

School Reform Tour: Charter Schools

City Academy

St. Paul, Minnesota

May 4, 2000

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Remarks at a Dinner for Representative William J. Jefferson in New Orleans,
September 27, 1999

The President. Thank you very much. First of all, like everyone else, I want to thank [p.1835] the Davises for having us in this magnificent home. And thank you for the tour through all the art and all the books and all the history of your life. It was fascinating. And I didn't steal any books or artwork. [Laughter] And I can't afford the discount price, either. [Laughter] But it's really wonderful, and we thank you for having us here.

Q. What about the golf——

The President. I'm getting there. [Laughter] I want to thank the mayor for making me so welcome in New Orleans and tell you that he has done a truly magnificent job. New Orleans has had one of the biggest drops in violent crime of any major city in America under his leadership. And I applaud him for that.

I would like to thank Sheriff Harry Lee, who is back there, for many things—being my friend for a long time. But you should know that he came with a group of people from Louisiana to the White House and stayed 2 days this week and provided good cajun cooking for the annual congressional picnic, with all the families there—and the annual press picnic. And while he is a strong supporter of mine, he did not taint the food of any of the Members of Congress of the other party—[laughter]—or any of the hostile press members. [Laughter] He was totally generous to everybody.

I want to thank the people who came from out of town here—Tommy Boggs, my good friend; and my friend Mack McLarty, the former Chief of Staff and Special Envoy to the Americas. We're all glad to be in New Orleans tonight, and we only wish we didn't have to go home.

And I thank Bill for running for Governor. I didn't thank him in the beginning because I didn't want him to leave the Congress. You know, whenever you run for an office like this and you run against an incumbent and times are good, you wonder and worry. But I have seen, myself, a marked movement in the polls and enough to justify your investment here tonight.

So I just want to make some substantive points that have nothing to do with politics. First of all—they have to do with policy more and people—and, incidentally, a political campaign.

First of all, my handicap on my home course is a 12. [Laughter] And that's what it is and that's what I play, even—[laughter]—unless I play a strange course from long tees, and sometimes I play to a 14. But otherwise, I normally play to a 12, and that's about what I shoot.

Secondly, I do most of my music in my music room. Hillary built me a music room on the third floor of the White House, in a little end room. And I have saxophones there from all over the world, from China, Russia, Poland, the Czech Republic, two magnificent horns from Germany, two from France, three from Japan, and goodness knows where else. Then I've got a bunch of American horns. And I play a 1935 Selmer, and I have a 1915 Buescher soprano saxophone. So I've been into this a long time, and that's where I play, because it's so far away I can't hurt anybody else's ears. [Laughter] So I don't take it on that plane with me when I go. And I do have one at Camp David. And if you have any other questions, I'll try to answer them. [Laughter]

But let me make some points very quickly—and I want you to know why I'm here tonight. Bill Jefferson started with me in 1991, when I was running for President—and nobody but my mother thought I could win—well, my wife did; no one else, those two. And we did it because we thought that the country couldn't go on the way it was, with this sort of gridlock in Washington where 12 years of the previous administrations had quadrupled the national debt, and they basically had reached an accommodation with Congress where every year we would embody President Reagan's idea that if you cut revenues and increased spending, you would balance the budget. It defied basic arithmetic; it didn't work in 1981, and it didn't work in 1991. And in between we quadrupled the national debt, and we got big, big increases in interest rates and high unemployment. The unemployment rate in Louisiana when I took office was about 7½ percent, I think, and it's 4.2 percent today.

So we said—we had been involved with this sort of new Democratic movement. And we thought the Democratic Party had to prove that you could be pro-business and pro-labor; that you could be for equality and [p.1836] education and for high standards; that you could be for growing the economy and improving the environment; that you could be for respecting individuals and people of all different races and ethnic groups and religious groups, and still believe that what binds us together as Americans is more important than what divides us.

In other words, we felt that American politics had fallen into this sort of liberal/conservative, right/left, business/labor, environment/economy. Everything was one way or the other, and nobody was ever getting anything done, and the country was getting deeper in the ditch. And our social divisions were deepening.

And I know that the previous President, with whom I had a very cordial, personal relationship, vetoed the Brady bill to do background checks because the NRA wasn't for it and the Republicans had to be with them; and then vetoed the family and medical leave law because some people in the business community said, "Well, that's an anti-business measure"—even though, clearly, one of the biggest challenges that we have is to balance work and family.

So I really believed—and I had some of the same arguments with my friends in our party. If this whole business is about having to make choices between these two things, we're going to leave America the loser. And the evidence was pretty compelling in 1991—we had high unemployment, stagnant wages, terrible recession, and increasing social division. And so I asked Bill and a number of other people in Louisiana to help me run for President, when I was, in the words of my predecessor, just a Governor from a small Southern State. And the people gave us a chance. They gave Al Gore and me a chance. And they basically listened to our argument about putting people first, and they said, "We'll try it." But it was just an argument; they didn't know.

By 1996, we were reelected, and with a much bigger margin of victory in Louisiana—thank you very much—because it wasn't an argument anymore; it was an established fact. You didn't have to argue anymore; you knew whether this was working or not, and it was.

Now we're nearly 7 years into it, 6 2/3 years, and the facts make the case. We have almost 19½ million new jobs, the longest peacetime expansion in history, the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years, the lowest welfare rates in 32 years, the lowest crime rates in 26 years. This year we announced that this year's budget surplus was going to be \$115 billion, and it's the first time in 42 years we've had 2 years of budget surpluses in a row.

Now, those are facts. And while the economy has been growing, I signed the family and medical leave law, and millions of people have taken advantage of it. Every year we've had a record number of new small businesses. I signed the Brady bill, and 400,000 people with criminal backgrounds or mental health histories haven't gotten handguns. And not a single hunter or sports person has been inconvenienced, but a lot of lives have been saved.

The air is cleaner; the water is cleaner; the food is safer. We've tripled the number of toxic waste dump cleanups. And the economy has grown, not been hurt, by strengthening our commitment to the environment. Ninety percent of our kids are immunized against serious childhood diseases. And the HOPE scholarship gives virtually a universal tax credit that opens the doors of college to anybody who will work hard enough to go.

This country is moving in the right direction, because of the ideas that we shared. And one of the reasons that I would go anywhere for him is that none of this would have happened, in my judgment, if we hadn't enacted the economic plan of 1993, which helped to cost us the Congress in '94 because people knew that it was controversial. We cut spending and raised taxes both, and everybody was mad and nobody felt the benefits yet. And it passed by one vote.

So if he hadn't been there to vote for it, or if he had said, "You know, I come from Louisiana; it's a conservative State," and he'd taken a dive, none of us would be here tonight, because I wouldn't have been reelected; the economy wouldn't be in good shape; and we'd all be singing another tune. But he was there because he knew it was the right thing to do. And he supported our crime package and all the other initiatives.

So I think his philosophy is right, and I know he's got the courage of his convictions. That's the first thing. [p.1837]

The second thing that I would like to say is that every election is about where you're going, not where you've been. I love to tell this story, but when I was Governor I used to go out to the State Fair every year and have Governor's day. And I'd just sit there in some little booth in one of the big pavilions. Anybody that wanted to come up could come up and say whatever they wanted. In 1990 I had been Governor for 10 years, and we had an election coming up. So this old boy in overalls, who was about 75 years old, comes up to me and he says, "Well," he said, "Bill, are you going to run for Governor again?" I said, "I don't know; if I do, will you vote for me?" He said, "Yeah, I guess so. I always have." And I said "Well, aren't you sick of me after all this time?" He said, "No, I'm not—but," he said, "nearly everybody else I know is." [Laughter] And I got kind of hurt, and I said, "Well, don't you think I've done a good job?" He said, "Sure, but you drew a paycheck every 2 weeks, didn't you? That's what we hired you to do." And it was a stunning insight.

So every election is not about yesterday; it's about tomorrow. Yesterday is important because it's evidence of what you'll do tomorrow.

So what are we going to do with all this prosperity? And what's still out there? And what does that got to do with this Governor's race? Number one, I believe with all my heart we need to use this time to deal with the long-term challenges of this country.

What are they? The aging of America. The baby boomers like me—I'm the oldest of the baby boomers—people between the ages of 35 and 53 are in the baby boom generation. We retire—we're much bigger than any other group our age except until these kids that are in school today. Thirty years from now there will be twice as many people over 65—twice as many—two people working for every one person drawing Social Security.

Now, with the surpluses, now is the time to deal with the challenge of Social Security and Medicare, to add a prescription drug coverage to the Medicare program—we'd never start Medicare without prescription drugs today—to lengthen the life of the Social Security Trust Fund until 2050, anyway, to get through the lifetimes of the baby boom generation. That's what we've got to do. It's the first thing we ought to do.

The second thing we need to do is to recognize that not everybody has been a part of this economic recovery. And we need to keep working to get more investment to people and places that haven't had it yet, and to keep this expansion going.

So I want to do two things. Number one, I want to give the same tax incentives to investors to invest in America we give them to invest in the Caribbean or Latin America or Africa or any other place in the world. I like those incentives to invest overseas in poor countries, but we ought to give the same incentives to people to invest in poor neighborhoods, poor communities, the Mississippi Delta, the Indian reservations, the inner cities in the United States of America. That's very important. If we can't bring investment and jobs to these places now, we will never get around to doing it. This country has never had greater prosperity.

And the other thing that we have to do, in my judgment, is not to squander this surplus. We need to save enough of this surplus to lengthen the life of Social Security and Medicare and to pay down the debt. Do you realize that this country could be out of debt in 15 years for the first time since 1835, when Andrew Jackson was President? Just think about—here in New Orleans, you think about how long ago that is—a guy that got to be President because he won the Battle of New Orleans in 1814, a guy that got to be President because of a battle he won in 1814 was the last person to have this country out of debt.

But in a global economy, it's a good deal. Why should liberals be for a debt-free America? Because money moves around the world in a hurry. That's what happened to Asia. You remember a couple years ago when they all went belly up at once. And if a government is not borrowing money, that means you get to borrow money for lower cost, your interest rates are lower. Lower business rates means more jobs and higher incomes. Lower personal rates means lower house loans, lower car loans, lower college loans, lower credit card payments, a longer, more protracted, more prosperous future for America. That's [p.1838] important. And all that could be done entirely by the Federal Government.

But the third big challenge cannot be. The third big challenge is doing right by the children of this country, and, specifically, giving them all world-class education. Do you believe all kids can learn? I do. Do you believe we need to challenge them to do better? I do. Do you believe we need to identify **failing schools** and require them to turn around and do better, or shut them down and let the kids go to other schools? I do.

I'm not for vouchers because we don't put enough money in the schools in the first place. So if you give vouchers, you take a relatively large amount of money away from the school budget for a relatively small number of people. That's why I'm not for it. But on the other hand, I think to just justify the status quo is wrong.

So I've offered the Congress a plan which would say you can have your Federal money for education, but if you want it, you've got to have a plan to hold schools accountable for the performance of their students, to turn around **failing schools** or shut them down, but we're not going to blame the kids for the failures of the system. We're going to give you some money to turn these schools around, and we're going to triple the money we give for after-school programs, which will help you keep the crime rate coming down. Won't it?

Now, this is where we come to the Governor's race. No matter what I do, under the American system and the constitution of every State, the primary responsibility for education is vested in the State. And most of the money for education is paid by taxpayers to the State or to the local government. Today, in a global economy, with modern technology, more education is critical. And yet, it is more difficult than ever in America because our student bodies are more and more diverse. I mean, today I saw people from at least four different ethnic groups in that little group of school children you had gathered up for me today—just looking at the faces of those kids.

Believe it or not, in the Alexandria school district, across the river from the White House, in Virginia, there are kids from 180 different racial and ethnic groups whose parents speak a hundred different languages, in one school district.

Now, that means we have work to do. And there is no more important responsibility for the Governor. If I were a citizen of Louisiana, if I were back home just voting in Arkansas—I hate to ever be a single-issue voter, but I would be almost completely a single-issue voter in a Governor's race, based on the person I thought was most likely to do the most for the schools of my State, because if these kids don't have the education they need, nothing else the rest of us do will matter for their future. It is the most important thing.

Last point—I'm the only person here who has been a Governor, and I did it for 12 years, and I loved it every day. And I did not get tired of it. I didn't get bored with it. And when I left to go be President, I was having more fun being Governor before I started running for President than I had ever had in my whole life. It's a wonderful job.

And if you like it, if you like people, if you like to work hard, if you believe in good schools and good jobs, and if it thrills you to get things done for your State, it's a wonderful job. But to be really good at it, you need to be passionate about your convictions, and you need to have a real vision you'll fight for. But you can't be too partisan and mean-spirited. You've got to be someone who can get people together, work with all kinds of different people, and convince people that your vision is the right one. And when other people have a good idea, then do that, too.

