



The State of Charter Schools in Colorado

BY DICK M. CARPENTER II, PH.D. AND KRISTA KAFER

THE STATE OF CHARTER SCHOOLS IN COLORADO

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
PART ONE: INTRODUCTION	9
PURPOSE	9
METHODOLOGY	9
GROWTH OF CHARTER SCHOOLS IN COLORADO	10
AUTHORIZING DISTRICTS	11
CHARTER SCHOOL DIVERSITY	12
CHARTER SCHOOL PROFILES	13
PART TWO: COLORADO CHARTER SCHOOL HISTORY	23
LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS REGARDING CHARTER SCHOOLS	23
COURT DECISIONS REGARDING CHARTER SCHOOLS	28
COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SCHOOLS OF CHOICE UNIT SUPPORT AND RESEARCH	29
PART THREE: CHARACTERISTICS OF COLORADO CHARTER SCHOOLS	31
CHARTER SCHOOL SIZE	31
GRADE LEVEL CONFIGURATION	32
WAITING LIST/LOTTERY POOL	33
CREATION STATUS OF CHARTER SCHOOLS	34
STUDENT-TO-TEACHER RATIO	34
ENROLLMENT STABILITY	34
EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM	35
PART FOUR: CHARACTERISTICS OF COLORADO CHARTER SCHOOL STUDENTS	38
RACIAL/ETHNIC MINORITIES	38
STUDENT ELIGIBILITY FOR FREE OR REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH	38
STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	43
DISCIPLINARY INCIDENTS	43
PART FIVE: CHARTER SCHOOL PERFORMANCE	44
COLORADO STUDENT ASSESSMENT PROGRAM	44
COLORADO GROWTH MODEL	44
DATA ANALYSIS	45
READING ASSESSMENTS	45
MATH ASSESSMENTS	49
WRITING ASSESSMENTS	53
SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY REPORTS	56
"BEATING THE ODDS" SCHOOLS	57
HIGH GROWTH SCHOOLS	58
PART SIX: COLORADO CHARTER SCHOOL TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS	60
TEACHER SALARY	60
TEACHER EXPERIENCE	61
HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS	62
CHARTER SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR SALARIES	62

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The State of Charter Schools in Colorado: 2008-2009 presents data and descriptive information about charter schools from the 2007-2008 school year. During the 2007-2008 school year, 141 charter schools operated in the state of Colorado.¹ These schools served 56,188 students, an increase of 52% from the total number of students (36,872) served in the fall of 2004 and 78% over the total served in 2003 (31,529). Charter school enrollment in 2007-2008 represented 6.9% of the total public school enrollment. If all of the charter schools were combined into an imaginary district, the enrollment of that district would be the fourth largest in the state.

First authorized 16 years ago, the number and types of charter schools have grown considerably. While most of Colorado's charter schools exist along Front Range cities and suburbs, the state also has a number of rural charter schools in mountain and plains communities. Colorado charter schools differ considerably in their pedagogical methods and curricula. More than half of the schools follow a national curricular model. Only a small fraction of schools are managed by education management companies.

During the past decade and a half, the legislature has passed legislation to help charter schools acquire facilities and has created a statewide authorizer, the Colorado Charter School Institute (CSI). CSI has since authorized 16 charter schools and survived a legal challenge.

CHARACTERISTICS OF COLORADO CHARTER SCHOOLS, THEIR STUDENTS AND EMPLOYEES

SIZE

Forty-seven percent of charter schools enroll less than 300 students, down from 58% in the 2006 report. The mean enrollment was 398 students, compared to 344 in the prior report. The number of charter students enrolled in 2007-2008 ranged from six students (Prairie Creeks Charter School) to 3,341 students (Colorado Virtual Academy). The largest brick-and-mortar school is The Classical Academy, with 1,860 students.

GRADE LEVEL CONFIGURATION

Sixty percent of charter schools (84 of 141 schools) fell outside of the traditional grade-level configuration of elementary, middle or high schools. These charter schools offered a program that served students continuously from elementary through middle school, from middle school through high school, or throughout their public school experience. The breakdown is as follows: 13.5% served the elementary grades; 41.1% served elementary

and middle school grades; 6.4% served the middle school grades; 4.3% served the middle and high school grades; 19.9% served the high school grades; and 14.2% (20 schools) served elementary, middle and high school grade levels.

WAITING LIST/LOTTERY POOL

Of the 133 charter schools that responded to the survey, 66% of charter schools (88) stated there was a waiting list/lottery pool for their school. The average waiting list size was 462 students, ranging from two to 7,500, and the statewide total was 38,374.

CREATION STATUS OF CHARTER SCHOOLS

Of the 141 schools operating in 2007-2008, 119 schools provided information about their creation status. Eighty-eight percent of the schools were newly created schools, 9.2% of the schools were public school conversions, and 2.5% of the schools were formerly private schools now operating as charter schools.

STUDENT-TO-TEACHER RATIO

Student to teacher ratio was determined by adding up the number of full and part-time teachers in the charter school and dividing that into student enrollment. The average student to teacher ratio was 17.92, with a median of 16.

RACIAL/ETHNIC MINORITIES

Colorado charter schools served 20,930 racial/ethnic minority students, representing 37% of the total charter school enrollment (56,188). The state average was 39%. The percent of racial/ethnic minority students enrolled in charter schools has increased over time from 32% in 2004 and 27% in 2001.

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY FOR FREE OR REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH

Charter schools served 14,089 students who were eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch, representing 25% of the total enrollment (56,188) of the schools. This rate reflects steady growth compared to prior years. In 2005, 20% of charter students qualified for Free or Reduced Lunch, and in 2001 it was 17.8%. The average for public schools was 35% for fall 2007.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

During the 2007-2008 school year, students with disabilities represented 7% (or 3,905 students) of the charter school population. By comparison, the statewide percentage was 10%. Compared to prior years, the percentage of charter students with disabilities has increased.

DISCIPLINARY INCIDENTS

To adjust for school size, the total number of disciplinary incidents reported in each school's School Accountability Report (SAR) was divided by the school's enrollment to produce a rate of disciplinary incidents. The average rate of disciplinary incidents was 10%. The disciplinary incident rate ranged from 0% to 116%. And the median rate was 3%. Compared to prior years, these indicators for school environment suggest an increase in charter school safety.

TEACHER SALARY

The average teacher salary in charter schools was \$34,657, ranging from \$18,318 to \$53,115. The median salary was \$33,861. The average teacher salary in districts in which those charters reside was \$45,950, which means charter teachers made an average of \$11,293 less than non-charter teachers.

TEACHER EXPERIENCE

The average experience of teachers in Colorado charter schools was 6.53 years, ranging from no experience to 16 years. The median experience of teachers in Colorado charter schools was 6.0 years. The average teaching experience of all public school teachers in Colorado was 11 years.

HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS

Of the 141 charter schools with SARs in 2007-2008, data regarding the percentage of teachers teaching the subject in which they received their degree were available for 121 of the charter schools. The schools ranged from 0% to 100% of teachers teaching the subject in which they received their degree. The average was 55%. The data for the districts in which those schools reside ranged from 36% to 96% of teachers teaching the subject in which they received their degree. The average was 70%.

CHARTER SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR SALARIES

Data on administrator salaries were available for 136 of the 141 charter schools. It is important to note that administrator salaries include all administrative staff, not just principals. The average salary of charter school administrators was \$68,094. The median salary was \$67,801. The average administrator salary in charter schools ranged from \$23,053 to \$123,969. The average salary of administrators in districts where those charter schools reside was \$79,847, which makes for a gap of \$11,753.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

According to a recent CDE-published report, *A Typology of Colorado Charter Schools*, a slight majority (65%) of Colorado's charter schools are of the traditional type. Progressive schools comprise another 27%. The remaining 8% are almost equally distributed among the vocational, general and alternative delivery categories. Most schools, 88%, do not serve a specific population of students.

Targeted-population schools are most likely to be of the progressive design, followed by traditional and vocational. Vocational and alternative delivery schools report the fewest safety and discipline infractions. Progressive schools, especially those with targeted enrollment, report the greatest number of safety and discipline incidents. Traditional schools tend to report the greatest achievement results topping the ranks in both math and the mean of math and reading. Traditional schools also report the second greatest achievement scores in reading. Alternative delivery schools realize the smallest scores in math and the mean of reading and math but report the greatest scores in reading.

CHARTER SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

In keeping with its legal mandate, this report compares the performance of charter school pupils with the performance of ethnically and economically comparable groups of pupils in other public schools. Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) data were separated into two groups based on eligibility for the federal Free or Reduced-Price Lunch Program, and within those two groups, student data were further disaggregated into four sub-groups based on race/ethnicity. The performance scores of charter and non-charter public school students were then "matched" within the groups and sub-groups, and the data were subjected to tests to determine statistical significance, using a significance level of $p < .05$.

READING ASSESSMENTS

Charter and non-charter school students performed similarly on the CSAP reading assessment in the elementary grades. In grades 6, 7 and 8, charter students tended to show greater percentages of proficient or advanced, a trend that reversed in the high school grades. An examination of trends by race/ethnicity indicate that Asian/Native American, Hispanic, and White students in charter schools all show greater percentages of proficient or advanced in the elementary and middle grades but smaller percentages in the high school grades. Among African American students the percentages are greater for charter students in elementary and high school grades, but

smaller in the middle grades. Among low-income students, while the elementary grades show no clear trends, charter students in middle grades tend to show greater percentages of proficient or advanced, but as with the non-eligible students, the trend is opposite in high school.

Median growth percentile scores indicate non-charter students tended to show greater growth in the elementary grades, but beginning in 7th grade, the pattern grew more mixed. Within groups by race/ethnicity, African American and Hispanic students in charter schools almost always showed smaller median growth percentiles compared to non-charter students. White and Hispanic students showed similar median growth scores between charter and non-charter status, with no definitive trends.

MATH ASSESSMENTS

Charter students in elementary and middle school grades showed greater percentages of proficient or advanced but smaller percentages in the high school grades. Among the low-income student population, charter students tended to show smaller percentages of proficient or advanced compared to their non-charter peers. However, growth scores were more mixed throughout the grades.

For race/ethnicity, Asian/Native American, Hispanic, and White charter student percentages of proficient or advanced were almost always greater, but the opposite was true for African American students. The latter trend was also true for African American students when considering growth scores. Hispanic students in charter schools also tended to show smaller growth scores, although the scores were greater in middle grades. Among Asian/Native American and White students, growth data show no clear trends.

WRITING ASSESSMENTS

As with reading and math data, a greater percentage of charter students scored at the proficient or advanced level from grades 3-8, but more non-charter students scored proficient or advanced in high school. Results indicate percentages and growth scores are quite mixed across grades and school types. An examination by race/ethnicity indicates Asian/Native American students in charter schools almost always achieved greater percentages of proficient or advanced, while the opposite was true for African American students. Non-charter Hispanic students also tended to realize greater percentages of proficient or advanced, except for those in high school, where charter students achieved greater percentages. No clear trend was evident for White students.

Some of the same patterns were also evident in the growth metric. Specifically, African American and Hispanic charter students tended to show smaller growth percentiles compared to non-charter students. The growth percentiles were consistently greater for White students in charter schools but mixed for Asian/Native American students.

SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY REPORTS

The charter schools operating in 2007-2008 issued 213 SARs, reflecting the fact that many charter schools served students at more than one grade level (elementary, middle and high). Two charter schools did not publish SARs. Twenty-one others are alternative education campuses and do not report SAR ratings. Finally, the scores of five schools were listed by the CDE as not reportable. Of the 213 charter school SARs in the 2007-2008 school year:

- 23% (49 schools) received an "Excellent" rating;
- 33% (70 schools) received a "High" rating;
- 29% (62 schools) received an "Average" rating;
- 13% (28 schools) received a "Low" rating; and
- 2% (4 schools) received an "Unsatisfactory" rating.

The 2008 SAR also includes school performance results using the Colorado Growth Model described above. Of the 192 charter school growth classifications reported in 2007-2008:

- 23% (45 schools) achieved "high" growth;
- 63% (120 schools) achieved "typical" growth; and
- 14% (27 schools) achieved "low" growth.

"BEATING THE ODDS" SCHOOLS AND HIGH GROWTH SCHOOLS

During the 2007-2008 school year, a group of charter schools demonstrated superior performance on either the overall performance score or the growth score, while serving a significant percentage of students commonly classified as at-risk. These schools are described as "beating the odds." Each of the seven schools serves student populations of greater than 50% low income and often greater than 50% minority. They achieved an overall performance rating of at least excellent or demonstrated high growth.

Beyond "beating-the-odds" schools, more than 40 other charter schools reported high growth scores during 2007-2008. Table 17 reports these schools arranged by percent Free or Reduced-Price Lunch in descending order. Note that some schools are listed twice because multiple grade configurations in these schools reported high growth scores.

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

The State of Charter Schools in Colorado: 2008-2009 presents data and descriptive information about charter schools from the 2007-2008 school year related to:

- Characteristics of Colorado charter schools
- Characteristics of Colorado charter school students
- Charter school performance
- Colorado charter school teachers and administrators

METHODOLOGY

This descriptive evaluation represents a review of student and school data maintained by the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) and/or individual charter schools. More specifically, the data analyzed in this report originated from the following sources:

- Charter school administrators completed an online survey covering various aspects of the school's program and operations for the 2007-2008 school year.
- The Colorado Department of Education Data Warehouse provided data regarding student enrollment; school demographics; administrator salary; and teacher salary, education, and experience—all drawn from the 2007-2008 School Accountability Reports (SAR).
- The Colorado Department of Education Assessment Unit provided data related to the performance of charter school and non-charter school students on the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP).

The analysis of CSAP results is included in Part Five of this report. Further details about the methodology related to that analysis are included in the introduction to that section.

GROWTH OF CHARTER SCHOOLS IN COLORADO

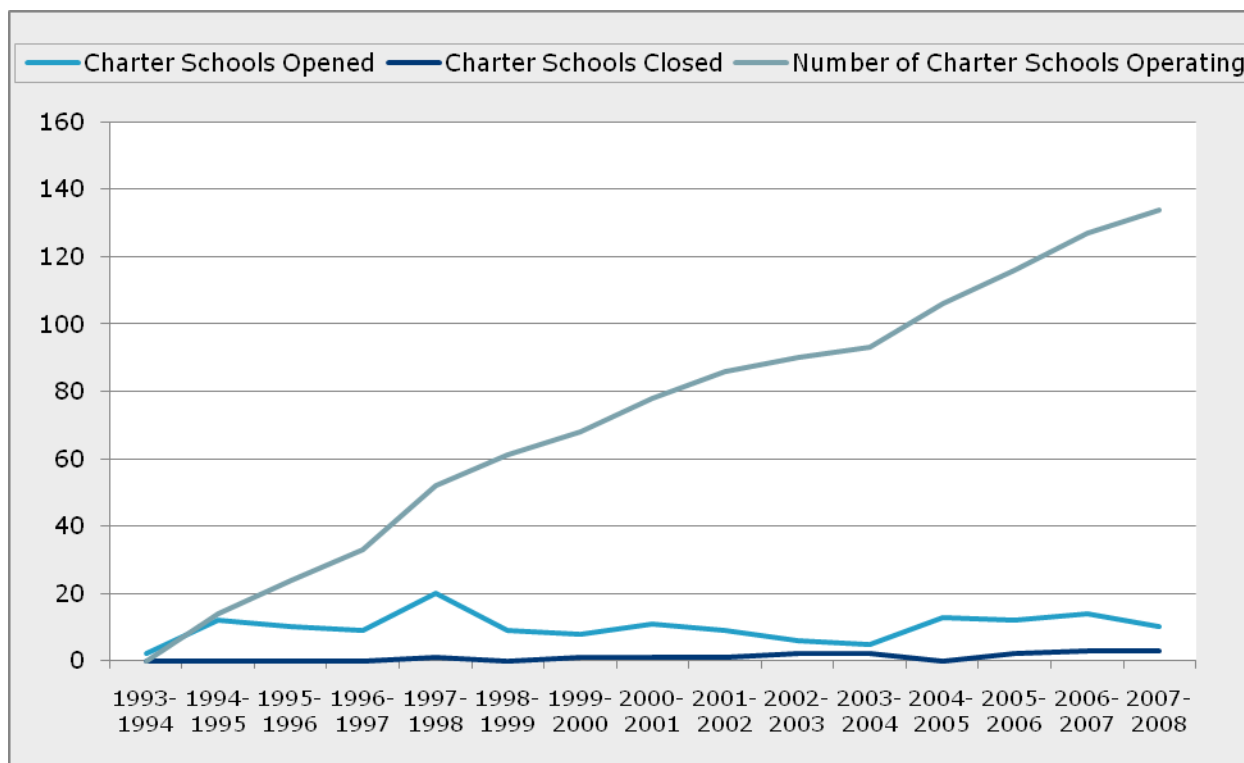
As shown in Table 1, the number of charter schools operating in Colorado has increased steadily since the General Assembly enacted the Colorado Charter Schools Act in 1993. During the 2007-2008 school year, 141 charter schools operated in the state of Colorado.ⁱⁱ These schools served 56,188 students, an increase of 52% from the total number of students (36,872) served in the fall of 2004 and 78% over the total served in 2003 (31,529). Charter school enrollment in 2007-2008 represented 6.9% of the total public school enrollment. If all of the charter schools were combined into an imaginary district, the enrollment of that district would be the fourth largest in the state (see Table 2).

