into the area and lay a foundation to resegregate our schools. This has taken place in disregard of North Carolina General Statute § 115C-218.45, which was legislated in an attempt to ensure that schools were not racially/ethnically segregated as a result of the North Carolina charter school movement. Yet there are no checks and balances in place at the state level to either prevent charter schools from coming in without a plan to resegregate, or to address existing charters that are instrumental in resegregating schools. During this time, and in spite of increased segregation of schools within our county, we have continued to work closely with the Department of Justice to not only comply with our desegregation order, but to grow as a district in embracing diversity and equity as key tenets to meeting the needs of every student in our care.

- The entirety of the impact statement discussed an overall adversarial approach to, and expression of a philosophical belief of, charter schools. It did not address the direct impact Wake Prep would have on Franklin County Schools.

The data is clear: The charter schools in our area do not represent the racial/ethnic diversity of our community. Every indication, both from the current trajectory of charter schools in our area and the track record of Charter One and American Leadership Academy, is that opening the door to Wake Preparatory Academy in Franklin County will further stratify the population both racially and socioeconomically.

And we also hold little confidence that the charter school approval process is thoughtful, thorough, and designed to provide the level of oversight necessary to prevent this resegregation from continuing. This is evidenced from the initial approval process through to the annual review of charter school performance.

The charter schools that are interested in coming to Franklin County insist that they are doing so to fill avoid- to close achievement gaps and meet the needs of a diverse population of students. The reality is that there is no void. Franklin County Schools has and will continue to provide a high-quality education that meets the needs of all learners. This can be accomplished without further diluting public school resources and dividing our population along racial and socioeconomic lines.

For these reasons, we urge the Charter Advisory Board and the State Board of Education to deny the request for Wake Preparatory Academy to relocate to Franklin County.

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Paige Sayles, Board Chair  
Franklin County Schools

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Dr. Rhonda Schuhler, Superintendent  
Franklin County Schools

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Bernard Hall, Vice Chair

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Dr. Elizabeth Keith, Board Member

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Debra Brodie, Board Member

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Rosemary Champion, Board Member

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Thomas Piper, Board Member

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Meghan Jordan, Board Member