That's the kind of person Bill is. That's why he was voted the "Best Legislator" in the State legislature two different times when he was a State legislator. And I can tell you as someone who has done this job for 12 years, he has the right temperament. He has plenty of sense. He has a magnificent wife to keep his head balanced and to help remind him that education is his first priority—[laughter]—and he has years and years and years of knowledge and skill in getting things done, including in the Congress, that money can't buy and that you can only get by living the way he has lived.

So I think what you ought to do is go out there and say, listen, to everybody—he hasn't asked anybody to vote for him because of [p.1839] his race. All he has asked is that nobody votes against him because of his race. All he said is—he wants to treat everybody the same and give every child the chance to live up to his or her God-given capacities.

But I'm telling you, if you look at a man's life, his record, his personal skills, and what the State needs at this time, and how it fits with what we're doing to move America into the 21st century, I can hardly think of anybody who is as well qualified, remotely, as he would be to be the Governor not only of this State but any State. You're lucky to have him running, and I hope you'll keep helping him.

Thank you very much.

Note: The President spoke at 6:50 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Arthur Q. and Mary Wineman Davis; Mayor Marc H. Morial of New Orleans; Jefferson Parish Sheriff Harry Lee; lobbyist Tommy Boggs; and Representative Jefferson's wife, Andrea.

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Remarks at Camp David, Maryland, and an Exchange With Reporters, September 4, 1999

Middle East Peace Process

The President. The new agreement which will be signed today between the Israelis and the Palestinians represents a wonderful opportunity to move the peace process forward. It is a product of hard work and the growing understanding by Israelis and Palestinians alike that the fulfillment of one side's aspirations must come with, and not at the expense of, the fulfillment of the other side's dreams.

The two sides have both strong positions to be reconciled and shared interests to be pursued together. They know there's no sense in an endless tug-of-war over common ground.

The United States has been honored to support these efforts for peace, from the signing of the Oslo agreement on the White House lawn almost exactly 6 years ago, to the Wye River accords achieved with the help of the late King Hussein, to the peace between Israel and Jordan itself in 1994, down to the present agreement. Our success in these endeavors, of course, goes back to the Camp David accords under President Carter in 1978.

Today I want to pay tribute to Prime Minister Barak for fulfilling his promise to seek a just and lasting peace for the people of Israel and to Chairman Arafat for his courage in taking yet another step toward mutual respect and recognition. I am grateful for Egyptian President Mubarak's extraordinary efforts in this instance. He had a critical role in facilitating this agreement. And, of course, I want to say a special word of thanks to Secretary Albright and her team for going the extra mile to help the parties bridge their final gaps and reach consensus.

There is much hard work ahead for all of us. The United States pledged in the Wye River accords that we would help both sides minimize the risks of peace and we would help to lift the lives of the Palestinians. I ask Congress now to provide the funds we need to keep that promise.

Final status talks are now set to begin. We will do everything we can to be supportive all along the way and to achieve our larger goal—a just, lasting, and comprehensive peace in the entire region, including Syria and Lebanon. I hope today's progress is seen by leaders in the Middle East as a stepping stone toward that larger goal. Our commitment to reaching it will never waver.

Thank you very much.

Reinvestigation of 1993 Waco Incident

Q. Mr. President, were you concerned that incendiary devices were used at Waco—or are you concerned?

The President. Well, let me say I support the Attorney General's decision to seek an independent investigation, and I think that's what ought to happen and we ought to see what the investigation turns up. We ought to find out what the truth is and let you and the American people know.

Q. Do you still have confidence in the Attorney General and the Director of the FBI?

The President. Yes, I certainly have confidence in the Attorney General. You know, she's told us what happened; and she's told us she asked some questions that she didn't get the right answers to.

And I think that with regard to the Director, I don't think that it's—there is going to be an independent investigation, which she supports and which he has said he supports. I don't think it serves any purpose for the rest of us to assign blame until the investigation is conducted and the evidence is in. I think he did the right thing in saying he thought there ought to be an independent investigation, and I think that that's all we can ask of him. And she is now going to appoint an appropriate person to do it, and I think we ought to let them do their job. [p.1693] East Timor

Q. Mr. President, are you pleased at the outcome of the voting in East Timor?

The President. Yes, I'm pleased because so many people voted, and I'm pleased because the outcome was so unambiguous. I believe it's 78½ to 21½; that's about as clear an expression of public opinion as you could ever expect.

Now, I'm very concerned about the continuing violence. The people who lost the election should recognize that they lost it fair and square, and we should now find a way to go forward peacefully. I respect the fact that the Government of Indonesia supported the referendum and has said that it will abide by these results. It isn't often that a country is willing to do such a thing. But I think it is also important that the Indonesians do everything they can to keep the peace and to prevent the bloodshed that we now see in East Timor. They have a capacity, I think, that would enable them to do that.

We will work with the United Nations; we will do everything we can to support it. But this was a truly historic occurrence and one that may provide some guidance, some indication, some hope for people throughout the world. It would be tragic, indeed, if the referendum which was so heavily supported by the people—not only the 78 percent who voted for independence but just the huge percentage of the citizens that showed up to vote—it would be tragic if all that came out of it was more and more violence and killing of innocents.

So I think it's important that they, the United Nations, and all of us who support them do everything we can to minimize the bloodshed and to facilitate an orderly and honorable transition. And we will support that.

Legislative Agenda

Q. Now that you're—[inaudible]—your vacation and Congress is going to come back, what are you hoping to accomplish as far as the legislative agenda?

The President. Well, I'm quite optimistic, actually, in view of some of the developments of the last few weeks. I hope we can pass the Patients' Bill of Rights. There is now a bipartisan bill that has been supported by the American Medical Association and 200 other health professional, health consumer groups. I hope now that those who have been opposing it in the congressional leadership will change their position and let us go forward.

I'm very hopeful that we will pass juvenile justice legislation that will adopt the commonsense measures to keep guns out of the wrong hands that the Senate adopted. I'm very hopeful that in the end we will get a budget agreement that will enable us to extend the life of Social Security, extend the life to the Medicare Trust Fund, and provide for prescription drugs and pay down the debt of the American people. And there are many other things that are going on.

I would like to emphasize, since this is Labor Day and all the children are going back to school, I'm also especially hopeful that we can be successful with our education agenda. This is the occasion, this year, 1999, as we see in every 5-year period, when we have to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. And back in January, at the State of the Union Address, I asked the Congress to change the terms in which we give money to States and school districts to stop subsidizing failure, to end social promotion, to dramatically increase our commitment to after-school and summer school programs, and to proven strategies that turn around **failing schools**.

We've seen all over the country where there is a systematic effort to turn these **failing schools** around, they work. And if we do that, plus the charter schools, plus the school modernization program and hooking them all up to the Internet, and our continuing commitment to hire more teachers, I think that this could be one of the most productive years that we have had since I've been President.

It's in the nature of divided government that things that happen that are positive tend to happen late in the process. So I am not at all pessimistic. I'm quite hopeful that we can get over this difference we have over the tax issue, that they will accept an affordable tax cut that will provide—my tax proposal provides about as much relief to middle class Americans as theirs does at a much, much lower cost and permits us to achieve these other objectives. [p.1694]

So I'm going to work as hard as I can with members of both parties to get that done as they come back. I'm looking forward to it, looking forward to talking to the leaders of the Senate and the House in both parties, and going back to work.

President's Vacation and Home Purchase

Q. Mr. President, after all you have done in the last 2 weeks, do you need a vacation? [Laughter] And how do you like your new house?

The President. Yes, even by my standards this was a fairly active vacation, you know. Hillary is keeping me busy. And we had a lot of—we also had finalized the house. I love this house. It's a beautiful old house, and the older part of it was built in 1889. The people who lived in it for the last 18 years have taken wonderful care of it. It was obviously a place that has been lovingly tended to. And it will be a good place to wake up in the morning—lots of light. I like the neighbors; they were nice. And so I'm looking forward to it; I know that Hillary is. And I'm very pleased that we were able to find it.

And I'd also like to say, since you asked me the question, a special word of thanks to all the people who opened their homes to Hillary or to Hillary and me, to people on our behalf, as we were looking for a place. As you might imagine, the circumstances for them were somewhat unusual, the publicity for them—most of them—was somewhat—was unprecedented. And I was very touched by the way we were received.

And I had a wonderful vacation. I liked it all. But I had to come up to Camp David to get a little rest this weekend.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you all.

Note: The President spoke at 4 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel; Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority; and President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt.

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Remarks at the National Governors' Association Meeting,
February 22, 1999

I know we're beginning a little late, so I will get right into my remarks and try to truncate them a little bit so we can have the maximum amount of time for discussion. Let me begin by saying that Hillary and I were delighted to have you here last night. We had a wonderful time. This room is in a little different condition than it was last evening, but I hope both events will prove to be enjoyable.

Let me say that I have been a participant in one way or the other in every Governors' meeting since 1979, for 20 years. I had the privilege of serving with 150 of my fellow Americans as Governors over a 12-year period. One of the best has passed away in the last few months, Governor Lawton Chiles of Florida. And I wanted to mention him both because he was an important member of the NGA and because he had the good sense to go from Washington back home, instead of the other way around.

I wanted to thank Governor Jeb Bush for his proposal to set aside some of the tobacco settlement money in Florida for the foundation named in Governor Chiles' name, for [p.276] the benefit of the children of the State. Those of us who knew and cared for Lawton are profoundly grateful for that. And I wanted to mention with the remembrance of him because he gave so much of his life, and the older he got, the more he gave to the future of our children. I know we have a lot of things to do today, but I'd like to spend my few moments talking about the education of our kids.

As I said in my State of the Union Address, the prosperity the Nation now enjoys gives us a rare opportunity and, I believe, a profound obligation to do more to ensure the education of all of our children. At a very important time, we have, as Secretary Riley never tires of saying, the largest school population and the most diverse one we've ever had. We have more overcrowded schools and more old and disrepaired schools than we have ever had. And we have more opportunities to seize the benefits of the well-educated population than we have ever had.

The budget that I sent to Congress this month, after the State of the Union, calls for spending \$1.4 billion to help States and school districts hire new and better trained teachers. That's a 17 percent increase over the budget I signed last fall, and it moves us considerably closer to our goal of hiring 100,000 new teachers over the next 7 years—now the next 6 years. It calls on Congress to pass our tax proposal to build or modernize 6,000 schools, which is a huge problem in many of your States. It triples our budget for after-school and summer school programs to \$600 million. That's enough to help local schools keep a million children in the schools and off the street during the hours when parents work and juvenile crime soars.

I had an interesting discussion last night with Mrs. Leavitt and Mrs. Kitzhaber about the importance of keeping young people in school, later in the school day. It includes new funds to stay on track to hook all our classrooms up to the Internet and to reach our goal of 3,000 charter schools by the year 2000.

I think it is very important that we invest more money, as we have more children, and as we are going to have to replace a large number of teachers who will be retiring, and make sure that they have been adequately prepared. But I think it's also important that we candidly assess how we invest the money we are now spending. The Federal Government already is investing \$15 billion a year in public schools. This year we have to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. I believe we should change the way we spend the money we are already spending. I don't know how many times I've heard Governors say that over the last 15 or 16 years about State funds.

The idea behind the "Education Accountability Act," which I will send to Congress next month, is to say after, now more than 15 years of education research and efforts since the issuance of the "Nation At Risk" report, and the 10th year after the Governors and President Bush issued the "Goals 2000" report, it is time for the Federal Government to invest in those things which Governors and school districts and principals and teachers and students and parents have proved are critical for raising student achievement, which is the theme of your conference.

It says that school districts accepting Federal money must end social promotion, turn around or shut down **failing schools**, ensure teachers know the subjects they're teaching, have and enforce reasonable discipline codes, and empower parents with report cards on their schools.

I say again, we did not dream up these ideas in Washington. We learned them from North Carolina, where Governor Hunt has led the way in improving teacher quality with performance assessments, incentives for veteran teachers to become even more proficient, a strategy to turn around or shut down **failing schools**; in Pennsylvania, where Governor Ridge is improving school safety with effective discipline codes; in Delaware, where Governor Carper is putting an end to social promotion by insisting that students pass State tests before they move to the next grade; in California, where Governor Davis has asked the legislature to turn around **failing schools** with a new accountability plan; in Michigan, where Governor Engler is supporting greater accountability by requiring school districts to send parents report cards. And I could mention every Governor in this room in some specific or another because these ideas represent the best practices in [p.277] education reform today, proven in the laboratories of democracy at the State, city, and school district level.

Many of you have proposed one or more of these ideas in your state of the State addresses. In his state of the State, Governor Engler endorsed all five of them and said he didn't understand how anyone could disagree. I'm with him.

Some people already are trying to frame this debate here in Washington, however, in partisan or ideological terms, and try to force everyone to take sides, when I'd like to use it as an opportunity for us to debate, discuss, and come together.