Table 1: The Number of Charter Schools in Colorado by School Year

	Charter Schools Opened	Charter Schools Closed*	Number of Charter Schools Operating
1993-1994	2	0	0
1994-1995	12	0	14
1995-1996	11	0	25
1996-1997	9	0	34
1997-1998	20	1	53
1998-1999	9	0	62
1999-2000	8	1	69
2000-2001	11	1	79
2001-2002	9	1	87
2002-2003	6	2	91
2003-2004	5	2	94
2004-2005	13	0	107
2005-2006	12	2	117
2006-2007	14	3	128
2007-2008	10	3	135

*Of the 16 charter schools that closed, 12 closed for financial reasons, 2 for academic reasons and 2 for programmatic reasons.

Figure 1: Status of Charter Schools 1993 to 2008



AUTHORIZING DISTRICTS

In 2007-2008, 46 of the state’s 178 school districts (25.4 %) authorized charter schools. Of those 46 districts, 14 had authorized three or more charter schools. The combined charter school enrollment of these 14 sponsoring districts was 85 charters, or 60% of the total charter school enrollment in fall 2008.

The following table shows the number of charter schools authorized by these 14 districts, their total charter enrollment, their total district enrollment, and the percentage that charter school enrollment constitutes of their total enrollment.

Table 2: Enrollment of School Districts with Three or More Charter Schools in 2007-2008

District	Number of Charter Schools	Charter Enrollment	District Enrollment	Charter Enrollment % of Total
Adams-Arapahoe 28J	5	1456	35523	4.10%
Boulder Valley RE2	5	2194	28875	7.60%
Brighton 27J	4	2172	13711	15.84%
Colorado Springs 11	7	1945	29271	6.64%
Denver County 1	19	6689	74176	9.02%
Douglas County RE1	8	6580	58723	11.21%
Falcon 49	3	1336	13616	9.81%
Greeley 6	3	2427	18870	12.86%
Harrison 2	3	1090	10921	9.98%
Jefferson County R1	15	5025	85887	5.85%
Northglenn-Thornton 12	3	5108	31544	16.19%
Pueblo City 60	4	2151	18504	11.62%
St Vrain Valley RE1J	3	1398	25751	5.43%

CHARTER SCHOOL DIVERSITY

Most of Colorado's charter schools exist along Front Range cities and suburbs. Denver has 26 charter schools and Colorado Springs has 22 charter schools. Colorado has the highest percentage of suburban charter schools in the county (47%) according to a 2002 Fordham study.ⁱⁱⁱ In his 2005 paper for the Progressive Policy Institute, Todd Ziebarth attributed the high percentage of suburban charter schools to the popularity of Core Knowledge schools among suburban parents and the use of chartering to meet the needs of high population growth areas such as Douglas County.^{iv} The state also has a number of rural charter schools in such places as Avon, Carbondale, Windsor, Gypsum, Lamar, Marble, Georgetown, Cortez, Montrose, Granby, and Paradox.

Colorado charter schools differ considerably in their pedagogical methods and curricula. A glance at the Colorado Department of Education's list of charter schools reveals considerable diversity.

Table 3: 2008 Schools Using a National Model

National Model	Number of Colorado Charter Schools
Core Knowledge	57
Expeditionary Learning	6
Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP)	1
Montessori	7
Paideia	3
Success for All	1

Only 12 schools, about 9% of the total, were operated by national nonprofit or for-profit Education Management Organizations (EMOs). By comparison, a quarter of charter schools nationwide are managed by EMOs.^v In Michigan, nearly three out of four charter schools are so managed.^{vi}

Table 4: 2008 Schools Operated by an Education Management Organization

Education Management Organization	Number of Colorado Charter Schools
Edison	4
Greater Educational Opportunities Foundation	1
Mosaica	4
National Heritage Academies	1
White Hat Management	3

In addition to embracing national models, Colorado has developed some of its own charter school franchises including the Hope Online Learning Academy Co-Op, Cesar Chavez School Network and New America Schools. In these cases, founders have replicated their school model in other Colorado districts.

CHARTER SCHOOL PROFILES

The following profiles describe five different charter schools.

WEST DENVER PREPARATORY CHARTER SCHOOL

Middle School in the Denver Public School District

www.westdenverprep.org/index.asp

Located in southwest Denver's Mar Lee neighborhood, West Denver Preparatory Charter School serves 300 sixth, seventh and eighth graders. Although nearly 90% of the student body is eligible for the federal Free or Reduced-Price Lunch Program, the school boasts higher proficiency rates than the district and the state. Rated by the Colorado Department of Education as having "high" growth, West Denver Prep stands out among nearby middle schools that have "typical" or "low" student academic growth. On the new Colorado Growth Model, West Denver Prep students scored the highest average growth percentile of any school in Denver Public Schools in both 2006-2007 and 2007-2008.

Students often enroll at West Denver Prep several grades behind. To help them catch up and excel, students attend a longer school day, receive extended class time in math and literacy, complete homework assignments each night and have access to tutoring. West Denver Prep seeks to give students the opportunity to gain the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in high school and go on to college. In the words of Founder and Head of School Chris Gibbons, West Denver Prep is "all about college all of the time."

The school's priorities are summed up in the acronym STRIVE which stands for Scholarship, Teamwork, Respect, Intelligence, Virtue, and Effort. Students wear uniforms and uphold a firm code of conduct. The school maintains a positive school culture where learning and achieving is celebrated. Students attend Morning Meetings and weekly Community Meetings to talk about their education, learn public speaking and develop self advocacy skills. Parents, teachers and students are committed to the West Denver Prep Family Contract, which outlines the school's expectations for attendance, behavior, and respect for others.

GEORGETOWN COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Elementary School in the Clear Creek School District

www.georgetownschool.org/

In addition to the growing number of urban and suburban charter schools, Colorado has a surprising number of rural charter schools in such places as Avon, Carbondale, Windsor, Gypsum, Lamar, Marble, Georgetown, Cortez, Montrose, Granby, and Paradox. In the state's quaint Victorian mining town

of Georgetown, Georgetown Community School serves 119 students in prekindergarten through 6th grade.

Faced with the possibility of losing its elementary school, the community decided to seek a charter with the district. Although presently located in an 80 year old building, Georgetown's elementary school predates statehood. In the process of reopening as a charter school, Georgetown Community School, the community made some changes to the curriculum. Guided by a simple phrase, "It's All About the Kids," the founders chose Saxon Math, Open Court Literacy, and the Core Knowledge Sequence. They also instituted a longer day. The school day runs from 8:00 am to 3:30 pm. Students can stay for enrichment activities until 4:00. Since reopening, the school has increased proficiency levels in core subjects.

Georgetown Community School's "high" rating on the School Accountability Report (SAR) does not capture the special character of this quaint village school. Only a visit to the school can do that. "It's magical," says Principal Rick Winter. The community agrees. "There are more volunteers than students," according to Winter, "Even those without children at the school pitch in." Winter attributes the little school's success to the community support and dedicated, hard working teachers. The small town community feel pervades this country school.

RIDGEVIEW CLASSICAL SCHOOLS

K-12 Poudre District Schools

www.ridgeviewclassical.com/

In 2008, *U.S. News & World Report's* "America's Best High Schools" ranked Ridgeview Classical School's high school 15th in the country. Ridgeview Classical Schools, located in Fort Collins, enrolls more than 700 students in grades kindergarten through 12th. Among the 21,069 schools analyzed by the magazine, Ridgeview held fourth place in both the charter school and the open enrollment categories. Rated "excellent" by the Colorado Department of Education, Ridgeview was the third highest scoring school in 2008.

Dr. Florian Hild, the school's principal, attributes the school's success to the coherent curriculum and intelligent, committed teachers. The school uses the Core Knowledge curriculum in the elementary and middle school grades and a classical liberal arts curriculum in the secondary school. In addition to content-rich core subjects, Ridgeview offers foreign languages including Latin, instrumental and vocal music programs, art, physical education, sports teams, and clubs. Like the vast majority of charter schools in Colorado, Ridgeview Classical Schools does not test for admittance and

accepts students of all backgrounds and achievement levels. Even with a national reputation for excellence, Hild stresses that Ridgeview is a “school for everybody.” Students who enter behind get the support they need to catch up. A quotation by Goethe, imbedded in the school’s mission, captures the institution’s focus on growing students’ potential: “If you treat an individual as he is, he will remain as he is. But if you treat him as if he were what he ought to be and could be, he will become what he ought to be and could be.”

The emphasis on growth is reflected in the school proficiency rates which run counter to the national trend. Unlike a great many schools, where proficiency in core subjects peaks in elementary school and declines precipitously over time, Ridgeview’s proficiency scores start strong and improve. Proficiency rates peak in high school. Cultivating young minds at Ridgeview is not the only priority; the school also emphasizes character growth and habits of mind – “thoroughness, the willingness to work, and the perseverance to complete difficult tasks” according to its Philosophy Statement. The school culture fosters camaraderie. There is a real “sense of family among students,” observes Hild.

JAMES IRWIN ELEMENTARY

Elementary school in the Harrison 2 School District
www.jamesirwin.org/elementary/default.asp

The James Irwin Charter Schools consist of an elementary, middle and high school. Named after James Benson Irwin, an astronaut from Colorado who was the eighth man to walk on the moon, all three schools are high flying achievers. The elementary school’s rating of “high” on its School Accountability Report contrasts with surrounding schools’ ratings of “average” and “low.” Some of its success can be attributed to the faithful implementation of research-based curriculum such as the Core Knowledge Sequence and Direct Instruction. Using flexible grouping in reading, math and spelling, the school ensures that every one of the 407 enrolled students receives instruction that is appropriately challenging and individualized.

Another secret of its success is the level of training and coaching teachers receive to cultivate their skills and knowledge. Every week teachers receive professional development, observation and coaching. There is a palpable sense of urgency as teachers maximize every minute for teaching and learning. Learning is first priority “Bell to bell, wall to wall, every name, every day, every class,” to use a phrase often repeated by the school’s leadership.

The result is electric. A visitor cannot help but notice the high level of enthusiasm and engagement in each upbeat classroom. James Irwin Elementary School seeks to inspire children to learn at high levels and to internalize their success says Principal Elizabeth Berg. Throughout their experience at James Irwin Elementary School, children should gain a sense of dignity, confidence and satisfaction with their learning.

LIFE SKILLS CENTER OF COLORADO SPRINGS

Alternative High School in Colorado Spring District 11

www.lifeskillscenters.com/viewschool.php?school_id=15

One of 38 Life Skills Centers in five states managed by the White Hat Management Company, the Life Skills Center of Colorado Springs educates students who have dropped out or are at risk of dropping out of the traditional public school system. In addition to experiencing education challenges, many of the students are low-income, adjudicated, pregnant or parenting, homeless or facing other personal difficulties. The Life Skills Center provides a unique program so that these students can earn a regular diploma based on state standards, not a General Educational Development diploma.

Chuck Holt Jr., the administrator of Life Skills Center of Colorado Springs, describes the school's approach this way, "We're trying to fit the school to the kids, not the kid to the school." The Center runs three five-hour sessions. Students pick a session that fits their work or parenting schedule. Guided by an individual academic and career plan, students work independently at a computer station with support from on-site teachers who are licensed in their fields. Students receive additional support. A vocational specialist helps students find jobs, develop career readiness skills, and secure higher education scholarships. A family advocate helps students connect with government agencies and community organizations that provide health care, housing, and other services. The Life Skills Center of Colorado Springs is currently looking at ways it can support parenting students on-site.

Holt praises his staff of teachers who "truly have a heart for the kids." Teachers work hard at motivating students and building their confidence. Many of the students have never experienced success in an educational setting. They find the care and support they need to graduate.

Table 5: Charter schools operating in 2007-2008, their authorizer, location and the year they opened

School Name	Date Opened	City/Town	Authorizer
The Classical Academy Charter	1997	Colorado Springs	Academy 20
The Classical Academy High School	2006	Colorado Springs	Academy 20
The Classical Academy Middle School	2006	Colorado Springs	Academy 20
Community Leadership Academy	2005	Commerce City	Adams County 14
Aurora Academy Charter School	2000	Aurora	Adams-Arapahoe 28J
Global Village Academy	2007	Aurora	Adams-Arapahoe 28J
Lotus School For Excellence	2006	Aurora	Adams-Arapahoe 28J
New America School	2006	Denver	Adams-Arapahoe 28J
Vanguard Classical School	2007	Denver	Adams-Arapahoe 28J
Corridor Community Academy	2004	Bennett	Bennett 29J
Boulder Prep Charter High School	1997	Boulder	Boulder Valley RE2
Horizons K-8 School	1997	Boulder	Boulder Valley RE2
Justice High Charter School	2006	Boulder	Boulder Valley RE2
Peak to Peak Charter School	2000	Lafayette	Boulder Valley RE2
Summit Middle Charter School	1996	Boulder	Boulder Valley RE2
Belle Creek Charter School	2003	Henderson	Brighton 27J
Brighton Collegiate High School	1998	Brighton	Brighton 27J
Bromley East Charter School	2001	Brighton	Brighton 27J
Landmark Academy At Reunion	2007	Commerce City	Brighton 27J
Frontier Charter Academy	2001	Calhan	Calhan RJ1
Mount View Core Knowledge Charter School	1996	Canon City	Canon City RE1
21st Century Charter School	2005	Colorado Springs	Charter School Institute
Caprock Academy	2007	Grand Junction	Charter School Institute
Cesar Chavez Colorado Springs - Central	2007	Colorado Springs	Charter School Institute
Colorado Distance & Electronic Learning Academy	2006	Brighton	Charter School Institute
Colorado Springs Charter Academy	2005	Colorado Springs	Charter School Institute
Colorado Springs Early Colleges	2007	Colorado Springs	Charter School Institute
Northern Colorado Academy of Arts & Knowledge	2006	Ft Collins	Charter School Institute
Pinnacle Charter Elementary School	1997	Federal Heights	Charter School Institute
Pinnacle Charter Middle School	1997	Federal Heights	Charter School Institute
Pinnacle Charter High School	1997	Federal Heights	Charter School Institute
Ricardo Flores Magon Academy	2007	Westminster	Charter School Institute

(Table 5: Cont.)

School Name	Date Opened	City/Town	Authorizer
Ross Montessori School	2005	Carbondale	Charter School Institute
Stone Creek Elementary	2006	Avon	Charter School Institute
The Academy at High Point	2006	Aurora	Charter School Institute
Cherry Creek Charter Academy	1995	Greenwood Village	Cherry Creek 5
Cheyenne Mountain Charter Academy	1995	Colorado Springs	Cheyenne Mountain 12
The Vanguard School	2006	Colorado Springs	Cheyenne Mountain 12
Georgetown Community School	2006	Georgetown	Clear Creek RE 1
CIVA Charter Academy	1997	Colorado Springs	Colorado Springs 11
Community Prep Charter School	1995	Colorado Springs	Colorado Springs 11
Emerson-Edison Junior Charter Academy	1997	Colorado Springs	Colorado Springs 11
Globe Charter School	1995	Colorado Springs	Colorado Springs 11
Life Skills Center Of Colorado Springs	2004	Colorado Springs	Colorado Springs 11
Roosevelt Edison Charter School	1996	Colorado Springs	Colorado Springs 11
Space Technology and Arts Academy (STAR)	2007	Colorado Springs	Colorado Springs 11
Academy of Urban Learning	2005	Denver	Denver County 1
Ace Community Challenge Charter School	2000	Denver	Denver County 1
Challenges, Choices & Images Charter School	2000	Denver	Denver County 1
Colorado High School	2002	Denver	Denver County 1
Denver Arts & Technology Academy	2000	Denver	Denver County 1
Denver School of Science and Technology	2004	Denver	Denver County 1
Highline Academy Charter School	2004	Denver	Denver County 1
KIPP Sunshine Peak Academy	2002	Denver	Denver County 1
Life Skills Center of Denver	2003	Denver	Denver County 1
Northeast Academy Charter School	2004	Denver	Denver County 1
Odyssey Charter Elementary School	1998	Denver	Denver County 1
Omar D. Blair Charter School	2004	Denver	Denver County 1
P.S.1 Charter School	1995	Denver	Denver County 1
Pioneer Charter School	1997	Denver	Denver County 1
Ridge View Academy Charter School	2001	Watkins	Denver County 1
Skyland Community High School	2003	Denver	Denver County 1
Southwest Early College Charter School	2004	Denver	Denver County 1
West Denver Preparatory Charter School	2006	Denver	Denver County 1
Wyatt-Edison Charter Elementary School	1998	Denver	Denver County 1
Academy Charter School	2003	Castle Rock	Douglas County RE1

(Table 5: Cont.)

School Name	Date Opened	City/Town	Authorizer
American Academy at Castle Pines Charter	2005	Lone Tree	Douglas County RE1
Challenge to Excellence Charter School	2002	Parker	Douglas County RE1
Core Knowledge Charter School	1994	Parker	Douglas County RE1
D C S Montessori Charter School	1997	Castle Rock	Douglas County RE1
Hope Online Learning Academy Co-Op	2005	Centennial	Douglas County RE1
North Star Academy	2006	Parker	Douglas County RE1
Platte River Charter Academy	1997	Highlands Ranch	Douglas County RE1
Eagle County Charter Academy	1994	Edwards	Eagle County RE50
New America Charter School	2007	Gypsum	Eagle County RE50
Indian Peaks Charter School	2000	Granby	East Grand 2
Legacy Academy	1997	Elizabeth	Elizabeth C1
Banning Lewis Ranch Academy	2006	Colorado Springs	Falcon 49
Pikes Peak School Expeditionary Learning	1999	Falcon	Falcon 49
Rocky Mountain Classical Academy	2006	Colorado Springs	Falcon 49
Frontier Charter Academy	1997	Greeley	Greeley 6
Union Colony Preparatory School	1997	Greeley	Greeley 6
University Schools	1999	Greeley	Greeley 6
Marble Charter School	1995	Marble	Gunnison-Watershed RE1J
James Irwin Charter Elementary School	2005	Colorado Springs	Harrison 2
James Irwin Charter Middle School	2003	Colorado Springs	Harrison 2
James Irwin Charter High School	2000	Colorado Springs	Harrison 2
Collegiate Academy Of Colorado	1994	Littleton	Jefferson County R1
Compass Montessori - Golden Charter School	2000	Golden	Jefferson County R1
Compass Montessori - Wheat Ridge Charter School	1998	Wheat Ridge	Jefferson County R1
Excel Academy Charter School	1995	Arvada	Jefferson County R1
Free Horizon Montessori Charter School	2002	Golden	Jefferson County R1
Jefferson Academy Charter School	1994	Broomfield	Jefferson County R1
Jefferson Charter Academy Junior High School	1996	Broomfield	Jefferson County R1
Jefferson Charter Academy Senior High School	1999	Broomfield	Jefferson County R1
Lincoln Charter Academy	1997	Arvada	Jefferson County R1
Montessori Peaks Charter Academy	1997	Littleton	Jefferson County R1
Mountain Phoenix Community School	2007	Golden	Jefferson County R1
New America School	2006	Lakewood	Jefferson County R1

(Table 5: Cont.)

School Name	Date Opened	City/Town	Authorizer
Rocky Mountain Academy of Evergreen	2001	Evergreen	Jefferson County R1
Rocky Mountain Deaf School	1997	Golden	Jefferson County R1
Woodrow Wilson Charter Academy	2000	Westminster	Jefferson County R1
Knowledge Quest Academy	2002	Milliken	Johnstown-Milliken RE5J
Cardinal Community Academy Charter School	2000	Keenesburg	Keenesburg RE3J
Alta Vista Charter School	1998	Lamar	Lamar RE2
Monument Charter Academy	1996	Monument	Lewis-Palmer 38
Littleton Academy	1996	Littleton	Littleton 6
Littleton Prep Charter School	1998	Littleton	Littleton 6
Independence Academy	2004	Grand Junction	Mesa Co Valley 51
Crestone Charter School	1995	Crestone	Moffat 2
Battle Rock Charter School	1994	Cortez	Montezuma-Cortez RE1
Southwest Open Charter School	1999	Cortez	Montezuma-Cortez RE1
Passage Charter School	1998	Montrose	Montrose County RE1J
Vista Charter School	2004	Montrose	Montrose County RE1J
Academy of Charter Schools	1994	Westminster	Northglenn-Thornton 12
Colorado Virtual Academy (COVA)	2003	Northglenn	Northglenn-Thornton 12
New America School	2004	Northglenn	Northglenn-Thornton 12
Stargate Charter School	1994	Thornton	Northglenn-Thornton 12
Guffey Charter School	1996	Guffey	Park County RE2
Lake George Charter School	1996	Lake George	Park County RE2
Liberty Common Charter School	1997	Fort Collins	Poudre R1
Ridgeview Classical Charter Schools	2001	Fort Collins	Poudre R1
Cesar Chavez Academy	2001	Pueblo	Pueblo City 60
Dolores Huerta Preparatory High School	2004	Pueblo	Pueblo City 60
Pueblo Charter School for the Arts & Sciences	1994	Pueblo	Pueblo City 60
Youth & Family Academy Charter	1997	Pueblo	Pueblo City 60
Swallows Charter Academy	1996	Pueblo West	Pueblo Rural 70
The Connect Charter School	2003	Pueblo	Pueblo Rural 70
Aspen Community Charter School	1995	Woody Creek	Roaring Fork RE1
Carbondale Community Charter School	1995	Carbondale	Roaring Fork RE1
Carbon Valley Academy	2005	Frederick	St Vrain Valley RE1J
Flagstaff Charter Academy	2005	Longmont	St Vrain Valley RE1J
Twin Peaks Charter Academy	1997	Longmont	St Vrain Valley RE1J
North Routt Charter School	2001	Clark	Steamboat Springs RE2
Prairie Creeks Charter School	1998	Strasburg	Strasburg 31J

(Table 5: Cont.)

School Name	Date Opened	City/Town	Authorizer
New Vision Charter School	2006	Loveland	Thompson R2J
Paradox Valley Charter School	1999	Paradox	West End RE2
Crown Pointe Charter Academy	1997	Westminster	Westminster 50
James Madison Charter Academy School	2005	Colorado Springs	Widefield 3
Windsor Charter Academy	2001	Windsor	Windsor RE4

PART TWO: COLORADO CHARTER SCHOOL HISTORY

LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS REGARDING CHARTER SCHOOLS

Colorado's first public charter school opened its doors in the fall of 1993, a few months after Governor Roy Romer signed the Colorado Charter Schools Act (Colorado Revised Statutes [C.R.S.] 22-30.5-101). The law defines a charter school as a public, nonsectarian, non-home based school that operates under a charter agreement with an authorizer. Initially, only public school districts could authorize a charter school. Like other public schools, charter schools may not charge tuition and are subject to all federal and state laws and constitutional provisions prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability, race, creed, color, gender, national origin, religion, ancestry, or need for Special Education services.

Because charter schools may waive specific state statutes and school district policies, they enjoy considerable freedom with regard to their choice of curriculum, budget priorities, contracting for services, facilities, and personnel matters. Each charter school is governed by a board of directors. Charter schools that do not meet the terms of their charter agreement may be shut down by the authorizer.

To open a charter school, a group of charter school founders, usually comprised of parents, educators and community leaders, submits a charter application to the district in which the perspective school intends to locate. The application must specify the school's mission, goals, objectives and performance goals; the degree of support for the school within the community; the school's education program; the methods the school will use to collect and analyze assessment data; the governance and operations model of the charter school; a business plan; employment policies; and other operational policies.

The district must consider the application, hold at least two public meetings, and accept or reject the charter school's application within 75 days of when it was filed. If the school board approves the application, the school founders and the district have 90 days to finalize a contract. If the local board denies the application or imposes unacceptable conditions on the application, the applicant may appeal to the State Board of Education.

The charter application serves as the foundation of the contract between the charter school and its authorizer. The contract specifies all of the agreements regarding waivers of district policies. It describes how the school will meet the intent of the laws and policies for which it has received waivers. The contract also includes agreements regarding facilities and

financial arrangements. Within 10 days after the authorizer has approved the contract, it must contact the State Board regarding the waivers the school seeks to receive from the state statutes and regulations. The State Board has 45 days to respond to the request.

In 2005, the State Board adopted a rule (22-2-117 C.R.S) providing automatic waivers for charter schools from the following statutes:

1. 22-9-106 C.R.S. Local board duties concerning performance evaluations for licensed personnel;
2. 22-32-109 (1)(f), C.R.S. Local board duties concerning selection of personnel and pay;
3. 22-32-110 (1)(h), C.R.S. Local board powers concerning employment termination of school personnel;
4. 22-32-126, C.R.S. Employment and authority of principals;
5. 22-63-201, C.R.S. Teacher employment, compensation and dismissal act of 1990; employment license required – exception;
6. 22-63-202, C.R.S. Teacher employment, compensation and dismissal act of 1990; contracts in writing – duration – damage provision;
7. 22-63-203, C.R.S. Teacher employment, compensation and dismissal act of 1990; probationary teachers – renewal and non-renewal of employment contract;
8. 22-63-206, C.R.S. Teacher employment, compensation and dismissal act of 1990; transfer of teachers – compensation;
9. 22-63-301, C.R.S. Teacher employment, compensation and dismissal act of 1990; grounds for dismissal;
10. 22-63-302, C.R.S. Teacher employment, compensation and dismissal act of 1990; procedures for dismissal of teachers and judicial review;
11. 22-63-401, C.R.S. Teacher employment, compensation and dismissal act of 1990; teachers subject to adopted salary schedule;
12. 22-63-402, C.R.S. Teacher employment, compensation and dismissal act of 1990; license, authorization or residency required in order to pay teachers; and
13. 22-63-403, C.R.S. Teacher employment, compensation and dismissal act of 1990; payment of salaries.

Charter contracts last for three or more years. The charter school must submit a renewal application to the board no later than December 1 of the year prior to the academic year in which the charter agreement is set to expire. The local board is required to rule on the renewal application no later than the next February 1st or a mutually agreed-upon date. The local school board may revoke or choose not to renew a charter school for the following reasons: the charter school has committed a material violation of the conditions, standards, or procedures in its charter application; the charter school failed to make reasonable progress toward achieving the student performance goals; the charter school failed to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management; and/or the charter school violated any provision of the law from which the charter school was not specifically exempted. The authorizer must state its reasons for revoking or not renewing a charter contract. The charter school may appeal the decision to the State Board of Education.

A charter school may appeal to the Colorado State Board of Education if a charter application has been denied, revoked or not renewed. Within 60 days of receipt of the notice of appeal, the State Board is required to hold a public hearing to review the local board's decision. If the State Board finds the local board's decision was contrary to the best interest of students, the school district or the community, it remands the decision to the authorizer with written instructions to reconsider. The authorizer must reconsider its decision within 30 days. If the board does not approve the application or renewal, the charter school may file a second appeal with the state. At which time, the State Board is required to hold a second hearing and reexamine the local board's decision. In this case, the State Board's decision is final and not subject to appeal.

Disposition of Charter School Appeals by the State Board of Education

Resolution	Inception- 12/31/00	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Total Inception- 2007
Upheld local board decision on first appeal	32	3	2	2	4	2	3	2	50
Remanded decision back to local board of education for reconsideration	21	3	2	2	3	4	3	2	40
Ordered the establishment of a charter school after the second appeal of a local board's decision	3	1		1	2		2		9
Overturned a local board's decision to revoke a charter	1								1
Dismissed the appeal because the parties settled the issues in dispute	5			1	1	4	4		15
Dismissed the appeal because of legal defects in the appeal	22	4					2		28
TOTAL	84	11	4	6	10	10	14	4	143

Since 1993, the General Assembly has passed several significant laws regarding charter school facility financing and authorizing. In 2001, the General Assembly passed an amendment to the School Finance Act to provide for the capital needs of charter schools. Pursuant to this amendment, a qualified charter school is entitled to receive from its district funding for capital construction according to a specific formula. In 2002, the legislature enacted the Charter School Capital Facilities Act to help Colorado charter schools meet their facilities financing needs. The law has several provisions to enhance the credit worthiness of charter schools when they access the bond, thereby, reducing the school's borrowing costs.

In 2004, the General Assembly established a second charter school authorizer—The Colorado Charter School Institute (CSI). Like district authorizers, CSI is authorized to receive charter school applications, to deny or approve those applications, to revoke, renew, or refuse to renew charter school contracts, and to monitor the operations of its schools. CSI may also accept charter schools from other districts and convert them to CSI schools. For the purposes of federal law, CSI is considered to be a local education agency that handles Special Education issues. CSI reports financial information to the State Board of Education in the same way as local school districts. CSI has authorized 16 charter schools since its inception. Two new schools will open in the fall of 2009; one new school will open in 2010.

CSI may grant charters to schools located in districts that have not retained “exclusive chartering authority.” Even if a district has obtained exclusive chartering authority, it may still permit on its own volition the establishment of CSI schools within its boundaries. To receive exclusive chartering authority, a local school board submits a resolution indicating its intent to retain such authority. The State Board of Education grants exclusive chartering authority to districts that have been “fair and equitable” toward charter schools during the previous four years. This means that the local board has complied with laws regarding administrative overhead charges, the purchasing of services by charter schools and other orders by the State Board, and has shared its resources. It also means that the district has not imposed a charter school moratorium or district charter school enrollment limit. A party may challenge the State Board's grant of exclusive chartering authority by filing a challenge within 30 days. The State Board must hold a hearing to address the challenge within 60 days.

The mission of the Charter School Institute is to foster high-quality public school choices offered through Institute charter schools including, particularly, schools for at-risk students.

The Institute shall:

- Act as a model of best practices in authorizing charter schools;
- Use state and federal systems for ensuring the accountability of each Institute charter school in meeting the obligations and goals set forth in its contract;
- Measure the academic success of each Institute charter school student through longitudinal indices; and
- Measure the academic success of each Institute charter school through performance-based means and not process-based means.

As of the 2008-2009 school year, the following districts do not have exclusive chartering authority: Bayfield 10 JT-R, Cheyenne County RE-5, Julesburg RE-1, Sierra Grande R-30, Durango 9-R, Mesa County Valley 51, Poudre R-1, Roaring Fork RE-1, and Westminster 50.

COURT DECISIONS REGARDING CHARTER SCHOOLS

The State Board's ability to appeal districts' decisions regarding charter schools was the subject of a lawsuit brought by the Denver Public Schools district, which contended that it had a constitutional right to determine education delivery within its boundaries. The case made it all the way to the Colorado Supreme Court, which upheld the State Board's authority in 1999 (*Board of Education School District No. 1 v. Booth*).