You'll hear some people say the Federal Government shouldn't be involved at all in public education, just send us the check, and we'll take care of the rest. In 1787 our Founding Fathers declared that all new territories had to set aside land for public schools, establishing at the birth of our Republic the principle that public education, though a State and local responsibility, is a national priority. In 1862 President Lincoln created the land-grant college system. In 1917 Woodrow Wilson mandated vocational training in public high schools. In 1958 President Eisenhower created the new program to help public school teachers improve math and science instruction in the aftermath of Sputnik.

None of these Federal actions undermine the ability of State and local government to run their schools. Each was a necessary response to the challenge the Nation faced at the time. I believe we are at a similar moment of challenge today. And it should lead, I believe, in the direction of all the work that has been done by Governors since 1983 toward what works to raise student achievement.

Some will say the Federal Government should be giving States more flexibility, not demanding more accountability. I think it's a false choice and the Federal Government should be giving you more of both. You know from your own interactions that flexibility and accountability can achieve the right ends working with local governments.

Since I've been here, our administration has cut regulations in elementary and secondary education programs by two-thirds, granted 357 waivers so that States and school districts can have the flexibility to try new approaches. We don't have any business telling you whom to hire, how to teach, how to run schools. I have vigorously supported more school-based management and more flexibility for you. But let's not kid ourselves. We are not doing our children any favors by continuing to subsidize practices that don't work and failing to invest in practices that do.

We shouldn't have a local option for schools to fail, year-in and year-out. Governors have recognized that for years. If you go back and read the "Goals 2000" statement, that—there's still a few of us around this room that were there back then—that the Governors hammered out with President Bush and his Education Department, and the allocation of responsibilities under that statement, it is clear that there has long been a recognition of our joint responsibility to raise student achievement. And I was thrilled when that became the topic of your endeavors this year.

There may be some who say there's now no longer any need for the Federal Government to assist on these accountability measures, because States and school districts are doing it on their own. I have no doubt that these ideas eventually will spread to every State and school district in America. The question is, how long will it take to happen?

Our Federal system, our laboratories of democracy, are great at inventing new ideas and testing them out. At least in the area of education, we're not so good at spreading the best of those ideas around in a comprehensive and timely fashion. It took over 100 years for laws mandating compulsory, free elementary education to spread from few States to the whole Nation. That pace of change might have been all right in the 19th century; it won't do for the 21st. We don't have the luxury of waiting and continuing to subsidize failure.

Now, let me just give one example of that, and then I'll turn it over to your chairman. In 1986 the NGA issued a report called, "Time For Results," with task forces chaired by Lamar Alexander, Tom Keane, Dick Riley, and me, urging the Governors to intervene in low-performing schools and school [p.278] districts and to take over or close down academically bankrupt schools—1986. In 1987 nine States had the authority to do that. In 1990 the NGA issued a report, "Educating America: State Strategies for Achieving National Education Goals." In 1988, 18 States offered assistance or intervention in low-performance schools. In 1998 NGA policy supported State focus on schools and reiterated the 1988 policy that States should have the responsibility for enforcing accountability, including establishing clear penalties in cases of sustained failures to improve student performance. In 1999, 19 States have procedures for intervening in **failing schools**, 16 for replacing school staff or closing down the school.

This is tough politics. I don't know that I could have passed this through my legislature. I do know that if we have the reauthorization of the Federal law this year and we're sending this out, and all we do is to say we ought to do what the NGA said we should do 13 years ago, that will accelerate the pace of reform in education, and I think it's a worthy thing.

I hope we can pass it. I want to work with you. And it is not inconsistent with our shared commitment to better flexibility in education.

Thank you very much.

Note: The President spoke at 10:05 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Governors Jeb Bush of Florida, James B. Hunt, Jr., of North Carolina, Tom Ridge of Pennsylvania, Gray Davis of California, John Engler of Michigan, and NGA Chairman Tom Carper of Delaware; Jacalyn Leavitt, wife of NGA Vice Chairman Gov. Michael O. Leavitt of Utah; and Sharon Kitzhaber, wife of Gov. John A. Kitzhaber of Oregon.

Source: United States. Executive Office of the President, Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, Week Ending Friday, February 26, 1999 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1995), 35:275-278

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The President's Radio Address,
February 26, 2000

Good morning. Last month, in my State of the Union Address, I called on Congress to help us launch a 21st century revolution in education, guided by our faith that every child can learn. This morning I'm announcing new steps to do just that—to provide tools for States and local communities to turn around their worst performing schools or shut them down.

If our Nation is going to make the most of the promise of the new economy, we must help every American make the most of their God-given potential. But students can't aim high in schools that perform low. Every child deserves a high-quality education.

Over the last 7 years we've followed a commonsense reform strategy: Invest more in our schools and demand more in return. I'm proud that our administration has enacted the largest investments in education in three decades, while, at the same time, working hard for higher standards, greater accountability, and extra help so that all children can meet those high standards.

It's working. Across our Nation, reading and math scores are on the rise. But in spite of this progress, too many schools in our poorest neighborhoods still fail to offer a quality education, and too few of these **failing schools** ever get enough help to turn around.

That's why I challenged Congress last year to pass my plan to establish a new school accountability fund to help States and local communities to fix **failing schools**. Together, we enacted a landmark initiative to provide \$134 million to States and school districts this year alone. Today I'm releasing official guidelines to ensure that these funds are invested in what works.

We're taking two unprecedented steps. First, under our plan districts and States will soon receive money dedicated entirely to turning around **failing schools**. This accountability fund will enable districts to take firm measures, putting in a tougher curriculum, helping teachers get the skills and training they need, and if necessary, closing down a failing school and reopening it under new management or as a public charter school.

Second, my plan also expands public school choice. For the first time ever, we'll require that districts give students in a chronically failing school the option to transfer to a better performing public school.

We know accountability works because that's what the experience of local communities tells us. Two years ago, for example, North Carolina drew up a list of the State's 15 worst performing schools and sent assistance teams to each school. Just a year later, reading and math scores shot up and 14 of those 15 schools improved their performance enough to be taken off the list. I've been to schools all over our country that are achieving in the very same way.

Ultimately, of course, it's up to States and local communities to take the reins and turn around a failing school, but the Federal Government must play a key role by granting more flexibility, demanding more accountability, and investing more in education. With today's action, we're declaring as a nation that we will not fail our children by tolerating **failing schools**. We must do more.

In our budget for the coming year, I'm doubling the size of the accountability fund to \$250 million and doubling our support for after-school and summer school programs, so that every child in a low performing school has the opportunity to participate. I ask Congress to do its part and make these vital investments.

Again, I also ask Congress to pass my "Education Accountability Act," which will make our schools even more focused on results. We must stay on track to hiring 100,000 high-quality teachers to reduce class size in the early grades. We must fulfill our commitment to build and modernize public schools. And we must invest in efforts to mentor disadvantaged students to help them understand that if they learn what they need to learn, they can all now go on to college.

This entire strategy is rooted in fundamental values: Everyone counts; everyone deserves a chance; everyone has a role to play; and we all do better when we help each other.

Fixing a failing school isn't easy, but communities are proving every day that it can be done. So we must continue to invest more [p.397] and demand more. We owe it to our children and to our future.

Thanks for listening.

Note: The address was recorded at 3:37 p.m. on February 25 in the Oval Office at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on February 26. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 25 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Source: United States. Executive Office of the President, Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, Week Ending Friday, March 3, 2000 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2000), 36:396-397

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April 4, 2000, Tuesday ,THIRD EDITION

SECTION: OP-ED; Pg. A23**LENGTH:** 758 words**HEADLINE:** THOMAS OLIPHANT;
POLs FLUNKING THE **SCHOOL** TEST THOMAS OLIPHANTWASHINGTON**BYLINE:** BY THOMAS OLIPHANT, GLOBE STAFF**BODY:**

Just for the fun of confusing a current presidential campaign topic, consider two contrasting proposals for dealing with public **schools that are failing** in their solemn purpose.

Plan A is tough as nails. Any **failing school** should be shut down at the end of the semester in which it is found to be **failing**. The summer would be spent redesigning the place with a new principal, a fixed-up physical plant, smaller class sizes, tutoring programs, and extended **school** days or years for every child who is at risk or behind. The **school** would reopen in the fall, but every parent would have guaranteed access for his kid to any other public **school** in the system. Plan B is mush. The first year after a public **school** was officially labeled **failing**, nothing would happen. Nor would anything happen in the second year. Only after a third year would an undetermined percentage of lucky parent get a voucher, worth a puny \$1,500, which states could match if they chose, that would be good at any private **school** he might be fortunate enough to get his kid accepted at. Meanwhile, life at the "failed" public **school** would go on.

Plan A was advanced recently by Sandra Feldman, the president of the American Federation of Teachers and a supposed guardian of the status quo.

Plan B's mush was concocted for George W. Bush. Go figure.

And for what it's worth, the odds of the current Republican Congress going along with the big, city-based American Federation of Teachers are a lot better than those for Bush's Rube Goldberg concoction.

In fact, the evidence is already in on that point. When few were noticing last October, and when the Texas governor was still being hailed as both our inevitable next president and a "compassionate conservative," Bush's thinking was being laughed out of the House of Representatives.

In committee, a version of the Bush idea that would shift a per-pupil chunk of each system's basic federal assistance to private **school** tuition went down by more than 2-to-1. And on the floor, a 10-state test of the Bush voucher idea was crunched in a 271-153 vote, with 66 Republicans voting

no.

To his left, his thinking is opposed as a pointless, further drain on resources for the public **schools**. To his right, Bush gets guff for his heretical fondness for federal intrusion. And there is no cheering middle for the governor, either.

The truth is that the shouting match over "choice" and vouchers engages people in small ideological salons far more than it does parents or voters, and for good reason.

As a careful study of the opinions of moderate voters for the moderately inclined, Democrat-oriented Center for National Policy makes clear, people are likely to have more basic and pragmatic sets of concerns. Above all, their focus is less on test scores and ideology and more on secure learning environments for hopefully happy, well-adjusted kids in public **schools** that are worth the effort it takes to help them succeed.

The study's opinion research was based on a series of focus group discussions in Richmond and a suburb of Chicago (Oak Park) with people who described themselves as independents or "weak" Republicans and Democrats to the polling team of Democrat Celinda Lake and Republican John Deardourff. It was supported by a poll Lake's firm did for the American Association of **School** Administrators.

To what ought to be the surprise of no one, the center's chairman, Leon Panetta (ex-congressman and Clinton White House chief of staff), summed up a portrait of voters who "are seriously worried about kids and likely to see **schools** as a key issue in races for national office, but this is not about reform. The public believes all American children deserve access to good, safe public **schools**. They are saying, make targeted improvements and do no harm."

This is not the first time reasonable people have popped up to point out that the noise that engages political junkies is of limited concern to the public and that polarized debates turn more people off than on.

The fundamentals are what matters, and politicians will do well in direct proportion to their acceptance of that. The reason Democrats have done much better with the issue until now (meaning, until Bush) is that they have come across more as problem-solvers than as revolutionaries.

And the reason Bush will probably not do as well as he thinks is that he has mistaken a few trees (**failing schools** and reading scores, for example) for a much larger forest. Education is both a bigger and a less sexy topic than he realizes.

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The Dallas Morning News♦ [View Related Topics](#)**April 24, 2000, Monday****SECTION:** ARLINGTON MORNING NEWS; OPINIONS; Pg. 9A; COMMENTARY**LENGTH:** 1134 words**HEADLINE:** Whom, exactly, are public **schools failing?****BYLINE:** Cathy Brown**BODY:**

Critics of public education frequently talk about "public **schools**" in the same breath as the word "failure." On this page recently, U.S. Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison wrote of the "failed public **schools**" in this country. The presidential candidates are building educational agenda on the image of the **failing** public **schools**.

But let's not accept the failure premise too readily.

Whom have the public **schools** failed? What have they failed to do?

An ideal system of public education does right by all stakeholders - students, parents, taxpayers, teachers, administrators, higher education and business. In that sense, public education in America has not reached the ideal.

But to declare that public education, as we know it, is an unmitigated failure is both unfair and wrong.

Let's look at what our modern system of public education has handled successfully.

First and foremost, it single-handedly integrated our society.

In the 1960s, civil rights legislation drew the line in the dirt and said, "That's all, folks."

But it wasn't church congregations that were bused across town so parishioners of various colors could worship together. And it wasn't corporations whose headquarters were relocated to the other side of the tracks. People didn't exchange houses so neighborhoods could be instantaneously diversified.

Instead, **schools** were ordered by the courts to do what no other system in our culture would. And they did it.

Beginning in 1965 in Arlington, for the first time there was a place for blacks and whites to come

together for a common purpose. And that place was the **school**.

Teachers, most of whom had grown up in ethnically unmixed settings, had to learn to evaluate the skills of students coming out of separate and unequal educational backgrounds.

Along the way, some teachers failed to hold their students to high academic standards. Other teachers failed to give up their resentment that standard English was no longer the default vernacular of every student.

But within two generations, public **schools** have come to accept diversity and even celebrate it.