The State Board's authority to make a final decision on contract disputes between charter schools and their school districts was clarified by the General Assembly and the Colorado Supreme Court in 1999. In House Bill 99-1274, the legislature clarified its intent that the State Board had such authority. In *Academy of Charter Schools v. Adams County School District No. 12*, the Colorado Supreme Court further clarified this issue. Contract disputes involving service agreements, the Court ruled, are voluntary

contractual provisions that can be enforced judicially. The State Board has authority to decide over disputes between charter schools and their districts regarding governing policy agreements.

Shortly after the enactment of the law authorizing the state's second charter school authorizer, the Boulder Valley School District, the Poudre School District and the Westminster 50 School District filed suit (*Boulder Valley School District Re-2 v. Colorado State Board of Education*). Poudre and Westminster 50 subsequently dropped out of the lawsuit. A district court decision ruled in favor of the constitutionality of the Charter School Institute and later that decision was affirmed by the Court of Appeals.

COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SCHOOLS OF CHOICE UNIT SUPPORT AND RESEARCH

During the past decade, the Colorado Department of Education Schools of Choice Unit has greatly enhanced its capacity to provide information, networking opportunities, conferences and workshops, technical assistance, and research to Colorado charter schools. CDE has created a Charter Start-up/Operating Handbook, a Charter School Governing Board Training Handbook and a Best Practices Guidebook—a web-based repository of national research and examples from successful Colorado charter schools. CDE has also produced materials on capital construction, Special Education, civil rights laws, federal programs, reading instruction, and administrative policies.

In 2007 the Schools of Choice Unit adapted the Title I evaluation service provided by CDE to meet the needs of charter schools. The resulting Charter School Support Initiative (CSSI) provides a comprehensive review of a school's strengths and weaknesses, based on the Standards and Indicators for School Improvement, a research-based rubric that covers curriculum, assessment, instruction, school culture, student, family and community support, professional development, leadership, organizational structure and resources, planning, and board leadership.

In February 2007 CDE published *2006 Special Education Services in Charter Schools: Surveying Perceptions of Charter School Administrators and Special Education Directors*.^{vii} Building on a previous 2002 study, this report provided updated information on charter school demographics, Special Education services, funding mechanisms, and satisfaction levels; details on the progress made on the implementation of the 2002 recommendations; and a comprehensive set of new recommendations based on findings presented in these data.

Drawn from 178 survey responses and 21 interviews, the data showed a growing level of support through CDE guidance and training as well as district-/BOCES-provided technical support, more cooperation between schools and LEAs, and some improvement in their relationships. This progress notwithstanding, there are still gaps in cooperation and information—particularly in the area of finance, institutional capacity, support, and guidance materials. The study recommended that gaps be filled with information shared through guidance materials and training for school administrators and LEA personnel. School founders should engage in comprehensive planning for Special Education before their school opens its doors. With clear information about finance models and costs provided by the LEA, the school and the district/BOCES would be able to better negotiate a plan that best serves the students. Once open the school should be able to draw upon the district/BOCES, the state and outside organizations for training, guidance, mentoring, and technical assistance. The data gathered for this study suggest that many of these activities are presently being conducted at schools across the state, but they are far from the standard.

In January 2009 CDE published *A Typology of Colorado Charter Schools*^{viii} that compares achievement levels of Colorado charter schools based on their educational approach. The study fills a gap in the existing charter school research. In the past, researchers have focused primarily on how charter schools, as a group, compare to district-run schools. The trouble with this approach is that it treats charter schools as if they were all the same when, in fact, charter schools differ significantly from one another in terms of student population, pedagogical approach, curricula, and academic achievement. While previous research can shed some light on whether chartering, as a mechanism for opening autonomous schools, produces better results than the conventional method, it cannot answer the question, “What types of schools best serve students or groups of students?” To answer that question, CDE commissioned a study that compares types of charter schools. The results of this study are detailed in Part 3.

PART THREE: CHARACTERISTICS OF COLORADO CHARTER SCHOOLS

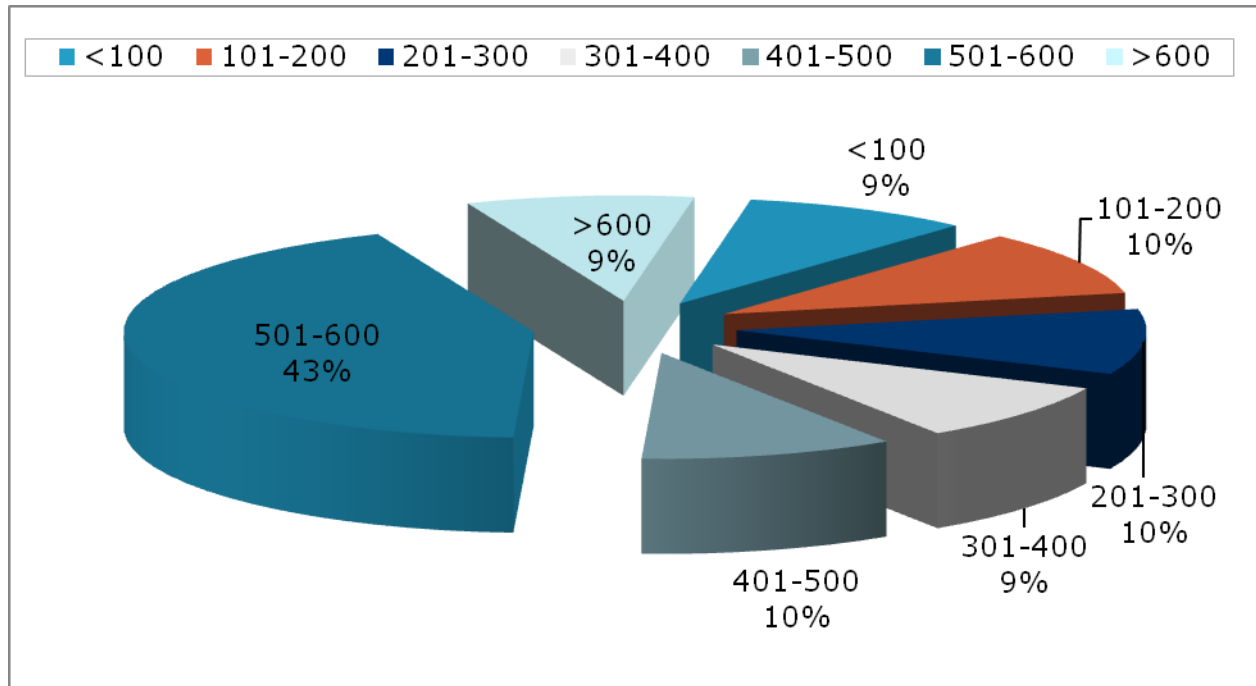
This section of the report looks at key characteristics of Colorado charter schools and the students and families they served. These data present an overall picture of the charter school program in Colorado during the 2007-2008 school year.

CHARTER SCHOOL SIZE

The charter schools included in this study ranged widely in size, depending on their location, the grade levels served and educational philosophy. Of the 141 schools in this report:

- 14.89% (21 schools) served less than 100 students;
- 17.02% (24 schools) served between 101 and 200 students;
- 15.6% (22 schools) served between 201 and 300 students;
- 14.89% (21 schools) served between 301 and 400 students;
- 16.31% (23 schools) served between 401 and 500 students;
- 7.09% (10 schools) served between 501 and 600 students; and
- 14.18% (20 schools) served more than 600 students.

Figure 3: Enrollment of Charter Schools 2007-2008



Forty-seven percent of charter schools enroll less than 300 students, down from 58% in the 2006 report. Moreover, the mean enrollment was 398 students, compared to 344 in the prior report, and statewide the number of

students in charter schools grew from 36,872, as indicated in 2006 report, to 56,188 during the 2007-2008 school year.

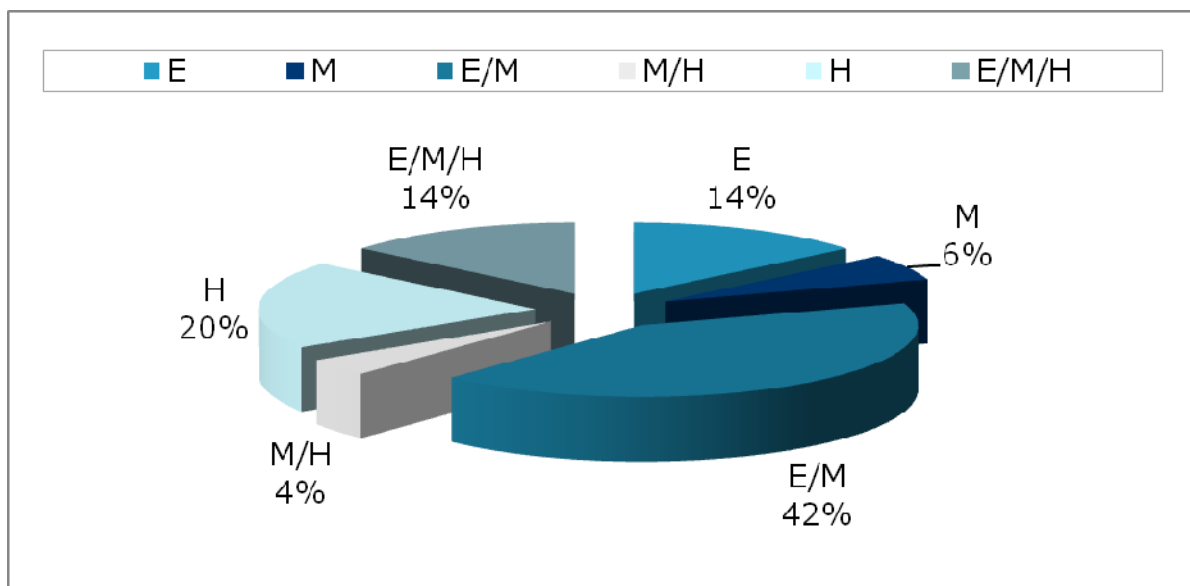
In the fall of 2007, 32% of charter schools enrolled 200 students or less, down from 39% in 2004, 42% in 2001, 52% in 2000, and 72.5% in fall 1996. At the other end of the enrollment spectrum, there has been a slight increase in the percentage of schools enrolling more than 600 students. In 2007-2008, 14% of operating charters served more than 600 students, up from 13% in 2004-2005 and 2001-2002, 11% in 2000-2001, and 4% in 1996-1997.

The number of charter students enrolled in 2007-2008 ranged from six students (Prairie Creeks Charter School) to 3,341 students (Colorado Virtual Academy). The largest brick-and-mortar school is The Classical Academy with 1,860 students. Enrollment of the largest charter school in Colorado continues to increase over time. In the fall of 1996 the largest charter school was 783 (Academy of Charter Schools); in the fall of 2002 the largest charter school was 1,294 students (Academy of Charter Schools); and in 2004 the largest school was The Classical Academy with 2,366.

GRADE LEVEL CONFIGURATION

Sixty percent of charter schools that operated in 2007-2008 (84 of 141 schools) fell outside of the traditional grade-level configuration of elementary, middle or high schools. These charter schools offered a program that served students continuously from elementary through middle school, from middle school through secondary school, or throughout their public school experience.

Figure 4: Grade Level Configuration of Charter Schools 2007-2008



Of the charter schools operating in 2007-2008:

- 13.5% (19 schools) served the elementary grades;
- 41.1% (58 schools) served elementary and middle school grades;
- 6.4% (9 schools) served the middle school grades;
- 4.3% (6 schools) served the middle and high school grades;
- 19.9% (28 schools) served the high school grades; and
- 14.2% (20 schools) served elementary, middle and high school grade levels.

Although some school grade configurations have remained basically stable since the late 1990's (see Table 6), such as elementary and elementary/middle schools, a few demonstrate notable differences. The percentage of high schools, for example, has continued to increase over time, while the percentage of middle/high schools has decreased.

Table 6: Charter School Grade Configurations Over Time

	1997	2001	2004
Elementary	12 %	15 %	14%
Elementary/Middle	41 %	38 %	40.2%
Middle	16 %	6 %	4.7%
Middle/High	12 %	12 %	8.4%
High	3 %	12 %	15.9%
K-12	16 %	17 %	11.2%

WAITING LIST/LOTTERY POOL

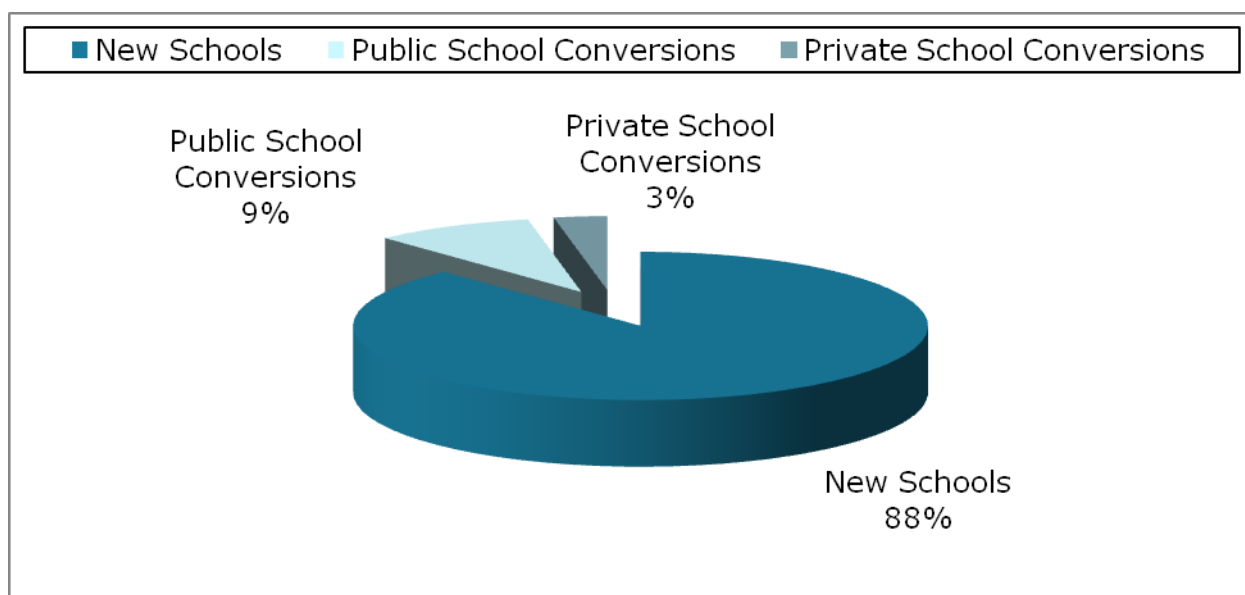
Of the 133 charter schools that responded to the survey, 66% of charter schools (88) stated there was a waiting list/lottery pool for their school. The average waiting list size was 462 students, ranging from two to 7,500, and the statewide total was 38,374. While this number may seem impressive, it is important to note that an individual student may be on several different waiting lists, inflating the number.

In the 2004-2005 school year there were 25,195 students on a charter school waiting list, with 75.7% of responding schools reporting a waiting list. In that year, the average waiting list size was 286 students and it ranged from two to 5,657.

CREATION STATUS OF CHARTER SCHOOLS

Of the 141 schools operating in 2007-2008, 119 schools provided information about their creation status. Eighty-eight percent of the schools were newly created schools, 9.2% of the schools were public school conversions, and 2.5% of the schools were formerly private schools now operating as charter schools. Such percentages are similar to the 2006 report: 87% new, 8.6% public conversion, and 4.3% private conversion.

Figure 5: Creation Status of Colorado Charter Schools 1991-2007



STUDENT-TO-TEACHER RATIO

Student to teacher ratio was determined by adding up the number of full- and part-time teachers in a charter school and dividing that number into the student enrollment number. Of charters operating in 2007-2008, the average student to teacher ratio was 17.92, with a median of 16. This was up slightly from 2003-2004 (the year reported in the 2006 report), which had an average ratio of 15.6 and a median of 14.75. Statewide, the average student-to-teacher ratio in 2007-2008 was 13.11, with a median of 13.3.

ENROLLMENT STABILITY

Data about enrollment stability were available for all charter schools that operated in 2007-2008. The average rate of enrollment stability was 89.9%. The median rate was 96%. The rate of enrollment stability ranged in individual charter schools from a low of 42% to a high of 100%.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

A Typology of Colorado Charter Schools^{ix} sorted Colorado's charter schools into five pedagogical categories: traditional, progressive, general, vocational, and alternative delivery; and into two student population types: targeted student population and open enrollment.

Traditional: Traditional schools stress high academic standards, challenging coursework, nightly homework, and other components often associated with a back-to-basics or college preparatory approach. Traditionalist philosophy places a high value on the acquisition of essential knowledge and skills and tends to view the teacher's role as the expert provider of that information. Core Knowledge schools and college-prep schools figure prominently in this group.

Progressive: Schools based on the philosophy of progressivism tend to prioritize individual student discovery and construction of knowledge. Classroom activities are often student-centered, project-based, hands-on, and done in cooperative student groups. The teacher assumes the role of facilitator or resource person, a "guide on the side," not a "sage on the stage," to use a common description. Montessori, Paideia and Expeditionary/Outward Bound schools are examples of this type of school.

Vocational: More commonly high schools, these schools work to equip students with career-related skills to help them transition to the world of work after graduation. Students often have the opportunity to participate in apprenticeships and on-the-job training programs designed to give them job-specific skills, experience and marketable credentials.

General: These charter schools are essentially indistinguishable from conventional neighborhood public schools. General schools may have school uniforms or other minor distinctions but they have not adopted curricula, thematic designs or distinctive instructional strategies to distinguish them from the district's schools.

Alternative delivery: These "virtual" schools provide the majority of instruction online. Teachers guide and monitor progress and are available by phone, e-mail and even interactive computer video simulcast. Students study at home with the support of a parent or, in the case of Hope Online, at a learning center with Hope mentors.

Targeted student population: These schools recruit and serve students with specific characteristics or needs such as high school drop-outs, gifted students, deaf students, or new immigrants. Typically, these schools' missions emphasize serving a particular type of student rather than employing a particular curriculum or pedagogy.

Open enrollment: These schools do not target or recruit a specific student population for admission.

After categorizing each school, the researchers filled in the remaining information through a CDE data request. CDE provided 2007-2008 data for each school's enrollment, percentage of minority students, percentage of federal Free or Reduced-Price Lunch Program participation, percentage of English Language Learners (ELL), percentage of students in Special Education, years in operation, teacher-to-pupil ratio, average years of teacher experience, safety and discipline rates, and average scale scores in reading and math on CSAP tests. The researchers then analyzed charter school types in terms of math and reading achievement using Hierarchical Linear Modeling.

The study reported the following results:

- *Prevalence:* A slight majority (65%) of Colorado's charter schools are of the traditional type. Progressive schools comprise another 27%. The remaining 8% are almost equally distributed among the vocational, general and alternative delivery categories. Most schools, 88%, do not serve a specific population of students. Targeted schools are most likely to be of the progressive design, followed by traditional and vocational.
- *Student demographics:* Of the open enrollment schools, alternative delivery schools serve the greatest proportion of students of color, English language learners and students with disabilities. In the targeted population category, progressive schools enroll the greatest percentage of students learning English. Vocational schools enroll the greatest percentage of low-income students and the second greatest percentage of minority students.
- *Teacher statistics:* The teacher-to-pupil ratio is greatest for alternative delivery schools with both open and targeted populations. Targeted vocational schools report the lowest ratio, followed by traditional schools. Teacher experience is generally greater in targeted student population schools.

- *Safety:* Vocational and alternative delivery schools report the fewest safety and discipline infractions. Progressive schools, especially those with targeted enrollment, report the greatest number of safety and discipline incidents.
- *Achievement:* In determining school performance, reading and math data were analyzed separately and together, and the analysis controlled for variables that, according to prior research, influence school achievement. Traditional schools tend to report the greatest achievement results topping the ranks in both math and the mean of math and reading. Traditional schools also report the second greatest achievement scores in reading. Alternative delivery schools realize the smallest scores in math and the mean of reading and math, but report the greatest scores in reading.

PART FOUR: CHARACTERISTICS OF COLORADO CHARTER SCHOOL STUDENTS

Charter schools operating in 2007-2008 were more racially and economically diverse than in prior years but continued to serve a smaller percentage of racial/ethnic minority students and students eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch than the state public school average.

RACIAL/ETHNIC MINORITIES

The charter schools operating in 2007-2008 served 20,930 racial/ethnic minority students, representing 37% of the total charter school enrollment (56,188). The state average was 39%. The percent of racial/ethnic minority students enrolled in charter schools has increased over time from 32% in 2004 and 27% in 2001, but trails the state average, which is also increasing (up from 37.5% in 2004 and 33% in 2001).

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY FOR FREE OR REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH

The charter schools operating in 2007-2008 served 14,089 students who were eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch, representing 25% of the total enrollment (56,188) of the schools. This rate reflects steady growth compared to prior years. In 2005, 20% of charter students qualified for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch, and in 2001 it was 17.8%. Despite the steady increase in the number of students eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch served in charter schools, these numbers are below the state's 35% for fall 2007, 32.1% in 2004, and 28% in 2001. The percent of students eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch served by the charter schools in fall 2007 ranged from 0% to 100%, with 16 schools reporting 0% and one school reporting 100%. Table 7 shows the percentage of students eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Lunch and the percentage of minority students for charter schools and their authorizing districts.

Table 7: Charter School and Authorizing District Demographics

Authorizer	School Name	District % Minority	District % FRL	Charter % Minority	Charter % FRL
Academy 20	The Classical Academy Charter	18.38%	9.45%	13.23%	4.89%
	The Classical Academy High School			8.89%	3.89%
	The Classical Academy Middle School			11.36%	4.09%
Adams County 14	Community Leadership Academy	84.74%	81.78%	85.98%	85.75%
Adams-Arapahoe 28J	Aurora Academy Charter School	75.90%	61.37%	49.09%	23.12%
	Global Village Academy			69.47%	7.08%
	Lotus School For Excellence			67.86%	26.79%
	New America School			97.25%	44.31%
	Vanguard Classical School			74.20%	8.92%
Bennett 29J	Corridor Community Academy	17.47%	23.65%	9.38%	0.78%
Boulder Valley RE2	Boulder Prep Charter High School	23.66%	16.92%	53.21%	50.64%
	Horizons K-8 School			10.20%	2.30%
	Justice High Charter School			48.15%	18.52%
	Peak to Peak Charter School			19.61%	4.40%
	Summit Middle Charter School			14.10%	3.53%
Brighton 27J	Belle Creek Charter School	49.62%	29.79%	43.85%	27.54%
	Brighton Collegiate High School			41.83%	14.05%
	Bromley East Charter School			30.86%	15.31%
	Landmark Academy At Reunion			32.27%	8.62%
Calhan RJ1	Frontier Charter Academy	6.06%	31.28%	6.33%	13.92%
Canon City RE1	Mount View Core Knowledge Charter School	11.68%	39.16%	8.19%	16.38%
Charter School Institute	21st Century Charter School		32.17%	49.77%	66.52%
	Caprock Academy			5.90%	7.64%
	Cesar Chavez Colorado Springs - Central			59.55%	55.06%
	Colorado Distance & Electronic Learning Academy			41.64%	15.46%
	Colorado Springs Charter Academy			17.36%	21.22%
	Colorado Springs Early Colleges			20.73%	18.77%
	Northern Colorado Academy of Arts & Knowledge			22.52%	17.57%
	Pinnacle Charter Elementary School			52.90%	28.86%
	Pinnacle Charter High School			57.56%	25.09%
	Pinnacle Charter Middle School			54.46%	34.94%
	Ricardo Flores Magon Academy			98.89%	72.22%

(Table 7: Cont.)

Authorizer	School Name	District % Minority	District % FRL	Charter % Minority	Charter % FRL
	Ross Montessori School			20.32%	21.93%
	Stone Creek Elementary			14.15%	10.85%
	The Academy at High Point			56.07%	28.21%
Cherry Creek 5	Cherry Creek Charter Academy	36.84%	22.62%	19.82%	0.00%
Cheyenne Mountain 12	Cheyenne Mountain Charter Academy	20.50%	11.05%	28.62%	21.66%
	The Vanguard School			26.67%	9.33%
Clear Creek RE 1	Georgetown Community School	12.27%	21.38%	11.32%	10.38%
Colorado Springs 11	CIVA Charter Academy	37.88%	48.60%	26.28%	21.90%
	Community Prep Charter School			47.06%	50.27%
	Emerson-Edison Junior Charter Academy			77.56%	85.12%
	Globe Charter School			38.31%	58.44%
	Life Skills Center Of Colorado Springs			55.94%	38.46%
	Roosevelt Edison Charter School			74.96%	85.43%
	Space Technology And Arts Academy (STAR Academy)			48.21%	56.25%
Denver County 1	Academy of Urban Learning	77.25%	66.50%	72.46%	65.22%
	Ace Community Challenge Charter School			98.95%	96.34%
	Challenges, Choices & Images Carter School			95.92%	41.13%
	Colorado High School			86.52%	79.21%
	Denver Arts & Technology Academy			77.25%	72.75%
	Denver School of Science And Technology			59.86%	34.11%
	Highline Academy Charter School			45.41%	25.33%
	KIPP Sunshine Peak Academy			96.22%	90.99%
	Life Skills Center of Denver			89.25%	58.88%
	Northeast Academy Charter School			95.37%	73.57%
	Odyssey Charter Elementary School			46.43%	32.59%
	Omar D. Blair Charter School			80.05%	41.30%
	P.S.1 Charter School			76.79%	63.93%
	Pioneer Charter School			98.43%	97.65%
	Ridge View Academy Charter School			66.89%	100.00%
	Skyland Community High School			92.86%	62.86%
	Southwest Early College Charter School			80.75%	64.75%
	West Denver Preparatory Charter School			93.94%	89.39%

(Table 7: Cont.)

Authorizer	School Name	District % Minority	District % FRL	Charter % Minority	Charter % FRL
	Wyatt-Edison Charter Elementary School			97.96%	91.04%
Douglas County RE1	Academy Charter School	17.50%	7.71%	10.98%	3.56%
	American Academy at Castle Pines Charter			13.13%	0.00%
	Challenge to Excellence Charter School			18.64%	0.00%
	Core Knowledge Charter School			8.63%	0.00%
	D C S Montessori Charter School			11.18%	1.47%
	Hope Online Learning Academy Co-Op			59.94%	43.00%
	North Star Academy			16.18%	0.00%
	Platte River Charter Academy			12.23%	0.00%
Eagle County RE50	Eagle County Charter Academy	53.42%	32.93%	6.94%	0.00%
	New America Charter School			100.00%	43.59%
East Grand 2	Indian Peaks Charter School	13.46%	16.82%	5.13%	23.08%
Elizabeth C1	Legacy Academy	11.57%	7.20%	7.94%	6.54%
Falcon 49	Banning Lewis Ranch Academy	31.20%	17.06%	22.20%	0.00%
	Pikes Peak School Expeditionary Learning			11.40%	3.63%
	Rocky Mountain Classical Academy			20.77%	0.00%
Greeley 6	Frontier Charter Academy	56.67%	53.34%	17.54%	0.00%
	Union Colony Preparatory School			22.75%	1.69%
	University Schools			33.07%	15.75%
Gunnison-Watershed RE1J	Marble Charter School	15.82%	16.18%	7.69%	23.08%
Harrison 2	James Irwin Charter Elementary School	69.73%	68.80%	39.54%	26.53%
	James Irwin Charter High School			37.50%	11.08%
	James Irwin Charter Middle School			45.09%	21.97%
Jefferson County R1	Collegiate Academy Of Colorado	26.27%	24.97%	15.91%	12.77%
	Compass Montessori – Golden Charter School			15.18%	15.18%
	Compass Montessori – Wheat Ridge Charter School			14.43%	12.44%
	Excel Academy Charter School			11.75%	12.90%
	Free Horizon Montessori Charter School			23.62%	11.06%
	Jefferson Academy Charter School			12.23%	4.08%
	Jefferson Charter Academy Junior High School			13.16%	12.50%

(Table 7: Cont.)

Authorizer	School Name	District % Minority	District % FRL	Charter % Minority	Charter % FRL
	Jefferson Charter Academy Senior High School			12.73%	12.36%
	Lincoln Charter Academy			18.28%	17.86%
	Montessori Peaks Charter Academy			15.38%	8.39%
	Mountain Phoenix Community School			0.00%	35.42%
	New America School			98.47%	69.93%
	Rocky Mountain Academy of Evergreen			6.16%	1.03%
	Rocky Mountain Deaf School			25.93%	44.44%
	Woodrow Wilson Charter Academy			14.26%	4.49%
Johnstown-Milliken RE5J	Knowledge Quest Academy	32.41%	28.83%	17.51%	8.42%
Keenesburg RE3J	Cardinal Community Academy Charter School	34.03%	43.60%	7.23%	19.28%
Lamar RE2	Alta Vista Charter School	51.42%	65.22%	19.05%	52.38%
Lewis-Palmer 38	Monument Charter Academy	12.27%	7.92%	10.88%	2.67%
Littleton 6	Littleton Academy	17.61%	16.54%	15.82%	0.00%
	Littleton Prep Charter School			37.80%	0.00%
Mesa Co Valley 51	Independence Academy	23.24%	38.83%	11.98%	0.60%
Moffat 2	Crestone Charter School	23.81%	51.27%	20.90%	40.30%
Montezuma-Cortez RE1	Battle Rock Charter School	45.41%	52.18%	51.52%	72.73%
	Southwest Open Charter School			49.69%	56.60%
Montrose County RE1J	Passage Charter School	34.89%	54.84%	54.17%	83.33%
	Vista Charter School			29.24%	55.56%
Northglenn-Thornton 12	Academy of Charter Schools	40.00%	29.00%	30.25%	17.20%
	Colorado Virtual Academy (COVA)			16.22%	10.00%
	Stargate Charter School			26.56%	5.90%
Park County RE2	Guffey Charter School	9.70%	38.49%	0.00%	20.00%
	Lake George Charter School			6.00%	26.00%
Poudre R1	Liberty Common Charter School	22.53%	24.29%	13.57%	3.61%
	Ridgeview Classical Charter Schools			16.08%	11.31%
Pueblo City 60	Cesar Chavez Academy	66.46%	67.96%	79.08%	64.22%
	Dolores Huerta Preparatory High School			67.92%	61.73%
	Pueblo Charter School for the Arts & Sciences			57.91%	67.83%
	Youth & Family Academy Charter			68.92%	90.09%
Pueblo Rural 70	Swallows Charter Academy	30.32%	35.01%	26.40%	15.74%

(Table 7: Cont.)

Authorizer	School Name	District % Minority	District % FRL	Charter % Minority	Charter % FRL
	The Connect Charter School			25.12%	0.00%
Roaring Fork RE1	Aspen Community Charter School	51.31%	30.41%	4.96%	4.13%
	Carbondale Community Charter School			16.79%	1.53%
St Vrain Valley RE1J	Carbon Valley Academy	32.83%	29.22%	15.32%	8.31%
	Flagstaff Charter Academy			9.46%	8.33%
	Twin Peaks Charter Academy			27.07%	11.78%
Steamboat Springs RE2	North Routt Charter School	10.92%	7.70%	0.00%	0.00%
Strasburg 31J	Prairie Creeks Charter School	12.49%	15.12%	33.33%	33.33%
Thompson R2J	New Vision Charter School	18.71%	28.42%	9.92%	10.97%
West End RE2	Paradox Valley Charter School	9.86%	50.98%	13.79%	75.86%
Westminster 50	Crown Pointe Charter Academy	76.94%	72.26%	40.43%	32.98%
Widefield 3	James Madison Charter Academy School	40.92%	28.37%	43.31%	0.00%
Windsor RE4	Windsor Charter Academy	15.46%	18.26%	10.81%	8.71%

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

During the 2007-2008 school year, students with disabilities represented 7% (or 3,905 students) of the charter school population. By comparison, the statewide population was 10 percent. Compared to prior years, the percentage of charter students with disabilities increased. In 2004-2005 the percentage was 6.8%, in 2001 it was 6.4%, and in 1997 it was 6.0%.