Citizen flight to suburban and private **schools** was the failure of the middle class to stay the course, face the change and make diversity work. In succeeding in education's major social test of the 20th century, this nation's public **schools** didn't fail either the government or the people.

Nor has public education failed business. We are the economic leaders of the world with young guns pioneering the Internet like Daniel Boone and Davy Crockett did the wilderness. Not all the dotcom-ers went to private **schools**. Mark Cuban, the broadcast.com whiz kid who now owns the Dallas Mavericks, graduated in 1976 from Mount Lebanon High **School** in Pennsylvania.

That was 12 years into the SAT score slide that began after peak scores were reached in 1964. Yet the system didn't fail Mr. Cuban.

Public education hasn't failed the academic world, either. We are sending more students to college than ever before. It's true that more remediation is required than in ages past, but that is due more to the mindset, generated by the GI Bill, that college is the province of Everyman rather than the privileged few.

Have public **schools** failed some individuals? Certainly. But there isn't a system anywhere that hasn't.

Undoubtedly, **schools** fail to achieve a number of attainable ideals. In many cases, such failure is a direct result of societal demands.

School fails to emphasize learning over making grades. But scoring is how society separates the students in terms of awards, scholarships and college admissions.

School fails to honor creativity over conformity.

But "standards" is really a euphemism for conformity. Society wants certain behaviors, ethics, values to be the ones everyone agrees are "right."

School fails to acknowledge that kids were born to learn. Instead of concentrating on thinking and subsequently on the articulation of thought, society esteems absorption of facts by rewarding memorization and recall.

School fails to establish a partnership between teacher and learner, pitting them against each other instead. For example, adaptable, conforming children excel at doing what they're told. Such behavior results in the points and pins that satisfy them.

Points and pins, however, don't excite all kids. Some find their challenges in opposing the system - cutting class and getting away with it, being late but not late enough to earn detention, not working hard but passing anyway, copping an attitude that disturbs but stops short of out and out defiance, working the grownups and beating them at their own game.

Society does an excellent job modeling such behaviors by welcoming loopholes in the tax code, taking days off from work by calling in sick, sloughing off an honest work effort but getting paid anyway and getting traffic tickets fixed.

In spite of these **failings**, the system of public education in this country has supplied the broad shoulders that have hauled us to the topmost rung on the world's pecking order. By any standard - prosperity, power, prestige - America is No. 1.

When we read about comparisons of American public **schools to schools** in Britain, Europe and Japan, lamentations inevitably follow about how lousy our kids compete. On April 10, forbes.com had this familiar line: "In the fourth grade, American students score better than kids in most other countries, according to an international study. By the 12th grade, American students score worse than kids in 95 percent of the countries surveyed."

What alarming quotes such as this don't take into account is that many foreign students are separated after seventh grade into two groups. One group goes into college preparation coursework, while the other group goes into trade **schools**. And once students are divorced from the college prep track, they can never crossover. That means in any comparison beyond seventh grade, their college-track kids compete with our polyglot mixture of abilities and aptitudes. Just think "apples and oranges."

Excluding the non-academic types from the scholarly works well for comparison purposes, but surely the inclusiveness of American public education - the rock solid belief that everyone can and should graduate from high **school** - is an unassailable characteristic of America's success story.

The next time you hear the phrase "failed public education," stop to question. Failed at what? Failed how? Failed whom? If we were to close down the shop, we would lose the successes along with the failures. And that just might be a bigger gamble than we ought to take.

Commentary by Cathy Brown, an Arlington free-lance writer, appears regularly on Mondays. She can be reached through e-mail (amn@dallasnews.com).

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The Washington Times**April 26, 2000, Wednesday, Final Edition****SECTION:** PART A; NATION; Pg. A4**LENGTH:** 673 words**HEADLINE:** Judge keeps **school**-voucher plan alive;
Denies motion of Florida teachers**BYLINE:** Andrea Billups; THE WASHINGTON TIMES**BODY:**

A Florida judge handed a victory to **school**-choice proponents yesterday , refusing to grant a motion to end a statewide voucher program at the end of the **school** year.

Leon County Circuit Judge L. Ralph Smith, who in March temporarily halted the "Opportunity Scholarship" program created by Republican Gov. Jeb Bush, ruling it was a violation of the Florida Constitution, declined to grant a motion made by teachers union attorneys yesterday to shut the program down.

Judge Smith said the unions did not demonstrate "compelling circumstances" necessary under state law to vacate the stay of his March injunction of the program. His decision opens the door for the program - which provides \$4,000 vouchers to students who attend **failing schools** to attend private **schools** or better public **schools** - to expand over the summer.

An estimated 60,000 new students may be eligible for the vouchers after the state releases its latest list of F-graded **schools** in June. Fifty-three students from two **failing** Pensacola **schools** used the vouchers to attend private **schools** this year, while 85 moved to better public **schools**.

"Today's ruling is great news for parents and children in **failing schools**," said Clint Bolick, litigation director of the Institute for Justice, a Washington public interest law firm who represents three voucher families in the case.

"This decision greatly increases the chances that students all across Florida will be able to escape from **failing** public **schools** next fall."

Yesterday's ruling, however, does not mean the legal wrangling is over. Attorneys for the institute and the state of Florida have appealed the judge's March ruling to the 1st District Court of Appeals, which will most likely take up the issue sometime this summer.

Mr. Bush and other **school**-choice proponents have vowed to appeal the case all the way to the state's Supreme Court.

Judge Smith's ruling comes on the heels of a new study released by the institute this week that

showed the threat of competition from **school** choice has forced Florida's **failing** public **schools** to act quickly with strong measures to improve student learning.

Without that competition, a part of Mr. Bush's education reform plan, any meaningful reform of the state's public **school** system is unlikely, concluded the report.

"Harsh is persuasive," the study found. "While the merits of the education reform measures some **schools** have chosen can be debated, the important thing is that the A-plus plan has instilled in the public **schools** a sense of urgency and zeal for reform not seen in the past when a **school's** failure was rewarded only with more money that reinforced failure."

The Florida governor's education initiative, the nation's first statewide **school**-choice program, has drawn high praise and angry criticism from those on both sides of the voucher debate.

The report was co-published by the Urban League of Greater Miami Inc., the Collins Center for Public Policy, Floridians for **School** Choice, the James Madison Institute and the Center for Education Reform in Washington, all voucher proponents.

Members of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Citizens Coalition for Public **Schools**, the Florida Congress of Parents and Teachers-PTA as well as the National Education Association, oppose the voucher initiative, saying it drains much needed resources away from public **schools**.

Kathleen Lyons, a spokeswoman for the NEA, said reform efforts were already in place in Milwaukee, Cleveland and Florida, before voucher programs were put in place in those areas.

"It's a shame the report isn't more balanced. If it were, the author would report on the efforts by NEA's Florida affiliate to improve Florida's public **schools** long before the voucher plan was conceived," she said of the institute's study.

"Teachers want what parents want: good public **schools** in every community," the NEA spokeswoman said, adding that "approaches like vouchers only hurt the efforts that have proven to improve performance."

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American Teacher Oct. 1999--Feature Story

What a mess!

Too many of our schools are falling apart or overcrowded--so when is Congress going to do something about it?

School No. 1 in Perth Amboy, N.J., opened in 1871 when Ulysses S. Grant was president. Thomas Edison's light bulb was still eight years in the future. Much later, the school was renamed for its first custodian, Thomas Mundy Peterson, who was the first African American to vote after the adoption of the 15th Amendment to the Constitution.

Fast-forward to 1999. The Thomas Mundy Peterson school is now 128 years old. Bill Clinton is president, and he is pushing for federal aid to help communities like Perth Amboy modernize or replace buildings that can no longer meet the educational needs of children.

Some of those unmet needs are very basic. At the Thomas Mundy Peterson School, there is no central hallway, so students have to walk through other classrooms to reach their own. The building has three floors but the only bathrooms for these K-4 students are on the bottom floor.

Hiking to the bathroom is an even bigger problem at Chapman Junior High School in Farmington, Ill., where the only working facilities are in an elementary school addition to the junior high building. Students lose valuable instruction time en route, and the potential for discipline problems is obvious.

Chapman, built in 1915, has an ancient boiler and erratic temperature control. "My room is right over the boiler room, so for the second floor to have any heat at all, my room is 80 degrees in the winter," says teacher Jill Taff. Science teacher Jeff Weyers no longer keeps animals or plants in his room--not since his piranha died of the cold despite the two heaters in its tank.

Perth Amboy and Farmington are not wealthy communities. Neither are most of the cities with the greatest need for school construction funds.

The average school in the United States is 42 years old. Many schools in low-income areas are much older.

According to the General Accounting Office, one-third of all elementary and secondary schools in the United States, serving 14 million students, need extensive repair or renovation. The GAO estimates the cost of bringing schools up to date at \$112 billion. With school populations hitting new records every year, the Department of Education says the U.S. will need 2,400 new schools by 2003.

President Clinton's proposal is to spend just \$3.1 billion over five years to help school districts raise \$25 billion with construction bonds. The federal money would pay the bond interest. Even this modest proposal has gotten the cold shoulder in Congress where many members are eager to give away \$800 billion in tax breaks that would mostly benefit the very rich.

But President Clinton and AFT leaders believe this issue is winnable. Last month, the AFT joined other unions for Labor Day events in a dozen communities across the country to build public pressure.

President Clinton and AFT president Sandra Fieldname spoke at Coleman Place Elementary School in Norfolk, Va., where the AFT local, the AFL-CIO Central Labor Council and the Building Trades Council organized a volunteer workday at the school. Skilled tradespeople, teachers, community volunteers and even children rolled up their sleeves and renovated two classrooms.

The federal government needs to pitch in, too. In Norfolk, more than 200 students will be studying in "mobile" classrooms outside the school this year because there is no room for them inside. Students must walk outdoors--regardless of the weather--to reach the cafeteria, the music room or the bathroom. "It interrupts instruction. It reduces the time we have to do the job of teaching these children," says Norfolk Federation of Teachers president Marian Flickinger, who attended Coleman Elementary as a child. The main building opened in 1925 and badly needs repairs. Just replacing the old windows would cost \$300,000, and the school board doesn't have it.

Flickinger is using the presidential publicity to mobilize a grassroots lobbying drive for passage of the federal construction aid. Her goal is 5,000 post cards sent to Congress. "Our needs are growing, and our funding sources are not," she says. "We need federal help."

--Alain Jehlen

See related items:
What you can do/Send us your photos
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Where We Stand

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When a School Fails

by AFT President Sandra Feldman
September 1997

*We must not try
to perpetuate schools
to which we would
not send our
own children.*

When the late Al Shanker started Where We Stand over 25 years ago, he pledged that he would freely explore and advance ideas, even if they were controversial and were not AFT policy. The new Where We Stand, which begins with this column, will have a different voice, but it carries the same pledge. I've spent my life in urban public schools--and there's probably nothing going on there that I haven't seen. So I'll be able to puncture some myths about how the schools work, confirm others, and raise issues that often get pushed aside. Our schools have plenty of problems; they also have many strengths. I'll be writing about both.

One of the most outrageous things about failing schools is that everyone--including the district administration-- knows which ones they are, but often years go by and no one does anything about them. In some cases, a school's problems are obvious: There is chronic disruption and violence, poor attendance, filthy hallways, and of course, achievement that is consistently below par. But sometimes a failing school is just a dead place where everyone has given up.

What can we do about these schools? Put simply and starkly, I believe that those of us responsible for public education must never defend or try to perpetuate a school to which we would not send our own children. If a district has recognized that a school is in trouble and has given it help over a period of time and if the school has not responded, we must shut that school down and start anew.

A Simplistic Response

The good news is that states and cities are taking steps to shut down failing schools. The bad news is that in most cases they do it crudely--getting rid of people instead of bad practices, putting in new people and keeping the same old programs and practices that didn't work to begin with. This strategy, which often goes by the ugly name of *reconstitution*, offers a simplistic response to a complicated problem.

There are many reasons why schools fail. Poor leadership is one of them, and a shortage of qualified teachers is another. Often administrators have settled for weak, watered-down curricula instead of adopting solid, proven programs, and they are unwilling or unable to maintain school discipline. And often there is an unconscionable lack of books and supplies--a sure sign of terrible management, even when resources are scarce. But if we shut down one of these schools--and do it right--the school *can* come back.

One New York City high school, for example, had incompetent principals for years. Discipline was never enforced. Violence was common. There were assaults on teachers and students, and students rioted in the halls and lunchroom. Many teachers had lost confidence in their ability to do their jobs.

How did this dysfunctional place get turned around? By starting over. Working together, parents, the teachers' union, and an enlightened superintendent were able to close the school and re-open it as four small, theme-based schools in the same building. Today, parents who had forsaken the failing school are sending their children back. There's a waiting list for students--and teachers--at the new school. About half the original teachers stayed; the others were allowed to transfer to schools elsewhere in the district.

No One Group Is To Blame

As the New York experience and similar experiences elsewhere show, no one group is to blame for failing schools and no one group can achieve the necessary change. Boards of education, superintendents, the leaders of local teachers' unions, and school staff have to work together on solutions. On criteria to identify failing schools. On humane and dignified processes for transferring staff if that is deemed useful or necessary. And above all, on bringing in programs and practices that have been proven to work, especially with at-risk kids.

I made this proposal in one of my first speeches as president of the AFT--to an audience of AFT members and teams of school board members and administrators from school districts around the country. I thought that saying we should get out front in support of shutting down failing schools was a bit risky, but my risky proposal got a standing ovation.

Good ideas can be ruined in their execution. It's essential that we shut down failing schools. It's also essential that we do it right. If we have the guts and the patience to work together, we can rebuild these schools into places where teachers can teach and kids can learn and flourish.

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The Near-Myth of Our Failing Schools

Ideologically inspired lamentations about the parlous state of American education mask the much more complex truth

by Peter Schrag



IN the spring of 1991, as warnings accumulated that America's second-rate schools were dooming the nation to permanent failure in the global economy, systems analysts at Sandia National Laboratories, a federal institution of generally impeccable

reputation, compiled a lengthy report showing that the picture in American education was far more complex -- and in many respects a great deal less gloomy -- than the rhetoric of alarm allowed. But for two years the report -- a collection of tables and statistics on everything from dropout rates and SAT scores to college degrees awarded in engineering and other technical fields -- was buried by the Department of Energy, which had commissioned it. The document, said James Watkins, George Bush's Secretary of Energy, was "dead wrong," and would be regarded as "a call for complacency at a time when just the opposite is required." It had a small underground circulation, but even after the Clinton Administration finally released it, in 1993, neither the Sandia data nor

similar findings from other sources got much attention. Mixed reports don't make for good headlines, and qualified good news undermines the sense of crisis essential both to liberal demands for more money and to conservative arguments that only vouchers and other radical solutions will do. Good news, even qualified good news, runs counter to the conventional wisdom and undermines almost everybody's agenda of reform.

**Discuss this article in
The Body Politic
forum of Post &
Riposte.**

From the archives:

**Flashback:
Educational
Measures,**

(September, 1997)

A number of *Atlantic* articles and features have considered educational standards and testing over the years.

**"The Other Crisis in
American Education,"
by Daniel J. Singal
(November, 1991)**

"A college professor looks at the forgotten victims of our mediocre educational system -- the potentially high achievers whose SAT scores have fallen, and who read less, understand less of what they read, and know less than the top students of a generation ago."

**"The Case for More
School Days," by
Michael Barrett
(November, 1990)**

"Call it Huck Finn's law: The authentic American flourishes in spite of schooling, not because of it. As applied, this has meant that American kids have one of the shortest school years in the Western world. It shows. Today what

It was always thus: in the late 1950s, after the launching of Sputnik; in the early 1980s, after publication of the federal report *A Nation at Risk*, which warned that the failures of the nation's schools were about to undermine America's ability to compete economically; in 1989, when President George Bush and the nation's governors initiated what came to be called Goals 2000, pledging to make this country the world leader in education by the year 2000; in 1993, when President Bill Clinton and a Democratic Congress followed that up with legislation to develop voluntary national standards in English, history, science, and other fields; and in 1995-1996, when that same effort collapsed in controversy and dispute over the standards that were produced.

Now, as President Clinton is calling yet again for higher school standards, and for a program of national testing in reading and math, the same assumptions of crisis and failure that have fueled every other recent reform debate are being invoked. The debate is driven once again by our favorite myths: that there was once a golden age, an era when schools maintained rigorous academic standards, when all children learned, when few dropped out and most graduated on time; that sometime in the past generation or so (most commonly pegged to the 1960s) the system began to fall apart under a siege of social promotion, grade inflation, and progressive mush that is leaving America helpless against superior foreign education; and that the large amounts of new money that have gone to the schools in the past generation have largely been wasted. House Speaker Newt Gingrich and the University of California regent Ward Connerly, who spearheaded California's drive against race-based affirmative action, wrote in a recent *New York Times* op-ed piece,

The education bureaucracy won't concede that, despite spending trillions of dollars on education over the past 30 years, American children are further behind today. It doesn't want to admit that the S.A.T. scores of African-American children, which average 100 points less than the scores of white

Huck Finn didn't know
would hurt him."

children, are the direct result of the current
[Great Society] policies.

In some places, circumstances, and contexts, some of those criticisms are correct. Many schools are academically flabby, mindless, and laced with an anti-intellectualism sometimes bordering on outright sabotage; some are wastelands of crime, drugs, and despair; many are afflicted by multicultural fashion and politically correct clichés. Some are run by arrogant, rigid bureaucracies or crippled by unions that make it impossible to move any teacher with seniority, let alone fire the bad ones, and classrooms are often without a regular teacher for the first month of school while the seniority system slowly determines who may be assigned where. Many schools don't demand nearly as much as they should. But many others suffer from few of those things, and without a more realistic sense of what is going on -- a better understanding of the myths -- the country will never get beyond the horror stories and ideological set pieces that seem endlessly to dominate the education debate.

Misleading Statistics and Comparisons

AMONG the Sandia findings, many of them corroborated by other studies, are the following: High school completion rates -- now roughly 90 percent -- and college graduation rates are the highest in history. One in four adult Americans has at least a bachelor's degree -- the highest percentage in the world (and the percentage keeps getting higher). A larger percentage of twenty-two-year-olds receive degrees in math, science, or engineering in the United States than in any of the nation's major economic competitors. Although SAT verbal scores declined over the years 1975 to 1990, the decline occurred chiefly because a larger percentage of lower-ranking students (those from the bottom half of their school classes) began taking the test. If the same population that took the SATs in 1975 had taken them this year, the average score would be significantly higher than it was then -- and higher than it was in 1990.

Because of reforms instituted in the 1980s, more American high school students than ever before are taking four years of English and at least three years of math and science. Far more are taking and passing Advanced Placement examinations (98,000 in 1978 and 535,000 in 1996). More teachers, for all the flaws in our teacher training-and-reward system, are subject to tough standards for certification and promotion.

To be sure, as the Sandia report recognized, on tests like the Third International Mathematics and Science Study and other international comparisons of academic achievement American students continue to score lower than their peers in Singapore, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, and elsewhere. Whereas parents of high-achieving students in Japan or China worry that their children are not doing well enough and ought to work still harder, among parents of American students who are scoring far less well on the same tests "satisfaction with ... students' achievement and education remains high and standards remain low," according to a team led by the University of Michigan psychologist Harold W. Stevenson. "Innate ability [not diligence or high expectations] continues to be emphasized by Americans as a basis for achievement." Stevenson's collaborator James Stigler, of the University of California at Los Angeles, has found an academic intensity in Japanese classes that is almost unthinkable in this country. Many American universities, including even as selective an institution as the University of California, continue to provide remedial courses to their freshmen: a quarter of the students entering UCLA are required to take what used to be called bonehead English, and nearly a third of those entering the University of California system as a whole are.

But as Iris Rotberg, a professor at George Washington University, points out, cross-cultural comparisons of academic achievement are tough to make. Many countries begin specialized education at age fourteen or even earlier, which means that some students have already left school and many others have begun cramming for (in the words of the Sandia report) the "life determining tests ... that specify their eventual position in the workforce." Many lower-achieving students in Great Britain and other countries have by age seventeen already been tracked into job-training programs or have simply left school and thus are not included in the test



samples, making comparisons meaningless. (For example, England and Wales rank near the bottom in international math comparisons of eighth-grade students; in comparisons of twelfth-graders, only six percent of whom in England take math, they rank near the top.) Intense competition in places like Singapore and Japan for good university slots and other rewards that will have consequences for a lifetime must wonderfully concentrate the mind.

The late Albert Shanker, for many years the president of the American Federation of Teachers, argued persuasively that the fierce competition in other countries is hardly an excuse for a U.S. system in which academic success or failure has so few consequences -- for either teachers or students -- and in which so little fosters intense academic effort. Even the best American students, he argued, do not perform as well as their peers elsewhere. Questions that all college-bound nineteen-year-olds in France or Great Britain are expected to answer would be impossible for most graduating seniors here. But the debate ought to make the complexity and ambiguities of the larger issue obvious enough. Which is better for the student -- to have the discipline that intense competition for relatively few college openings brings, or to have ample opportunity?

Misleading Historical Comparisons

WHAT is true of cross-cultural comparisons is even more emphatically true of historical ones.

Precisely when was the golden age of American education that the conventional wisdom assumes existed? Was it in the early years of this century, when, as the education historian Colin Greer pointed out years ago, "All minority groups, white as well as black, with the exceptions of the English, Scots, Germans, and Scandinavians, were negatively portrayed" in American textbooks; when "Jews, Italians, Chinese and blacks were mean, criminal, immoral, drunken, sly, lazy, and stupid in varying degrees"? Was it in the 1920s, when most students never went beyond the eighth grade, when large numbers of children, especially in the South, never went to school at all from April to November, and when no one had ever heard of any such concept as the dropout rate? Was it in the 1930s and 1940s, when even the more enlightened medical schools had strict quotas for Jews and blacks, and the others systematically excluded them, as did a great many other educational institutions as well? Was it in the 1950s, when the historian Arthur Bestor published *Educational Wastelands: The Retreat From Learning in*

Our Public Schools (reissued, significantly, in a new edition in 1985), when Rudolf Flesch's *Why Johnny Can't Read* was long a best seller, and when the schools were thought to be failing because, with the launching of Sputnik, the Russians had beaten us into space? Was it in 1963, when Admiral Hyman Rickover published *American Education, a National Failure*?

From the archives:

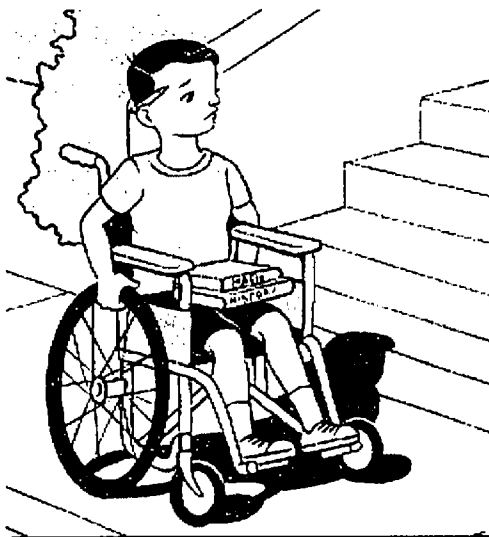
"Where Ghetto Schools Fail," by Jonathan Kozol (October, 1967)

"The author, a thirty-year-old Harvard graduate and novelist, describes the sequence of events that led to his dismissal from one of Boston's Roxbury schools -- for bringing into his classroom reading materials he felt bridged the gap between the ghetto environment of his pupils and the prejudices and irrelevancies of their antiquated textbooks."

Consider our contemporary why-Johnny-can't-read arguments. In 1987 Chester Finn and Diane Ravitch, two of the country's most thoughtful conservative school critics, published a set of statistics and related data about what American students don't know about their own history and literature. The book title took the form of a question, *What Do Our 17-Year-Olds Know?*, and the answer was unequivocal. "If there were such a thing as a national report card," Finn and Ravitch wrote, "then we would have to say that this nationally representative sample of 11th-grade students earns failing marks in both subjects." But as at least some parents have noticed, and as Gerald Bracey, a prolific debunker of schools-are-failing stories, reported in the journal *Phi Delta Kappan* in March of 1995, students may in fact know more than their parents and grandparents do. In any case, Bracey showed, such complaints are hardly new. In 1943 *The New York Times*, citing findings by the historian Allan Nevins, reported its shock at discovering that

a large majority of [college] students showed that they had virtually no knowledge of elementary aspects of American history [and] could not identify such names as Abraham Lincoln, Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Jackson, or Theodore Roosevelt.... Some students believed that George Washington was president during the War of 1812.... St. Louis was placed on the Pacific Ocean, Lake Huron, Lake Erie, the Atlantic Ocean, Ohio River, and almost every place else.

Similarly, the college students described Walt Whitman as a missionary, a pioneer, a colonizer, an unpatriotic writer, a humorist, an English poet, and (not surprising in the days of Paul Whiteman) a band leader. Plus ça change ...



Chester Finn and like-minded people point to scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), widely considered to be among the most reliable measures of academic achievement, to show how little progress has been

made from the late 1970s to the present, despite the orgy of curricular reforms and the growing amounts of money that have been appropriated for K-12 schools in most states over the past decade. But rarely do these people point to the changing demographics of the American school -- the growing proportion of students whose native language is something other than English (now more than 25 percent in California, and nearly half in Los Angeles), and the growing proportion of students from poor or one-parent families. A Rand analysis of the same NAEP scores, issued in December of 1994, shows that although overall scores for students aged thirteen and seventeen didn't rise much from 1970 to 1990, scores for all ethnic subgroups were up (three percentage points for whites, eleven points for Hispanics, nineteen points for blacks). And although one reason for that change was that the parents were better educated (in 1970, 38 percent of mothers had not finished high school; in 1990 the figure was 17 percent), Rand's researchers concluded that the gains for blacks and Hispanics were larger than any change in family characteristics could explain. Whether the gains were a direct effect or a second-generation effect of the parents' better schooling, public investment, contrary to the conservative critics, had made a difference.