DISCIPLINARY INCIDENTS

Each charter school's SAR reports the number of disciplinary incidents that occurred at the school during the year. Comparisons among schools of the total number of disciplinary incidents can be misleading because the charter schools vary in size so dramatically. To adjust for school size, the total number of disciplinary incidents reported in each school's SAR was divided by the school's enrollment to produce a rate of disciplinary incidents.

These data were available for 141 of the charter schools operating during the 2007-2008 school year. The average rate of disciplinary incidents was 10%. The disciplinary incident rate ranged from 0% to 116%. And the median rate was 3%. These indicators for school environment suggest an increase in charter school safety. The 2004 average was 14.6%, and the 2001-2002 average was 18.7%.

PART FIVE: CHARTER SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

Results in this section draw on two types of data—Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) test results and the Colorado Growth Model (CGM).

COLORADO STUDENT ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

The CSAP is a statewide assessment aligned with the state model content standards. The data used in this report were at the student level drawn from CSAP tests administered in reading, math and writing for grades 3 through 10.

CSAP reports student performance using four levels:

- Unsatisfactory
- Partially proficient—does not meet the standards
- Proficient—meets the standards
- Advanced—exceeds the standards

Results reported below collapsed these four categories into two—Proficient/Advanced and Not Proficient. The tables report the percentages of charter or non-charter public school students who achieved at the Proficient/Advanced level.

COLORADO GROWTH MODEL

The CGM provides a common understanding of how individual students and groups of students progress from year to year toward state standards based on where each individual student begins. The CGM gives each student with at least two consecutive years of CSAP scores a Student Growth Percentile in each subject area (reading, math, and writing). This percentile differs from CSAP scores in the following ways:

- It is based on how much change there was in a student's score from the previous year, not on the latest score.
- It reflects how this amount of change compares with that of a student's academic peers (students in the same grade and with a similar pattern of past CSAP scores).
- It is on a different scale from CSAP scores.

To determine the performance of a group of students, such as in a particular school, all the growth scores of the respective students are used to calculate

a Median Growth Percentile. This same process was used in this report to determine the Median Growth Percentiles of charter and non-charter public school students.

Medians are a form of average scores, so they provide an indication of how a particular group of students as a whole are growing. By definition, 50 is the median score. Percentiles greater than 50 indicate above average growth; the higher the number, the better.

DATA ANALYSIS

The Colorado Charter Schools Act specifically directs that this report “shall compare the performance of charter school pupils with the performance of ethnically and economically comparable groups of pupils in other public schools who are enrolled in academically comparable courses.” To respond to this mandate, student data were separated into two groups based on eligibility for the federal Free or Reduced-Price Lunch Program. Within those two groups, student data were further disaggregated into four sub-groups based on race/ethnicity—Asian/Native American, African American, Hispanic, and White. The performance scores of charter and non-charter public school students were then “matched” within the groups and sub-groups. Finally, differences between charter and non-charter students within the respective groups were subjected to tests to determine statistical significance, using a significance level of $p < .05$.^x Statistically significant performance differences are noted with an asterisk (*) in the following tables.

READING ASSESSMENTS

There were 31,342 students from charter schools reporting CSAP reading scores for the 2007-2008 school year, compared to 433,246 students in non-charter public schools. Table 8 shows the percentage of charter school and non-charter school students scoring at the proficient and advanced level in each grade. The numbers in parentheses represent the number of students that reported scores. Charter school students scored better than non-charter school students in reading in grades 3-8, and non-charter school students performed better in grades 9 and 10.

Table 8: Percentage of Charter and Non-Charter Students at Proficient or Advanced in Reading, 2007-2008 (Sample Size in Parentheses)

Grade	Charter	Non-Charter
3	75.7 (4,672)	69.9 (54,429)
4	72.2 (4,284)	65.6 (53,853)
5	75.2 (4,191)	70.1 (52,784)
6	75.6 (4,661)	71.2 (52,135)
7	73.5 (4,138)	65.4 (52,573)
8	73.6 (3,526)	67.4 (52,994)
9	59.3 (2,851)	68.2 (56,073)
10	59.2 (2,485)	68.7 (52,732)

All differences were significant at $p < .05$

Tables 8 and 9 show the results of the matched comparisons. Table 9 includes only students who were not eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch. Looking first at the percentages of students at proficient or advanced, charter and non-charter school students performed similarly on the CSAP reading assessment in the elementary grades. However, scores began to show greater differences beginning in the middle grades. In grades 6, 7, and 8, charter students tended to show greater percentages of proficient or advanced, a trend that reversed in the high school grades. Within groups by race/ethnicity, Asian/Native American students in charter schools almost always showed greater percentages of proficient or advanced. Conversely, African American students in charters almost always had smaller percentages of proficient or advanced. Results for White and Hispanic students showed no clear trends.

Median growth percentile scores indicate non-charter students tended to show greater growth in the elementary grades, but beginning in 7th grade, the pattern grew more mixed. Note that third grade students do not have growth percentiles because they did not take CSAPs in grade two. Within groups by race/ethnicity, African American and Hispanic students in charter schools almost always showed smaller median growth percentiles compared to non-charter students. White and Hispanic students showed similar median growth scores between charter and non-charter status, with no definitive trends.

Table 9: Percentage of Charter and Non-Charter Students at Proficient or Advanced and Median Growth Percentile in Reading, Matched by those Not Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch and Race/Ethnicity, 2007-2008 (Sample Size in Parentheses)

Grade	Race/Ethnicity	Proficient or Advanced		Median Growth Percentile	
		Charter	Non-Charter	Charter	Non-Charter
3	Asian/Native American	89 (209)	80 (1,678)*		
	African American	65.9 (182)	67.9 (1,181)		
	Hispanic	67.3 (468)	66.4 (4,303)		
	White	83.9 (2,778)	84.8 (24,695)		
4	Asian/Native American	82.9 (164)	80.8 (1,644)	53 (155)	55 (1,497)
	African American	58.1 (167)	65 (1,180)	36.5 (148)	44 (1,066)
	Hispanic	59.8 (428)	62.2 (4,102)	40.5 (398)	47 (3,702)*
	White	82.5 (2,623)	82.6 (25,010)	55 (2,468)	55 (23,320)
5	Asian/Native American	86.7 (165)	85.1 (1,660)	60 (152)	59 (1,514)
	African American	56.3 (151)	67.2 (1,190)*	44 (133)	53 (1,070)*
	Hispanic	63.9 (399)	67.2 (4,052)	45 (379)	49 (3,770)
	White	84.6 (2,538)	85.5 (25,286)	50 (2,379)	52 (23,771)*
6	Asian/Native American	94.4 (179)	83.5 (1,595)*	60 (171)	61 (1,460)
	African American	59.4 (180)	72.3 (1,258)*	51 (161)	57 (1,147)
	Hispanic	69.8 (454)	68.3 (4,027)	45 (425)	51 (3,780)*
	White	85.2 (2,650)	86.2 (25,624)	48 (2,474)	52 (24,037)*
7	Asian/Native American	88.9 (162)	78.4 (1,621)*	60 (155)	58 (1,480)
	African American	67.3 (150)	63.6 (1,326)	60.5 (136)	53 (1,209)
	Hispanic	64.2 (467)	58.9 (4,329)*	51 (434)	51 (4,005)
	White	83.8 (2,345)	80.4 (26,459)*	52 (2,163)	50 (24,824)*
8	Asian/Native American	90.7 (150)	77.6 (1,574)*	56.5 (140)	56 (1,464)
	African American	65.9 (129)	64.1 (1,383)	46.5 (118)	50 (1,246)
	Hispanic	61.4 (365)	60.6 (4,542)	42 (340)	50 (4,249)*
	White	83.3 (2,072)	82.8 (27,041)	51 (1,910)	51 (25,548)
9	Asian/Native American	80.3 (71)	77.9 (1,650)	57 (58)	56 (1,445)
	African American	50 (90)	61.7 (1,667)*	34 (70)	50 (1,485)
	Hispanic	46.3 (447)	55.7 (5,838)*	40 (275)	49 (5,052)*
	White	81.2 (1,239)	82.9 (29,918)	54 (1,030)	51 (27,218)*
10	Asian/Native American	72.7 (66)	77.1 (1,711)	52 (54)	61 (1,564)
	African American	51.9 (12008)	62.7 (1,685)*	38.5 (92)	52 (1,498)*
	Hispanic	48.2 (407)	56.8 (5,613)*	48.5 (304)	50 (5,098)
	White	76.7 (1,149)	80.5 (30,335)*	48 (992)	48 (28,704)

*p<.05

Table 10 includes results for students eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch. While the elementary grades show no clear trends, charter students in middle grades tend to show greater percentages of proficient or advanced, but as with the non-eligible students, the trend is opposite in high school. These same patterns are also evident in the median growth percentile data.

An examination of trends by race/ethnicity indicate that Asian/Native American, Hispanic, and White students in charter schools all show greater percentages of proficient or advanced in the elementary and middle grades but smaller percentages in the high school grades. Among African American students, the percentages are greater for charter students in elementary and high school grades but smaller in the middle grades. In the median growth percentile data, results are quite mixed for all racial/ethnic groups.

Table 10: Percentage of Charter and Non-Charter Students at Proficient or Advanced and Median Growth Percentile in Reading, Matched by those Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch and Race/Ethnicity 2007-2008 (Sample Size in Parentheses)

Grade	Race/Ethnicity	Proficient or Advanced		Median Growth Percentile	
		Charter	Non-Charter	Charter	Non-Charter
3	Asian/Native American	74.3 (35)	53.7 (890)*		
	African American	35.1 (151)	48.1 (2,032)*		
	Hispanic	50.6 (482)	47.2 (12,507)		
	White	71.4 (364)	66.5 (7,118)*		
4	Asian/Native American	58.8 (34)	51.9 (952)	38 (32)	46 (846)
	African American	36.1 (147)	39.4 (2,02008)	31 (134)	41 (1,844)*
	Hispanic	39.6 (445)	37.4 (12,140)	34 (416)	43 (10,096)*
	White	69.5 (275)	61.2 (6,796)*	52 (254)	47 (6,206)
5	Asian/Native American	83.9 (31)	54.3 (888)*	58.5 (30)	51 (802)
	African American	46.9 (130)	48 (1,762)	40 (117)	49.5 (1,622)*
	Hispanic	46.1 (497)	43.1 (11,317)	43 (470)	48 (10,514)
	White	73.9 (280)	64.1 (6,62008)*	46 (260)	45 (6,20084)
6	Asian/Native American	65.9 (44)	57 (901)	45 (41)	54 (807)
	African American	46.5 (129)	45.7 (1,815)	56 (117)	48 (1,664)
	Hispanic	50.5 (711)	42.3 (10,529)*	49 (676)	45 (9,925)
	White	72 (314)	66.4 (6,368)*	40 (286)	46 (5,901)

(Table 10: Cont.)

7	Asian/Native American	62.9 (35)	50.5 (866)	57 (33)	55.5 (770)
	African American	45.7 (127)	37.4 (1,742)	49 (121)	49 (1,551)
	Hispanic	47 (591)	36.9 (9,919)*	54 (557)	52 (9,245)
	White	67 (261)	58.2 (6,292)*	54 (237)	46 (5,737)
8	Asian/Native American	59.1 (22)	52.8 (864)	66 (22)	54 (748)
	African American	42.9 (105)	40.5 (1,786)	54 (98)	48 (1,625)
	Hispanic	47.9 (428)	37.3 (9,729)*	52.5 (42008)	51 (9,094)
	White	63.9 (255)	60.6 (6,055)	49 (232)	45 (5,540)
9	Asian/Native American	50 (32)	51.4 (784)	37 (14)	57 (661)
	African American	24.4 (131)	40.4 (1,682)*	37 (61)	49 (1,473)*
	Hispanic	32.8 (579)	37 (8,792)*	38 (294)	50 (7,875)*
	White	53.1 (262)	61.6 (5,727)*	47 (146)	47 (5,079)
10	Asian/Native American	45.8 (24)	52.8 (651)	60 (19)	56 (560)
	African American	28.8 (111)	40.4 (1,424)*	34 (67)	52 (1,262)
	Hispanic	34.4 (419)	38.9 (6,688)	49 (307)	53 (6,058)
	White	52 (198)	59.7 (4,600)*	37.5 (144)	47 (4,193)

*p<.05

MATH ASSESSMENTS

For math tests 31,337 charter school students and 433,293 non-charter students reported scores. As Table 10 indicates, charter students in elementary and middle school grades showed greater percentages of proficient or advanced but smaller percentages in the high school grades—a trend similar to reading scores.

Table 11: Percentage of Charter and Non-Charter Students at Proficient or Advanced in Math, 2007-2008 (Sample Size in Parentheses)

Grade	Charter	Non-Charter
3	73.6 (4,645)	69.6 (54,538)
4	73.5 (4,286)	68.2 (53,888)
5	67.2 (4,189)	65.3 (52,873)
6	64 (4,665)	61.1 (52,252)
7	52.7 (4,142)	46 (52,670)
8	53.1 (3,539)	47 (53,104)
9	29.8 (2,861)	39 (56,357)
10	25.1 (2,530)	31.6 (52,977)

All differences were significant p<.05

Table 12 includes only students who were not eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch. Among this student population, charter students tended to show smaller percentages of proficient or advanced compared to their non-charter peers. However, growth scores were more mixed throughout the grades.

An examination of scores by race/ethnicity reveals mixed results for percentages of proficient/advanced for Asian/Native American students. Among Hispanic students, charter percentages were almost always smaller, and among White and African American students, percentages were smaller for younger charter students. However, African American charter students in grades 8, 9, and 10 showed greater percentages, as did White students in the middle grades. Median growth scores showed fewer definitive trends, particularly among Asian/Native American, White and African American students. Non-charter Hispanic students, however, almost always showed greater growth scores.

Table 12: Percentage of Charter and Non-Charter Students at Proficient or Advanced and Median Growth Percentile in Math, Matched by those Not Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch and Race/Ethnicity 2007-2008 (Sample Size in Parentheses)

Grade	Race/Ethnicity	Proficient or Advanced		Median Growth Percentile	
		Charter	Non-Charter	Charter	Non-Charter
3	Asian/Native American	83.7(22008)	82.5 (1,687)		
	African American	58.1 (179)	64.7 (1,190)		
	Hispanic	63.2 (470)	64.1 (4,358)		
	White	82.2 (2,768)	85.1 (24,692)*		
4	Asian/Native American	81.7 (164)	84.4 (1,649)	60 (155)	60 (1,507)
	African American	58.2 (165)	63.4 (1,185)	37 (147)	48 (1,071)*
	Hispanic	61.7 (431)	64.7 (4,102)	42 (405)	48 (3,823)*
	White	82.2 (2,625)	83.3 (25,024)	55 (2,474)	54 (23,388)
5	Asian/Native American	83.6 (165)	83.8 (1,663)	59.5 (152)	58 (1,517)
	African American	40.3 (149)	58.5 (1,197)*	39 (132)	52 (1,072)*
	Hispanic	51.5 (398)	59.7 (4,073)*	39 (379)	48 (3,802)*
	White	77.4 (2,536)	80.5 (25,301)*	50 (2,375)	53 (23,787)*
6	Asian/Native American	81.6 (179)	79.2 (1,595)	61 (172)	61 (1466)
	African American	38.5 (179)	53 (1,260)*	44 (160)	50 (1,144)
	Hispanic	52.4 (454)	54.9 (4,035)	43 (424)	48 (3,776)*
	White	73.7 (2,654)	76.4 (25,662)*	48 (2,480)	52 (24,20086)*

(Table 12: Cont.)