Contradictory Objectives

THAT the same charges now being directed at the schools were leveled a half century ago is hardly reason to ignore them, but it does say something about those myths. Editorials in *The Wall Street Journal*, a newspaper long devoted to the cause of school vouchers, often complain that Americans spend more per pupil in their public schools than the French or the Germans and

get less in return. But what goes unmentioned is that the French and the Germans spend more on health and child care, public transportation, and related social services (not counted in their school spending, though it often is part of ours), and that theirs are for the most part still monocultural societies with less social pathology. Nor is it generally recognized that most of the growth in American school spending in the past three decades has gone for special education for the ballooning numbers of students officially considered handicapped or disabled, a designation that hardly existed in the years immediately after the Second World War. The Sandia report estimates that from 1960 to 1988 constant-dollar spending for "regular" students increased by 39 percent per pupil while spending for all students increased by roughly 150 percent. The difference is almost entirely accounted for by special education, which, as the report points out, can have little impact on average performance on national standardized tests. (Among unfunded federal mandates special education, which diverts huge sums from the regular classroom, is certainly one of the most costly.)

From the archives:

"The Great Debate Revisited," by Art Levine (December, 1994)

"Contention between proponents of the 'meaning first' and the 'phonics first' approaches to literacy goes back more than a century. That the former is now in the ascendant, the author argues, should be cause for concern."

"Schools for Everything," by Melville J. Homfeld (March, 1959)

"There are signs today that the school has become society's dumping ground, that the public school system has become a vast refuse heap for any and every unwanted service or task that other social or governmental institutions and agencies find too tough to handle."

None of this is meant to deny the system's enormous problems and failures -- crime, drugs, arteriosclerotic bureaucracies, self-serving unions, decaying facilities, vocational-education programs a half century out of date -- or to suggest that all our students are doing splendidly. Despite the glories of a higher-education system that, even after the sharp tuition increases and the cutbacks in public funding of the past few years, is still the world's most accessible and abundant, Albert Shanker was right: as long as so few real rewards are given for distinction and so few real penalties exacted for failure, the educational process will tend to remain lackadaisical and inefficient. The question is whether Americans will ever tolerate anything more demanding. Equally important, the schools are so riven with contradictory objectives -- merit versus inclusion, for example -- and so loaded down with extraneous social mandates for everything from drug education and AIDS counseling to diversity training and social awareness (often imposed by the same politicians who complain about school failure) that it's a wonder anyone learns anything. But flat generalizations about crisis and failure, the superiority of foreign schools, or the glorious past will do nothing to solve the problems.

Who Wants Rigor?

WHICH brings us to yet another myth: that Americans -- and parents in particular -- really do want schools with high academic standards, and

to name.

"The Defeat of the Schools," by James L. Mursell (March, 1939)

"The recent investigation carried on by the Carnegie Foundation in the colleges of Pennsylvania, issued under the title *The Student and His Knowledge*, which has caused considerable furor over the ignorance of college seniors, is only a drop in the bucket."

"Plain Facts About Public Schools," by Samuel P. Orth (March, 1909)

"Were you ever a member of a school board? If not, then have hardly been revealed to you, in their fullest measure, the machinations and tendencies of the dual forces that combine to establish our public schools: the educational forces on the one hand, and the public or political forces on the other."

would get them if the education establishment didn't stand in their way. In *Inside American Education* (1993) Thomas Sowell, of the Hoover Institution, listed the usual complaints, from the travesties of sex education and the overemphasis on school sports to the pressure for political correctness in curricula. But if he had ever been to a school-board meeting where someone proposed making it harder for students with bad grades to play football, he'd know that it's not only educationists who foist this stuff on the system. Ross Perot's first great public campaign -- for tougher school standards in Texas -- wasn't against teachers but against ordinary folks all across Texas. The censors and the enemies of high standards come as often from outside the system as from inside. They may be religious fundamentalists fighting the teaching of evolution or demanding equal time for creationism in science programs, or complaining about witches and secular humanism in reading textbooks and dirty words in novels. They may be gays complaining that Michelangelo and Tchaikovsky are not identified in the history books as homosexual, or black self-esteemers blocking the adoption of updated history texts because they're short on the civilizations of Africa (even though the older texts don't mention them at all). They may be civil-rights groups demanding that *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* be taken out of the syllabus because it contains the word "nigger," or opposing tougher standards because they fear that more poor children will fail. Clinton's new proposal for national testing is already under assault from groups that include the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund and FairTest on the left, and the Christian Coalition and Phyllis Schlafly's Eagle Forum on the right. (The right, Chester Finn has said, doesn't like anything with the word "national" in it; the left doesn't like anything with the word "testing.") In addition, groups all across the spectrum have fought over the content and requirements of every form of educational testing, asserting that the SAT is biased against minorities and women, that the (now defunct) California CLAS test was too intrusive into the personal lives of students and their families and didn't focus enough on the basics, that yet another test simply demands too much. And then there are the age-old fights (in and outside the schools) about phonics versus whole language, math facts versus constructivism, progressivism versus drill-and-kill. Of course the school establishment is not an innocent in these things, but it is hardly the only culprit. Virtually every national poll shows that although only a fifth of Americans rate the nation's public schools very highly, some 70 percent of us think that the schools our own children attend

are doing just fine -- a phenomenon that Finn calls "retail complacency." We could be wrong on either count, or on both, but things are obviously not quite as simple as the rhetoric of failure suggests. Anti-intellectualism is as American as apple pie.

From the archives:

"High School and the New Jobs," by Ralph Whitehead Jr.

(September, 1997)

"A high school education is no longer enough to earn a middle-class living -- but that doesn't have to be true."

"What School Choice Really Means," by David L. Kirp

(November, 1992)

"The elementary and junior high schools of East Harlem have been held up by many educators and politicians as models, and as proof that allowing parents to choose their children's schools is the key to improved performance. Many of the achievements in East Harlem are real, the author finds, but the reasons for them are not always apparent -- and not always faced up to by educators."

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The Weak Economic Argument

THERE was a time when American schools were known for their successes: the children of immigrants who made it to City College or Columbia or Harvard and went on to have professional careers. Dropouts and failures simply vanished into the large market for unskilled labor. Now the schools tend to be known for their failures: dropouts, kids who bring guns to school, students who score lower than their counterparts abroad. We forget that we are trying to take children from an unprecedented array of ethnic and cultural backgrounds, many of them speaking little or no English, and educate them all to a level of sophistication never imagined for so large a proportion of any population.

A few years ago our presumed failure to do that was blamed for what was regarded as the nation's slipping competitiveness against the Germans and the Japanese, but now that the business pages -- and the front pages, too -- are celebrating a triumphant economic recovery, no one credits the schools. The old litany simply continues. In 1995, at yet another "national summit" in Washington on "world-class education for all America's children," business people blithely reiterated that American students were being insufficiently educated for the global economy in which they will have to survive. All assumed that if young people were well enough educated, great jobs would await them; none seemed concerned that since 1979, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, real wages have declined for all men except those with more education than four years of college. The business people did not mention that increasing numbers of college graduates were doing jobs that required no college training at all -- that, as *Phi Delta Kappan* reported a couple of years ago, the number of college-educated door-to-door salesmen, for example, grew from 57,000 in 1983 to 75,000 in 1990, and the number of bus drivers with bachelor's degrees rose from 99,000 to 166,000. The job market for college graduates has surely improved with the economic recovery, but the boom will not last forever either.

In 1995, when the University of Illinois surveyed its 1994

graduates about whether their college training was being put to good use, nearly 40 percent said they regarded themselves as overqualified. In the early 1990s Sam Ginn, the chairman of Pacific Telesis, went around California talking about how his company had given seventh-grade reading tests to 6,400 applicants for operator positions and only 2,700 had passed. He didn't point out that the jobs paid less than \$7.00 an hour, or that since the company had only 700 jobs to offer, there were almost four qualified applicants for every available slot. For such problems a lot of fixes are needed, many of them only remotely connected with the schools.

The Stanford University educationist Larry Cuban may well have been right when he said, "The myth of better schools as the engine for a leaner, stronger economy was a scam from the very beginning." Yet even if he wasn't, economic recovery has changed the basis for argument. It's hard to read without embarrassment a statement like the one from *A Nation at Risk* about how the country must reform its educational system "if only to keep and improve on the slim competitive edge that we still retain in world markets." But the obsolescence of the economic rationale hardly weakens the case for better schools and higher standards, particularly in the inner cities, from which a disproportionate number of the nation's school failures have always come. On the contrary, it returns our attention to the broader case for good public education -- the desirability of a liberally educated community, Thomas Jefferson's argument about the importance of an enlightened citizenry, the desperate need to end our cycles of poverty and to apply resources accordingly. But those objectives require a far more realistic appreciation of what we have done in our educational system in the past, what we are doing now, and what we think we want to do. Despite the problems encountered by Goals 2000 and Clinton's national-standards effort, the trend of the past few years -- surely a healthy one -- has been to find ways to set broad goals and standards, and to free local schools and teachers to accomplish them in their own ways. But those things can be done only if we can see the results without ideological blinders, if the tests and assessments we use really measure what we want to know, and if we have the confidence to support the schools that this society needs. A growing number of people, in the name of world-class standards, would abandon, through vouchers, privatization, and other means, the idea of the common school altogether. Before we do that, we'd better be sure that things are really as bad as we assume. The dumbest thing we could do is scrap what we're doing right.

Peter Schrag writes frequently on education and politics. He is the author of *Paradise Lost: The California Experience and the American Future*, to be published next spring.

Illustrations by Mark Ryden

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City rates high with magazine

Industry Week ranks Owensboro as No. 6 in rural manufacturing

27 April 2000

By Keith Lawrence
Messenger-Inquirer

Owensboro's industrial recruiting efforts got a double shot of support this month from Industry Week magazine.

The Cleveland-based publication ranks Owensboro at No. 6 in the nation among rural manufacturing areas and says the community ranks No. 104 out of 315 "world class cities" in the United States.

No. 103? San Francisco.

Evansville-Henderson ranked 101. Lexington was No. 17.

Fred Reeves, executive vice president of the Owensboro-Daviess County Chamber of Commerce, hadn't seen the rankings Wednesday. But he said, "Any time you get a good ranking in a national magazine, it's very positive. For a community our size, that says we're doing very well."

Both rankings are based on such factors as total manufacturing employment and manufacturing gross product per employee -- in other words, the total manufacturing production value of the community divided by the number of manufacturing employees.

"That says we have productive workers and low costs for manufacturing," Reeves said. "Those are the kinds of things industries look for."

This was the fourth year that Industry Week has compiled the

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national rankings.

The magazine said Owensboro had an average growth of 6.8 percent per year in manufacturing employment between 1994 and 1997. That was the highest of the "rural areas" on the chart.

San Jose, Calif., was named No. 1 on the "world class cities" list. Salem, Ore., topped the rural areas chart.

The magazine says that the purpose of its index is to "identify world-class manufacturing regions; not necessarily the fastest growing, most diversified, or the lowest cost regions, but those that are best at manufacturing."

Owensboro's manufacturing gross product per employee is listed at \$93,210 -- third-highest of the rural Top 10.

The five cities ahead of Owensboro on the rural list are Salem; Atlanta; Des Moines, Iowa; Columbus, Ohio; and Indianapolis. None of those sound like rural areas, but the rankings are for the counties in the metropolitan areas outside those cities.

Owensboro's metropolitan area includes only Daviess County.

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Community Profile



Owensboro is the industrial and cultural hub of western Kentucky. Located along the southern banks of the Ohio River, Owensboro is the third largest city in terms of population in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Owensboro is located 32 miles southeast of Evansville, Indiana; 123 miles north of Nashville, Tennessee; 109 miles southwest of Louisville, Kentucky; 203 miles southeast of St. Louis, Missouri; and 205 miles southwest of Cincinnati, Ohio.

Owensboro is known as "a city of festivals." Each year, the world-famous International Bar-B-Q Festival and the Summer Festival draw thousands of spectators and participants from across the country and around the world.

Owensboro enjoys the luxury of a diverse economic base. As an example, more than 47,000 people earn their living in Daviess County, but the county's 10 largest private companies are responsible for less than 15% of the total employment.

What's ahead? The work of state and local officials to provide a new link to the north is paying off, as work has begun on a new four-lane bridge from Owensboro across the Ohio River into southern Indiana. The new span will cost more than \$100 million and be a direct route to I-64 in Indiana, which provides a link from St. Louis to Louisville.

In addition, the MidAmerica Airpark was officially opened for business in August of 1995. It is a 450-acre industrial park adjacent to the Owensboro-Daviess County Regional Airport. Five companies are currently located in the airpark.



In 1780, the first white settlers came, via the Ohio River, to what is now Daviess County. Early settlers included Joseph Blackford and William Smeathers. Smeathers came in 1798 and built his cabin on a site near the river, which is now St. Elizabeth Street in Owensboro. From this dwelling constructed by Smeathers, the first settlement began. The city was originally called "Yellow Banks" in reference to the color of the soil along the banks of the Ohio River and was selected as the county seat when the county was formed in 1815. Daviess County, the 58th county to be formed in Kentucky, was named in honor of Colonel Joseph Hamilton Daveiss, a distinguished lawyer and soldier. In 1817, the city's name was changed to Owensborough (later changed to Owensboro) in honor of Colonel Abraham Owen.



Between moderately cold winters and warm, humid summers, Owensboro-Daviess County experiences a wide temperature fluctuation. The annual mean temperature is 57.2 degrees Fahrenheit, with extremes of 107 degrees in 1936 and 1944 and a low of minus 21 degrees in 1951. In the winter, the average temperature is 39.6 degrees, and in the summer 76.9 degrees is the estimated average. Temperatures are generally highest in July and lowest in January. The average annual rainfall for Daviess County is 44.27 inches.



Daily newspaper service is provided by the Owensboro Messenger-Inquirer. Nine radio stations, WVJS-AM, WSTO-FM, WOMI-AM, WBKR-FM, WKWC-FM, WBIO-FM, WQXQ-FM, WCVK-FM and WKDQ-FM, serve the Owensboro-Daviess County area. The Owensboro market is served by all four major television networks, WEHT, WTVW, WFIE and WEVV. Adelphia provides cable service and communications. Telegraph service is

provided by Western Union.

Owensboro currently has two U.S. Post Offices, plus several branch offices throughout the city.

Daviess County ranks first in Kentucky counties in total crop production. Daviess County leads the state in soybean production and ranks second in corn. The county is also a major source of tobacco.

More than 84% of all land area in Daviess County is devoted to agricultural uses, and more than 62% is considered prime cropland.

The Owensboro-Daviess County area is the industrial hub of western Kentucky, listing major manufacturers and processors in aluminum, automotive and electronic components, steel, distilling, mining and natural gas transmission. Locally produced commodities include meat products, smokeless tobacco, office furniture, wire drawing, spaghetti sauce, small electric motors, whiskey, high grade steel, chemicals, large steel vessels, grain processing, soybeans, refined oil, paper, plastic extensions, ice cream, hand cleaner and casement windows.

Local scheduled air service and charter service are available at the Owensboro Daviess County Regional Airport. The airport has two concrete runways (5,000 and 6,500 feet), and the longer runway has a full instrument landing system that provides all-weather capabilities. Plans are underway to extend this runway to 8,000 feet. Passenger service, air freight, flight instruction, aircraft maintenance, hangars, and fuel are provided by two full-service fixed-based operators: MillionAir and Martin Aviation. Scheduled airline service is provided by Northwest Airlink (a regional carrier for Northwest Airlines)

which has daily flights to its major hub in Memphis, Tennessee.

Owensboro-Daviess County is surrounded by an excellent highway system. The Audubon Parkway, William Natcher Parkway, US Highways 60, 231 and 431 all provide direct access to the area. Construction of a new bridge over the Ohio River from eastern Daviess County to US 231 in Southern Indiana is under way. The new route will provide a direct link to I-64.

Four of the 31 common carrier trucking companies serving Owensboro maintain local terminals. CSX Transportation provides Owensboro with mainline rail service and piggyback facilities. The Owensboro Riverport Authority provides barge, rail and storage facilities. The city of Owensboro operates a citywide bus service. Taxi, rental car and luxury limousine services are available.

The city of Owensboro operates under a city manager form of government. An elected mayor and four elected city commissioners appoint the city manager.

Daviess County is represented by an elected judge-executive and three elected county commissioners. Those four comprise the Daviess County Fiscal Court.

Two public school systems, Owensboro and Daviess County, plus the Owensboro Catholic School system comprise the K-12 education system in the community. Heritage Christian and Good Shepherd operate Christian schools providing education from preschool to middle school and preschool to high school, respectively. The Triplett school offers private education for kindergarten through high school.

Adult education programming is available at Longfellow Education Center.

Owensboro is home to two four-year liberal arts colleges - Brescia University and Kentucky Wesleyan College. Each has an enrollment of approximately 800 students. The region is home to the Owensboro Community College, one of 13 community colleges in the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS). More than 2,300 students attend the community college.

The Owensboro Junior College of Business offers a 36-year tradition of excellence in providing highly skilled employees to the business community. Two locations of Owensboro Technical College, located in Owensboro, are also part of KCTCS.

Western Kentucky University offers both undergraduate- and graduate-level classes at its Owensboro campus. Murray State University offers an MBA program. Owensboro Community College also offers doctoral programs in several fields. Some are available via telecommunications. Brescia University offers the Master of Science in Management degree to provide early and mid-career professionals with enhanced skills and abilities to meet the increasing needs of local employers.

The area has excellent public recreation facilities sponsored and maintained by the Owensboro Parks and Recreation Department, the Daviess County Parks and Recreation Department and Ben Hawes State Park. Facilities include numerous parks, playgrounds, swimming pools, golf courses, a disc golf course, tennis courts, softball and baseball diamonds, basketball courts, nature trails, an ice arena and a new 2.5-mile greenway for biking and walking.

There are two softball complexes, a soccer complex, a youth football field and sand volleyball courts. At least four playgrounds are designed for the physically disabled.

The Owensboro Sportscenter is a

- 5,000-seat air-conditioned auditorium/arena.

Some of the area's private recreation facilities include three country clubs with golf courses, five swimming pools, 14 indoor movie theaters, three bowling facilities, a large YMCA, the HealthPark and indoor and outdoor tennis courts.

Owensboro hosts several festivals annually. Each May, cooking teams from around the area compete in the two-day International Bar-B-Q Festival. The annual event features cooking, square dancing, musical performances, arts and crafts and a number of other events. The city is home to many other festivals and celebrations, including the annual Summer Festival during the Fourth of July week. Owensboro is known for its bluegrass music tradition. The International Bluegrass Music Museum and the headquarters for the International Bluegrass Music Association are both in Owensboro. Jam sessions, a winter concert series and the Bluegrass Blast in September are among a few of the bluegrass activities.

The Owensboro-Daviess County Public Library serves the city and county with more than 400,000 circulating items and volumes.

The Owensboro Area Museum of Science and History and the Wendell Ford Government Education Center is one of the finest facilities of its kind in the region. The Owensboro Museum of Fine Art has just completed a \$1.6 million expansion. It features an Atrium Sculpture Court, a restored Civil War-era mansion and the Kentucky Spirit galleries. Also included is a priceless collection of German stained glass windows.

The Owensboro Symphony Orchestra has an annual concert schedule and completed its 32nd year during the 1998-99 season.

The symphony performs with some of the world's best musical talent and annually conducts a Christmas Pops concert. Theater fans are encouraged to participate in Theater Workshop of Owensboro and Owensboro Dance Theatre performances.

In recent years, Music at Maple Mount, a summer institute for young musicians, has enjoyed a growing audience. Each June, students from around the world participate in music workshops and perform at various locations in the community.

The curtain is always rising on a new event in Owensboro's new performing arts and civic center. RiverPark Center includes a 1,500-seat multi-purpose auditorium, an experimental theater that seats up to 300, lobbies and support facilities, a riverfront plaza, a café, an open-air courtyard, meeting-reception rooms and the International Bluegrass Music Museum. Each year, RiverPark Center hosts more than 150 performance events and more than 900 civic events. RiverPark Center is home to several local performing arts organizations, including the following: International Bluegrass Music Association, Owensboro Community College Oak Island Theatre, Owensboro Concert Association, The Owensboro Symphony and The Owensboro Dance Theatre. In addition, RiverPark Center presents a professional Broadway series, an Arts Teach Kids series, Kidstuff series, as well as several special events including the Taste of Owensboro and the Tri-State Book Festival.

RiverPark Center provides an ideal setting, the know-how and creativity for all occasions. From business meetings to wedding receptions, its lighting and design experts can make any event a theatrical happening. Enhanced by its riverfront setting, computerized ticketing services, versatile spaces, high visibility, and most importantly, cost-efficiency, RiverPark

Center is the perfect place to stage an event.

Owensboro Mercy Health System (OMHS) is committed to providing health education, prevention, early intervention and wellness programs in addition to high-quality, cost-effective inpatient and outpatient services. At all locations, OMHS offers state-of-the-art technology with a medical staff of 130+ physicians representing a wide range of specialties.

This not-for-profit regional health care provider, OMHS serves 13 counties in Kentucky and southern Indiana. The main hospital, located at 811 East Parrish Avenue, is licensed for 469 beds. The mission of OMHS is to heal the sick and to improve the health of our community. The HealthPark, which opened in October 1998, is the most recent facility established to assist with the second part of the mission statement: to improve the health of our community. Located at 1006 Ford Avenue, the HealthPark includes a health and fitness center, a diagnostic center, a health resource center, outpatient therapy services, a chapel and physician offices. Another facility owned and operated by OMHS is the Convenient Care Center at 608 Frederica Street. Open seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., the Convenient Care Center offers high quality minor emergency services.

RiverValley Behavioral Health provides mental health, substance abuse and mental retardation/developmental disability services in a seven-county area. It opened a new office in Owensboro in 1998 in the Cigar Factory Complex. The remodeled lower level of the complex contains the agency's offices for outpatient therapy, case management, DUI education, prevention center/library and administrative services. RiverValley also provides residential and partial programs as well as inpatient treatment for children ages 5-18 at

RiverValley Behavioral Health Hospital.

There are more than 100 Protestant churches, 18 Catholic churches, and one Jewish temple in Owensboro-Daviess County.

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Owensboro

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Government



Owensboro is governed by a mayor, four commissioners and a full-time city manager. The mayor is elected to a four-year term, while the commissioners each serve two-year terms. Daviess County is governed by a county judge-executive and three commissioners. Each county official serves a four-year term.

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Major Area Employers

MAJOR EMPLOYERS IN THE OWENSBORO-DAVIESS COUNTY AREA

Owensboro Mercy Health System	hospital	2500
Daviess County Board of Education	school system	1705
Commonwealth Aluminum (Hancock County)	aluminum manufacturing	1100
Owensboro Board of Education	school system	808
NSA, A Division of Southwire Company	aluminum manufacturing	800
RiverValley Behavioral Health	mental health agency	761
Willamette Industries, Inc.	paper manufacturing	570
City of Owensboro	city government	502
Firststar	mortgage processing	500
Miles Farm Supply	agriculture	500
Wal-Mart	retail store	475
Lipton Company	Ragu spaghetti sauce	466
Field Packing Company	meat processing	450
Premium Allied Tool	precision parts	432
Williams Company/Texas Gas	natural gas	425
Commonwealth of Kentucky	state government	404
Daramic	battery seperators	400
Swedish Match	tobacco products	368
UniFirst	uniform distribution	350
Kimberly Clark	paper products	350

Wyndall's Enterprises, Inc.	grocery stores	350
A.C.M.I.	aluminum castings	310
General Electric Motor Plant	electric engines	310
Canteen Service Company	food services	288
MPD, Inc.	microwave products	275
Omico Plastics	plastics manufacturer	272
AK Steel	steel manufacturer	270
The HON Company	office furniture	257
Miles Farm Supply	farm services	250
WaxWorks & VideoWorks	wholesale audio/video	230
Barton Brands, Ltd.	bottling plant	205
DBM Technologies	blow molded plastic parts	203
Southwire Rod & Cable Mill	aluminum wire	203
Owensboro Community College	college	200

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Commitment to Education

Two public school systems, The Owensboro Independent and Daviess County school systems, and one parochial, Catholic Consolidated, provide excellent opportunities for elementary, middle school and high school students.

Two four-year liberal arts colleges are located in Owensboro. Brescia and Kentucky Wesleyan colleges each enroll over 800 students.

Owensboro Community College, an extension of the University of Kentucky, continues to grow and increase its offerings. More than 3,000 currently attend the college and enrollment is always climbing.

Western Kentucky University offers an extended campus program including undergraduate, graduate and doctoral programs.

Murray State University has also located an extended campus in Owensboro.

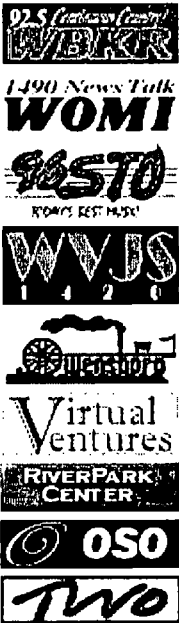
The Owensboro Junior College of Business offers a tradition of training highly skilled employees. Short, term, hands on training aids students in job placement.

Two vocational educational facilities are available in Owensboro as well, providing job skill training in a number of areas.