7	Asian/Native American	75.3 (162)	65.9 (1,621)*	64 (155)	61 (1,483)
	African American	35.3 (150)	36.4 (1,328)	54.5 (136)	47 (1,218)
	Hispanic	37.8 (468)	36.1 (4,339)	57 (435)	48 (4,028)*
	White	64.6 (2,347)	62.1 (26,502)*	60 (2,167)	52 (24,899)*
8	Asian/Native American	78 (150)	64.4 (1,578)*	54 (140)	56.5 (1,470)
	African American	39.5 (129)	37.2 (1,390)	53.5 (120)	51 (1,257)
	Hispanic	33.6 (369)	36.2 (4,548)	47 (339)	48 (4,263)
	White	63.7 (2,076)	63.2 (27,059)	50 (1,899)	52 (25,591)
9	Asian/Native American	52.8 (72)	55.1 (1,658)	52.5 (58)	56 (1,451)
	African American	25.3 (91)	23.2 (1,678)	48 (69)	49 (1,492)
	Hispanic	17.1 (457)	25.3 (5,857)*	37 (277)	45 (5,059)
	White	47.1 (1,232)	54.2 (30,029)*	57 (1,022)	52 (27,289)*
10	Asian/Native American	39.4 (66)	45.3 (1,721)	73 (55)	58 (1,572)
	African American	20.7 (111)	15.5 (1,690)	53.5 (94)	52 (1,509)
	Hispanic	11 (429)	16.7 (5,631)*	45 (323)	47 (5,126)
	White	39.9 (1,159)	43.1 (30,441)*	55 (999)	52 (28,834)

*p<.05

Table 13 includes math scores for students eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch. As indicated, charter students more frequently showed greater percentages of proficient or advanced, although the results were mixed across grades. Growth scores were also mixed, showing no clear trends by grade or school type.

For race/ethnicity, Asian/Native American, Hispanic, and White charter student percentages of proficient or advanced were almost always greater, but the opposite was true for African American students. The latter trend was also true for African American students when considering growth scores. Hispanic students in charter schools also tended to show smaller growth scores, although the scores were greater in middle grades. Among Asian/Native American and White students, growth data show no clear trends.

Table 13: Percentage of Charter and Non-Charter Students at Proficient or Advanced and Median Growth Percentile in Math, Matched by those Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch and Race/Ethnicity 2007-2008 (Sample Size in Parentheses)

Grade	Race/Ethnicity	Proficient or Advanced		Median Growth Percentile	
		Charter	Non-Charter	Charter	Non-Charter
3	Asian/Native American	71.4 (35)	58.1 (886)		
	African American	31.8 (148)	42.3 (2,035)*		
	Hispanic	52.6 (477)	47.1 (12,529)*		
	White	67.9 (358)	66 (7,134)		
4	Asian/Native American	61.8 (34)	58.9 (960)	42.5 (32)	51 (858)
	African American	35.2 (145)	40.3 (2,02008)	33 (135)	43 (1,858)
	Hispanic	49.7 (445)	45.2 (12,133)	40 (425)	46 (11,472)*
	White	73.2 (276)	62.4 (6,805)*	45 (254)	44 (6,246)
5	Asian/Native American	74.2 (31)	55.8 (887)*	61.5 (30)	53 (82008)
	African American	31.3 (131)	39.8 (1,764)	34 (121)	48 (1,632)*
	Hispanic	41.3 (496)	40.6 (11,343)	38.5 (476)	47 (10,737)*
	White	62.9 (283)	57.4 (6,624)	45 (264)	44 (6,109)
6	Asian/Native American	63.6 (44)	54.3 (906)	55 (41)	56 (82008)
	African American	28.1 (128)	32.8 (1,812)	40 (116)	47 (1,661)
	Hispanic	46.1 (712)	35.4 (10570)*	52 (675)	48 (9,956)
	White	59 (315)	52 (6,395)*	39 (287)	45 (5,917)
7	Asian/Native American	45.7 (35)	36.2 (867)	62 (33)	49 (772)
	African American	17.2 (128)	15.8 (1,746)	43.5 (122)	46 (1,552)
	Hispanic	29.6 (592)	18.8 (9,938)*	58 (562)	47 (9,293)*
	White	38.1 (260)	34.5 (6,306)	50 (237)	46 (5,754)
8	Asian/Native American	47.8 (23)	36.8 (870)	64 (23)	53 (756)
	African American	17.8 (107)	18 (1,791)	44 (101)	48 (1,636)
	Hispanic	28.7 (432)	19 (9,777)*	51 (413)	46 (9,146)
	White	44.3 (253)	35.5 (6,074)*	47 (231)	50 (5,563)
9	Asian/Native American	23.5 (34)	28.2 (797)	36 (14)	52 (675)
	African American	6.8 (133)	9.9 (1,696)	29 (61)	51 (1,478)*
	Hispanic	11.6 (579)	11.7 (8,876)	36 (293)	45 (7,929)*
	White	18.6 (263)	26.4 (5,746)*	45 (145)	48 (5,090)
10	Asian/Native American	25 (24)	22 (651)	60 (19)	50 (565)
	African American	7.3 (110)	6.4 (1,434)	39 (73)	49 (1,276)
	Hispanic	7.7 (427)	7.1 (6,767)	41.5 (316)	47 (6,149)
	White	15.4 (201)	19.3 (4,617)	50 (146)	48 (4,217)

*p<.05

WRITING ASSESSMENTS

For writing tests 31,320 charter school students and 433,296 non-charter students reported scores. As with reading and math data, a greater percentage of charter students scored at the proficient or advanced level from grades 3-8, but more non-charter students scored proficient or advanced in high school.

Table 14: Percentage of Charter and Non-Charter Students at Proficient or Advanced in Writing 2007-2008 (Sample Size in Parentheses)

Grade	Charter	Non-Charter
3	53.9 (4,646)	50 (54,557)
4	59.1 (4,286)	51.4 (53,803)
5	66.5 (4,189)	59 (52,797)
6	65.1 (4,662)	59.4 (52,186)
7	65.5 (4,136)	57.7 (52,62008)
8	62 (3,533)	52.9 (53,051)
9	42.1 (2,847)	50.4 (56,154)
10	43.2 (2,482)	49.1 (52,758)

All differences were significant $p < .05$

Table 15 includes students not eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch. Results indicate percentages and growth scores are quite mixed across grades and school types. An examination by race/ethnicity indicates Asian/Native American students in charter schools almost always achieved greater percentages of proficient or advanced, while the opposite was true for African American students. Non-charter Hispanic students also tended to realize greater percentages of proficient or advanced, except for those in high school, where charter students achieved greater percentages. No clear trend was evident for White students.

Some of the same patterns were also evident in the growth metric. Specifically, African American and Hispanic charter students tended to show smaller growth percentiles compared to non-charter students. The growth percentiles were consistently greater for White students in charter schools, but mixed for Asian/Native American students.

Table 15: Percentage of Charter and Non-Charter Students at Proficient or Advanced and Median Growth Percentile in Writing, Matched by those Not Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch and Race/Ethnicity 2007-2008 (Sample Size in Parentheses)

Grade	Race/Ethnicity	Proficient or Advanced		Median Growth Percentile	
		Charter	Non-Charter	Charter	Non-Charter
3	Asian/Native American	65.6 (209)	64.6 (1,686)		
	African American	37.8 (180)	47.8 (1,193) *		
	Hispanic	47.7 (470)	45.6 (4,38)		
	White	61.9 (2,767)	64.9 (24,717) *		
4	Asian/Native American	66.5 (164)	67.7 (1,648)	56 (155)	58 (1,507)
	African American	46.1 (167)	51.9 (1,180)	46 (149)	49 (1,070)
	Hispanic	46.5 (430)	46 (4,099)	44 (401)	48 (3,722)
	White	69.5 (2,623)	69.3 (24,974)	56 (2,472)	55 (23,337)
5	Asian/Native American	83.5 (164)	77.2 (1,659)	65 (151)	58.5 (1,512)
	African American	50.7 (150)	56.5 (1,192)	46 (133)	52 (1,072)
	Hispanic	54.3 (398)	54.9 (4,053)	46 (379)	49 (3,767)
	White	77 (2,540)	75.7 (25,292)	52 (2,379)	52 (23,779)
6	Asian/Native American	88.8 (179)	73.7 (1,594) *	68.5 (172)	57 (1,461) *
	African American	47.8 (180)	58.5 (1,259) *	47 (161)	51 (1,147)
	Hispanic	54 (454)	54.9 (4,027)	48 (424)	50 (3,779)
	White	75.1 (2,651)	75.6 (25,653)	55 (2,481)	52 (24,066) *
7	Asian/Native American	82.6 (161)	73.7 (1,623) *	59 (153)	60 (1,482)
	African American	57.3 (150)	56 (1,326)	57 (136)	49 (1,213)
	Hispanic	54.4 (467)	50.6 (4,336)	48.5 (434)	49 (4,016)
	White	76 (2,342)	73.5 (26,480) *	55 (2,158)	52 (24,869) *
8	Asian/Native American	81.3 (150)	66.9 (1,577) *	62.5 (140)	57 (1,467)
	African American	48.8 (129)	49 (1,381)	59 (120)	52 (1,243)
	Hispanic	47.7 (369)	43.5 (4,550)	54 (343)	47 (4,261) *
	White	72.1 (2,073)	69 (27,042) *	55 (1,909)	52 (25,559) *
9	Asian/Native American	66.2 (71)	62.2 (1,651)	53 (58)	53 (1,451)
	African American	38.2 (89)	40.8 (1,671)	45 (69)	48 (1,489)
	Hispanic	26.6 (448)	37.2 (5,838) *	41.5 (276)	48 (5,051) *
	White	63.3 (1,237)	66.5 (29,954) *	54 (1,027)	52 (27,268)
10	Asian/Native American	59.1 (66)	56.6 (1,711)	49 (54)	52 (1,563)
	African American	39 (105)	38 (1,686)	39 (91)	48 (1,498)
	Hispanic	28 (410)	33.8 (5,605) *	44 (310)	47 (5,090)
	White	61.3 (1,149)	62.9 (30,341)	56 (992)	52 (28,714) *

*p < .05

Table 16 reports results for students eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch. Both growth percentiles and percentages of proficient or advanced indicate charter students in the elementary and middle grades tended to show higher scores, but the trend reversed in the high school grades. This same trend was evident for percentage scores of Asian/Native American and White students. Percentages for Hispanic charter students were almost higher, but for African American charter students this was true only in the middle grades. Growth scores showed slightly different trends. Asian/Native American and White charter students' scores tended to be greater, while it was the opposite for African American and Hispanic charter students.

Table 16: Percentage of Charter and Non-Charter Students at Proficient or Advanced and Median Growth Percentile in Writing, Matched by those Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch and Race/Ethnicity 2007-2008 (Sample Size in Parentheses)

Grade	Race/Ethnicity	Proficient or Advanced		Median Growth Percentile	
		Charter	Non-Charter	Charter	Non-Charter
3	Asian/Native American	61.8 (34)	33 (893)*		
	African American	21.4 (145)	27.8 (2,034)		
	Hispanic	32.6 (476)	29.3 (12,523)		
	White	42.5 (362)	42.7 (7,136)		
4	Asian/Native American	50 (34)	36.6 (951)	55 (32)	48 (854)
	African American	25.2 (147)	28.5 (2,004)	35 (137)	44 (1,856)
	Hispanic	31.1 (444)	23.7 (12,134)*	36 (416)	42 (10,146)
	White	47.8 (278)	43.1 (6,792)	46 (255)	45 (6,228)
5	Asian/Native American	64.5 (31)	43.9 (886)*	60.5 (30)	49 (802)
	African American	31.5 (130)	35.9 (1,763)	38.5 (118)	49 (1,624)*
	Hispanic	36.2 (497)	30.6 (11,318)*	45 (469)	46 (10,522)
	White	58.1 (279)	50.2 (6,613)*	46.5 (260)	45 (6,20083)
6	Asian/Native American	59.1 (44)	42.5 (902)*	55 (41)	49 (806)
	African American	35.9 (128)	33.4 (1,816)	40 (117)	45 (1,662)
	Hispanic	40.4 (712)	31 (10,535)*	56 (674)	48 (9,918)*
	White	61.1 (314)	50.7 (6,382)*	50 (285)	45 (5,910)
7	Asian/Native American	60 (35)	46.3 (867)	61 (32)	54 (767)
	African American	39.4 (127)	31.7 (1,741)	50 (121)	48 (1,555)
	Hispanic	39.7 (592)	27.9 (9,922)*	53 (560)	47 (9,262)*
	White	57.3 (262)	47.7 (6,294)*	54.5 (236)	46 (5,746)*
8	Asian/Native American	39.1 (23)	38.6 (867)	60 (23)	54 (752)
	African American	34 (106)	26. (1,793)	53 (99)	50 (1,632)
	Hispanic	36.6 (429)	23.5 (9,754)*	53 (407)	48 (9,106)
	White	51.6 (254)	42.4 (6,067)*	48 (231)	48 (5,547)

(Table 16: Cont.)

9	Asian/Native American	21.2 (33)	31.7 (788)	24 (14)	50 (666)*
	African American	12.2 (131)	20.2 (1,686)*	43 (62)	46 (1,475)
	Hispanic	19.6 (578)	19.8 (8,820)	49.5 (294)	49 (7,896)
	White	30.8 (260)	39.3 (5,731)*	48.5 (146)	46 (5,077)
10	Asian/Native American	29.2 (24)	29.5 (654)	55 (19)	53 (561)
	African American	15.6 (109)	19.8 (1,422)	42.5 (66)	46 (1,252)
	Hispanic	19.4 (418)	17.4 (6,706)	47.5 (306)	49 (6,068)
	White	34.3 (198)	36.1 (4,607)	46 (145)	48 (4,196)

*p<.05

SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY REPORTS

The 2008 Colorado School Accountability Reports (SARs) rated the academic performance of public schools based on their Overall Standardized Weighted Total Score. The Overall Standardized Weighted Score is an average of the individual Area Standardized Scores for CSAP reading, CSAP mathematics and CSAP writing. CDE statistically combined the percentages of students achieving various levels of proficiency at each grade level to calculate a score for each academic assessment. Schools that served multiple grade levels (elementary, middle and high) received separate accountability reports for each grade level. Separating out these grade levels allowed CDE to compare the academic performance of schools to schools of the same level. In other words, elementary schools were compared to other elementary schools, middle schools to other middle schools and high schools to other high schools. As a result, a charter school with a K-12 program would have published three separate SARs, one for elementary school, one for middle schools, and one for high school.

The school accountability reporting process applies five ratings of overall academic performance: Excellent, High, Average, Low, and Unsatisfactory. The percentage of schools at each rating was preset by the state based on a curve rather than a straight standard. These preset percentages for the ratings reflected logical cut-off points within the standardized normal distribution: 8% Excellent rating, 25% High rating, 40% Average rating, 25% Low rating, and 2% Unsatisfactory rating. Because the distributions are not re-standardized each year, it is possible for schools to improve their performance ratings over time.

The 2008 SARs were used in this report. The charter schools operating in 2007-2008 issued 213 SARs, reflecting the fact that many charter schools served students at more than one grade level (elementary, middle and high). Two charter schools did not publish SARs. Twenty-one others are

alternative education campuses and do not report SAR ratings. Finally, the scores of five schools were listed by the CDE as not reportable. Of the 213 charter school SARs in the 2007-2008 school year:

- 23% (49 schools) received an "Excellent" rating;
- 33% (70 schools) received a "High" rating;
- 29% (62 schools) received an "Average" rating;
- 13% (28 schools) received a "Low" rating; and
- 2% (4 schools) received an "Unsatisfactory" rating.

The 2008 SAR also includes school performance results using the Colorado Growth Model described above. Each school's median growth percentile is used to classify it as having low, typical or high growth. In order to make sure that schools are not unfairly classified into a lower growth category than they deserve, a comparison region is created around median growth scores for each school, based on its number of students and on how much variation there is in growth scores among that school's students. This calculation, along with rules for using the comparison region, makes it more difficult for schools to be classified into lower categories, which ensures a classification of low growth is not the result of some chance occurrence.

Like the overall performance rating above, not all charter schools reported growth scores. Some schools do not receive SAR growth classifications because they do not have at least 20 SAR-eligible students whose data can be included. Other charters do not receive scores because they are alternative education campuses. In all, 24 charter schools received no growth classification, 21 were alternative education campuses, and results for four schools were not reportable.

Of the 192 charter school growth classifications reported in 2007-2008:

- 23% (45 schools) achieved "high" growth;
- 63% (120 schools) achieved "typical" growth; and
- 14% (27 schools) achieved "low" growth.

"BEATING THE ODDS" SCHOOLS

During the 2007-2008 school year, a group of charter schools demonstrated superior performance on either the overall performance score or the growth score, while serving a significant percentage of students commonly classified as at-risk. These schools are described as "beating the odds." Each of the schools below serves student populations of greater than 50% who are eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch, and who are often greater than 50% minority. They also achieved an overall performance rating of at least excellent or demonstrated high growth.

Table 17: "Beating the Odds" Schools

School	Percent Free or Reduced-Price Lunch	Percent Minority	Performance Score
GLOBE Charter School	58.44	38.31	High Growth
KIPP Sunshine Academy	90.99	96.22	High Growth
Roosevelt Edison Charter School	85.43	74.96	High Growth
West Denver Preparatory Charter School	89.39	93.94	High Growth
Alta Vista Charter School	52.38	19.05	High Overall Score
Cesar Chavez Academy	64.22	79.08	High Overall Score
Pueblo Charter School	67.83	57.91	High Overall Score

HIGH GROWTH SCHOOLS

Beyond "beating-the-odds" schools, more than 40 other charter schools reported high growth scores during 2007-2008. Table 18 below reports these schools arranged by percent Free or Reduced-Price Lunch in descending order. Note that some schools are listed twice because multiple grade configurations in these schools reported high growth scores.

Table 18: High Growth Schools

School Name	Grade	FRL Percent
Omar D. Blair Charter School	M	41.30%
Denver School of Science and Technology	H	34.11%
Crown Pointe Charter Academy	E	32.98%
Odyssey Charter Elementary School	M	32.59%
Crown Pointe Charter Academy	M	31.90%
Highline Academy Charter School	E	25.33%
The Pinnacle Charter High School	H	25.09%
Aurora Academy Charter School	M	23.12%
Cheyenne Mountain Charter Academy	M	21.66%
Colorado Springs Charter Academy	M	21.22%
Academy of Charter Schools	E	17.20%
Collegiate Academy of Colorado	M	12.77%
Jefferson Charter Academy Senior High School	H	12.36%
Twin Peaks Charter Academy	M	11.80%
Twin Peaks Charter Academy	E	11.78%
Ridgeview Classical Charter Schools	H	11.31%
James Irwin Charter High School	H	11.08%
Stone Creek Elementary	E	10.85%

(Table 18: Cont.)

The Vanguard School	H	9.33%
Stargate Charter School	M	5.90%
Aspen Community Charter School	M	4.13%
The Classical Academy High School	H	3.89%
Pikes Peak School Expeditionary Learning	M	3.63%
Liberty Common Charter School	M	3.61%
Academy Charter School	E	3.56%
Summit Middle Charter School	M	3.53%
Horizons K-8 School	E	2.30%
Carbondale Community Charter School	M	1.53%
Corridor Community Academy	E	0.78%
Independence Academy	H	0.60%
American Academy at Castle Pines Charter	M	0.00%
American Academy at Castle Pines Charter	E	0.00%
Challenge to Excellence Charter School	E	0.00%
Cherry Creek Charter Academy	E	0.00%
North Star Academy	E	0.00%
Core Knowledge Charter School	E	0.00%
Frontier Charter Academy	E	0.00%
Littleton Academy	E	0.00%
Littleton Prep Charter School	M	0.00%
Platte River Charter Academy	M	0.00%
Platte River Charter Academy	E	0.00%

PART SIX: COLORADO CHARTER SCHOOL TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

This section reports on characteristics of charter school teachers and administrators, including salary, experience and qualifications. Data were drawn from the 2007-2008 SARs.

TEACHER SALARY

Data about teacher salary were available for 141 charter schools. The average teacher salary in charter schools was \$34,657, ranging from \$18,318 to \$53,115. The median salary was \$33,861.

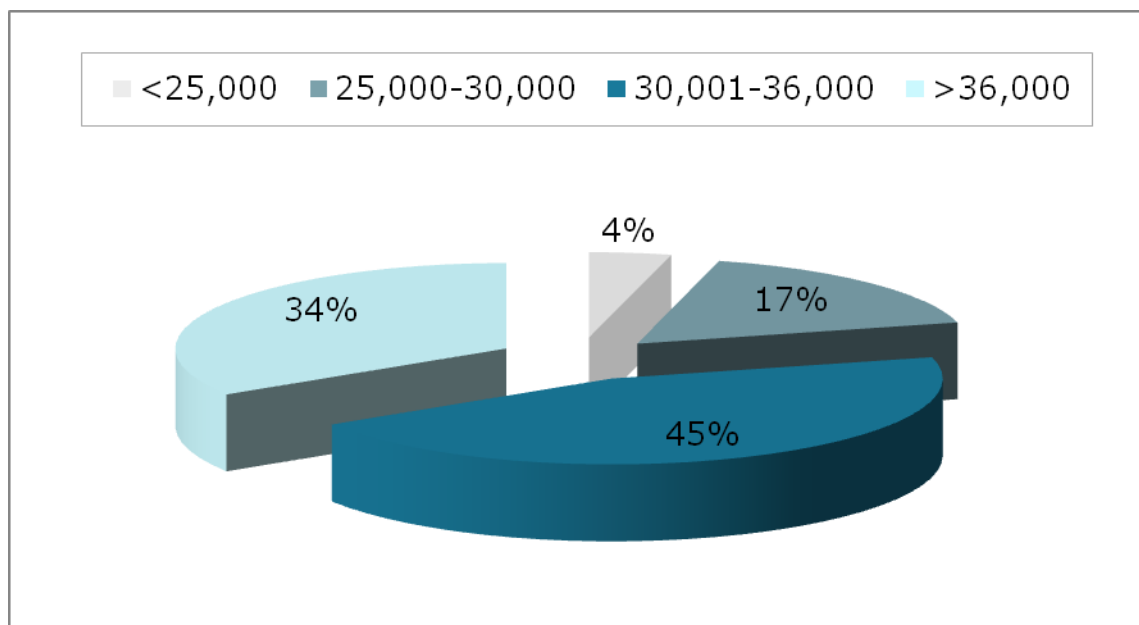
The average teacher salary in districts in which those charters reside was \$45,950, which means charter teachers made an average of \$11,293 less than non-charter teachers. As indicated below, this gap is less than in 2004, but greater than in 2001.

- 2004: Charter—\$29,266, Non-charter—\$43,319; Gap—\$14,053
- 2001: Charter—\$29,601; Non-charter—\$40,659; Gap—\$11,058

Of the 141 charter schools:

- 4% (6 schools) had average teacher salaries of less than \$25,000,
- 17% (24 schools) had average teacher salaries of between \$25,001 and \$30,000,
- 45% (63 schools) had average teacher salaries of between 30,001 and \$36,000, and
- 34% (48 schools) had average teacher salaries of more than \$36,000.

Figure 6: Average Charter School Teacher Salaries 2007-2008



TEACHER EXPERIENCE

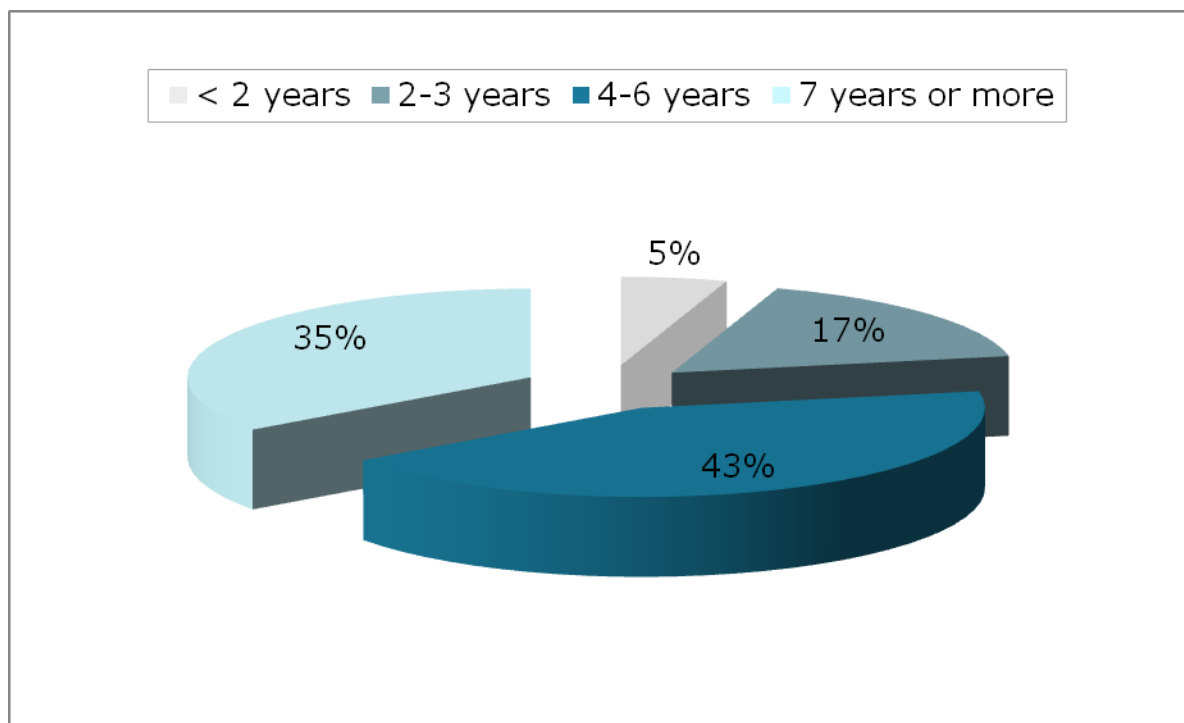
The average experience of teachers in Colorado charter schools was 6.53 years, ranging from no experience to 16 years. The median experience of teachers in Colorado charter schools was 6 years. The average teaching experience of all public school teachers in Colorado was 11 years.

The average years of teaching experience of Colorado charter school teachers has increased slightly over time. In 2004, the average experience was 6.1 years and in 2001 5.2 years.

Of the 141 charter schools,

- 5% (7 schools) had a teaching staff with an average of less than two years experience;
- 17% (24 schools) had a teaching staff with an average of two to three years experience;
- 43% (60 schools) had a teaching staff with an average of four to six years of experience; and
- 35% (50 schools) had a teaching staff with an average of seven or more years of teaching experience.

Figure 7: Average Years of Teacher Experience in Charter Schools 2007-2008



HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS

Of the 141 charter schools with SARs in 2007-2008, data regarding the percentage of teachers teaching the subject in which they received their degree were available for 121 of the charter schools. The schools ranged from 0% to 100% of teachers teaching the subject in which they received their degree. The average was 55%. The data for the districts in which those schools reside ranged from 36% to 96% of teachers teaching the subject in which they received their degree. The average was 70%.

CHARTER SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR SALARIES

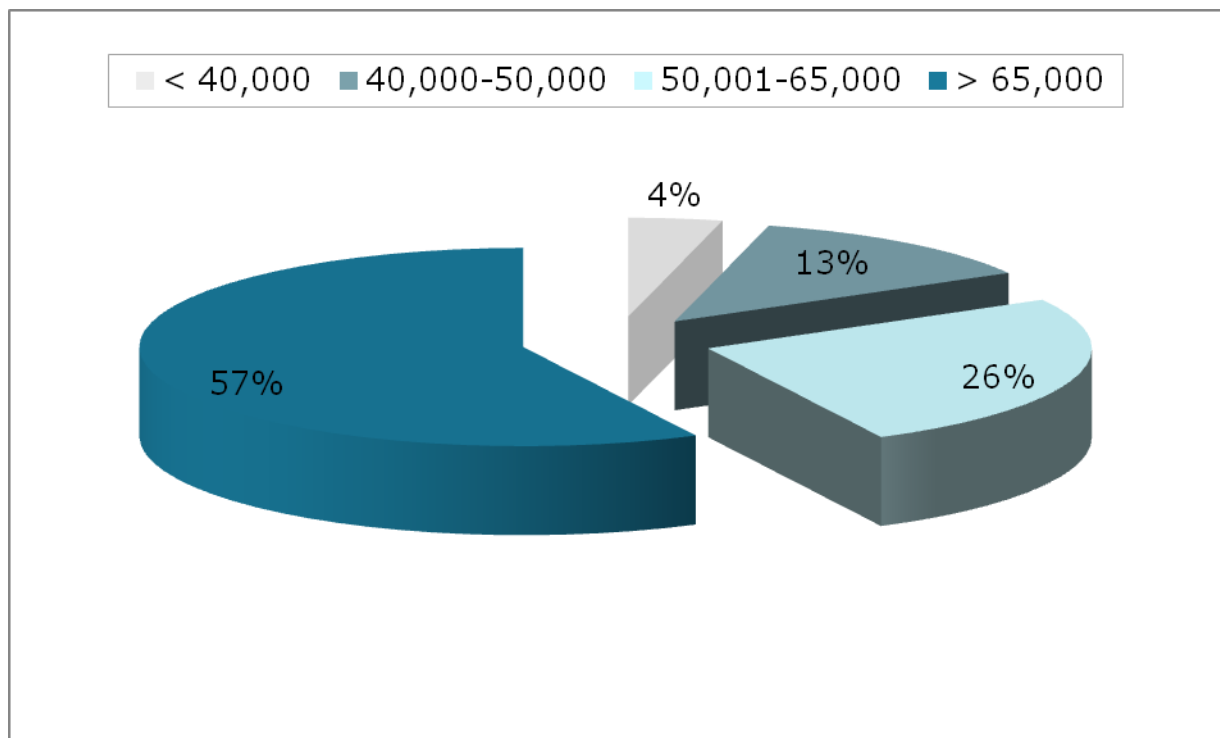
Data on administrator salaries were available for 136 of the 141 charter schools. It is important to note that administrator salaries include all administrative staff, not just principals. The average salary of charter school administrators was \$68,094. The median salary was \$67,801. The average administrator salary in charter schools ranged from \$23,053 to \$123,969.

The average salary of administrators in districts where those charter schools reside was \$79,847, which makes for a gap of \$11,753. Compared to 2004, this gap has narrowed. At that time, charter administrators made an average of \$57,883 compared to \$74,171 for non-charter administrative staff, a gap of \$16,288.

Of the 136 charter schools for which data were available:

- 4% (5 schools) had average administrator salaries of less than \$40,000,
- 13% (17 schools) had average administrator salaries of \$40,000 - \$50,000,
- 26% (35 schools) had average administrator salaries of \$50,001 - \$65,000, and
- 58% (79 schools) had salaries of over \$65,000.

Figure 8: Average Charter School Administrator Salaries 2007-2008



ⁱ Some of these were different grade configurations operating under a parent charter name. For example, The Classical Academy lists three schools: Classical Academy Charter, Classical Academy Middle, and Classical Academy High School.

ⁱⁱ See note above.

ⁱⁱⁱ Pushpam, J. (2002). *The approval barrier to suburban charter schools*. Washington, DC: Thomas B. Fordham Foundation.

^{iv} Ziebarth, T. (2005). Peaks & valleys: Colorado's charter school landscape. Retrieved October 30, 2008, from http://www.ppionline.org/documents/Colorado_Charter_1220.pdf.

^v Mead, S. (2006). Maintenance required: Charter schooling in Michigan. Retrieved October 28, 2008, from www.educationsector.org/usr_doc/Michigan_Charter_Schools.pdf.

^{vi} Mead, S. (2006).

^{vii} www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/download/pdf/MAIN/2006_SpedServicesCS.pdf.

^{viii} www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/download/typologyreport_012709.pdf.

^{ix} www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/download/typologyreport_012709.pdf.

^x CSAP data were analyzed using Chi-Square. Median Growth Percentiles were analyzed using Westenber-Mood median testing.