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Bluegrass Music Jam Sessions

Bluegrass music jam sessions - the second and fourth
Thursday of each month
7:00 pm to 10:00 pm
International Bluegrass Music Museum
101 Daviess Street
270-926-7891

4/16/2000

The Marshall Collection of American Impressionists Paintings

April 16-June 4, 2000
The Marshall Collection of American Impressionist
Paintings. Sponsored by Swedish Match.
Owensboro Museum of Fine Art
901 Frederica Street
270-685-3181

4/29/2000

Owensboro Symphony

"Italian Night at the Symphony"
Gerald Dolter, Baritone
OSO Chorus and Sutton Singers
RiverPark Center
270-684-0661 for information
270-687-2787 for tickets

5/6/2000

March of Dimes Walk America 2000

March of Dimes Walk America 2000
Saturday, May 6, 2000
Jack C. Fisher Park
registration - 9 am
walk - 10 am

5/12/2000

International Bar-B-Q Festival

May 12-13, 2000
Friday 5 pm to midnight
Saturday 10 am to midnight
the downtown riverfront comes alive with food and fun
- arts and crafts, carnival rides, games, musical
entertainment, concessions and more!
1-888-316-5403 pager, leave message for Michele
Wright, Chairperson of the festival

5/12/2000

Delta Queen Arrival!

The Delta Queen Steamboat will arrive on the

riverfront in downtown Owensboro at 12:00 noon on Friday, May 12th and will be docked there until 11:00 p.m.

5/13/2000

U.S.Air Force Band

Performance by the United States Air Force Band
RiverPark Center
270-687-2787

5/19/2000

The Supporting Cast

May 19, 20, 21, 25, 26, 27, 2000
Theatre Workshop of Owensboro presents
The Supporting Cast
Tickets available by calling 270-683-5333

5/19/2000

Battle of Sacramento

May 19-20,2000
Battle of Sacramento Civil War Re-enactment -
Sacramento, KY
for further information, contact Sheila Heflin at
270-684-0211

5/27/2000

Kick-Off Summer Concert

May 27-28, 2000
Kick-Off Summer Concert
Panther Creek Park
5160 Wayne Bridge Road, off Highway 81
270-281-5346

6/2/2000

Yellowbanks Dulcimer Festival

June 2-3, 2000
Yellowbanks Dulcimer Festival
English Park on the river
two days of old-time musical fun and entertainment
John Shortt, 270-926-9877

6/2/2000

Friday After Five

Friday After Five Street Fair
Downtown on the riverfront
270-683-2060
FREE!!!!

6/8/2000

Southern Living Cooking School

Southern Living Cooking School
RiverPark Center - 2 sessions
Sponsored by Messenger-Inquirer
for further information, contact Faye Murry
270-691-7240

6/9/2000

Friday After Five

Friday After Five
Downtown on the riverfront
270-683-2060
FREE!!!

6/11/2000

**Yellowbanks 2000: A Millennium
Celebration**

June 11-August 2, 2000
An invitational exhibition designed to showcase the
accomplishments of Owensboro-Daviess County, KY
artists and to document the very best being produced
in the visual arts in the Owensboro area in the year
2000. Sponsored by Owensboro National Bank.
Owensboro Museum of Fine Art
901 Frederica Street
270-685-3181

6/13/2000

Movies in the Park

Legion Park
contact Owensboro Parks for further information
270-687-8700

6/21/2000

Jazz Festival

June 21-23, 2000
Jazz Festival
three days of musical entertainment downtown on the
riverfront at the RiverPark Center
270-683-2060

6/23/2000

Quilt Show

June 23-24, 2000
Owensboro Area Quilt Guild is hosting its biennial
Quilt Show at Brescia University
717 Frederica Street
Friday, June 23 9 am to 6 pm
Saturday, June 24 10 am to 4 pm
for further information, contact
Deanna Kaminski, Show Chairperson
270-683-6678

6/23/2000

Friday After Five

Friday After Five
Downtown on the riverfront
270-683-2060
FREE!!!

6/27/2000

Movies in the Park

Legion Park
contact Owensboro Parks for further information
270-687-8700

6/30/2000

Friday After Five

Friday After Five Street Fair
Velvet Bombers - RiverPark Center
Second Helping - Gazebo
270-683-2060
FREE!!!

7/3/2000

Owensboro Summer Festival

July 3-4, 2000
Fun for the family on the banks of the Ohio River at
English Park
Carnival rides and musical entertainment
On the evening of the 4th, the Owensboro Symphony
Orchestra will present a Pops Concert followed by a
spectacular fireworks show
For further information, contact 270-926-8150

7/4/2000

Garage Top Social

Downtown Parking Garage
call Owensboro Parks & Recreation for more details
270-687-8700

7/7/2000

Friday After Five

Friday After Five
Cabin Creek Band
RiverPark Center
270-683-2060
FREE!!!

7/11/2000

Movies in the Park

Legion Park
contact Owensboro Parks for further information
270-687-8700

7/14/2000

Friday After Five

Friday After Five
Juggernaut
RiverPark Center
270-683-2060
FREE!!!

7/21/2000

Friday After Five

Friday After Five

The Jazzmen
RiverPark Center
270-683-2060
FREE!!!

7/21/2000

Dust Bowl

Join the fun and action at the annual Dust Bowl
Basketball Tournament
Kendall Perkins Park
Contact Jimmy Bush for further information
270-684-3324

7/25/2000

Movies in the Park

Legion Park
contact Owensboro Parks for further information
270-687-8700

7/28/2000

Friday After Five

Friday After Five Street Fair
Check Lawson - RiverPark Center
Pat Kirtley - Gazebo
270-683-2060
FREE!!!

7/31/2000

Daviess County Lion's Club Fair

July 31 - August 5, 2000
Daviess County Fairgrounds
off Highway 54 in Philpot
for further information, contact Larry Prior at
270-683-8314

8/4/2000

Friday After Five

Friday After Five
Downtown on the riverfront
270-683-2060
FREE!!!

8/5/2000

Owensboro Antique Car Show

Owensboro Antique Car Show
Owensboro Community College
Bob Scrivner
270-685-4205

8/11/2000

Friday After Five

Friday After Five
Downtown on the riverfront
270-683-2060
FREE!!!

8/13/2000

Homecoming 2000: Natives and Notable Visitors

August 13-October 15, 2000

Homecoming 2000: Natives and Notable Visitors -
Eight one-person exhibitions designed to document
the accomplishments of former Owensboro artists and
craftsmen who have continued to achieve recognition
after leaving the community. Sponsored by
Owensboro Messenger-Inquirer.
Owensboro Museum of Fine Art
901 Frederica Street
270-685-3181

8/18/2000

Friday After Five

Friday After Five
Downtown on the riverfront
270-683-2060
FREE!!!

8/25/2000

Friday After Five

Friday After Five Street Fair
Arnold Chinn Band - RiverPark Center
The Brass Company - Gazebo
270-683-2060
FREE!!!

9/22/2000

Bluegrass Blast

September 22-24, 2000
The sounds of bluegrass fill the air on the banks of the
Ohio River at English Park
music and concessions
Deloris Raines
800-489-1131

10/14/2000

Miniature Dollhouse Scenes

October 14-15 and 21-22, 2000
Towne Square Mall
Open during mall hours
Free and open to the public
for further information, contact Ruth Blakeman at
270-926-3754

10/21/2000

Apple Festival

October 21-22, 2000
Reid's Orchard Apple Festival
Reid's Orchard, Highway 144
Food in abundance and fun for all! Arts and crafts,
carnival rides, entertainment, games
and hayrides
Billy Ried

270-685-2444

10/24/2000

Ghosts & Goblins in the Park

October 24-28 and October 30

Ghosts and Goblins in the Park

Legion Park

270-687-8700 for further information

11/10/2000

Holiday Homecoming Christmas Show

November 10-12, 2000

Christmas Craft Show - one of the finest in the
tri-state!

Army Armstrong

270-926-3661

11/18/2000

Owensboro Christmas Parade

Owensboro Christmas Parade

downtown Owensboro

4:30 pm

Downtown Owensboro, Inc.

270-683-2060

12/2/2000

Holiday Hustle 5K Run/Walk

Holiday Hustle 5K Run/Walk

English Park

contact Owensboro Parks for further information

270-687-8700

Email the Owensboro-Daviess County Tourist Commission.

215 East Second Street, Owensboro, KY 42303

(502) 926-1100 or (800) 489-1131

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Rich in History

In 1780, the first white settlers came, via the Ohio River, to what is now Daviess County. Early settlers included Joseph Blackford and William Smeathers. Blackford came around 1780, established a hunting camp on Blackford Creek, and was later killed by Indians. Smeathers came in 1798 and built his cabin on a site near the river which is now St. Elizabeth Street in Owensboro. From this dwelling constructed by Smeathers, the first settlement began.

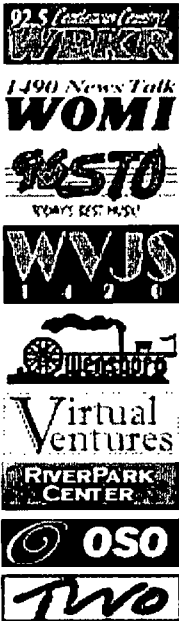
The city was originally called "Yellow Banks" in reference to the color of the soil along the banks of the Ohio River and was selected as the county seat when the county was formed in 1815.

Daviess County, the 58th county to be formed in Kentucky, was named in honor of Colonel Joseph Hamilton Daviess, a distinguished lawyer and soldier. He was appointed U.S. Attorney for Kentucky and was a prosecutor in Aaron Burr's treason case. In 1817, the city's name was changed to Owensborough (later changed to Owensboro) in honor of Colonel Abraham Owen. Owen was a distinguished soldier and was a member of the constitution. Both Owen and Daviess were killed in the battle of Tippecanoe during the War of 1812.

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Audubon Elementary General Information

Divider Title: _____

Audubon Elementary
Owensboro, Kentucky

This K-5 school has 450 students 64 percent of whom qualify for free and reduced price lunch. The school is 85 percent white and 15 percent non-white. Audubon, a formerly low-performing school, was recognized as a National Title I Distinguished School in 1998-1999. The school now ranks 18th in the state for student performance. The school has improved from 12% to 57% of students identified as distinguished or proficient in writing (now second in the state); from 5% to 70% in reading; and 0% to 64% in science. They have a class size teacher from the President's Class Size Reduction initiative (she is referred to locally as the "Clinton Teacher") and class sizes that range from 15-22. This school is an excellent example of how high standards, accountability, and investment can turn around low-performing schools and also debunks the notion that high poverty schools cannot be high performing schools.

Central High School
Davenport, Iowa

Central High School is the oldest school in Davenport; it was built in 1904. Davenport is currently undertaking a comprehensive renovation of their high schools and Central High School is the last school to begin this process. The planned renovation at Central includes an expansion of the media center, expansion of classrooms, upgrading the science lab, upgrading the electrical, communication, and ventilation systems, and upgrading their physical education facilities. Because Central is almost 100 years old and appears old to the casual observer, it is an excellent location to highlight the President's school modernization proposal. Surveys show that with regard to school renovation, ventilation/air quality and technology are two issues that particularly concern parents.

Central has 1439 students, 33 percent of whom receive free and reduced price lunch (so the percentage of disadvantaged students is likely higher). 29 percent of the students are minority. Test scores are average and a high percentage of students go on to further studies upon graduation.

City Academy
St. Paul, Minnesota

City Academy is the nation's oldest charter school and was the only charter school in operation when the President was first elected to office. Established in 1992, the school was created for high school age students who will thrive in a small learning community and need extra support. In fact, students participated in the development of the proposal and obtaining operating support. To be admitted to City Academy a student must not be attending school anywhere else—it is a school designed to help at-risk youth. City Academy serves approximately 100 high school students and is diverse demographically. Because May 1-5 is National Charter Schools Week, the President's presence at this school would send a powerful message. City Academy represents what is right about the charter school movement.

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The Courier-Journal (Louisville, KY.)**April 12, 2000, Wednesday MET/METRO****SECTION:** NEWS Pg.08a**LENGTH:** 605 words**HEADLINE:** Schools that excel feel KERA pressure to keep succeeding
Top achievers seek new ways to motivate pupils, parents, staff**BYLINE:** SARA SHIPLEY, The Courier-Journal**SOURCE:** STAFF**BODY:**

With his red sweater vest, salt-and-pepper hair and wire-rimmed glasses, Benjamin Truitt looks more like a college professor than a fifthgrade teacher.

The retired U.S. Navy cryptologist now applies the same precision he once used to crack enemy codes to teaching math, social studies and language arts at **Audubon Traditional Elementary** School in Louisville.

According to Principal Angela French-Coles, Truitt is one reason the school last year scored an exemplary 105 out of a possible 140 in math on a statewide assessment. Only a handful of elementary schools scored higher in that subject on the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System.

The school's elation over that achievement is tempered, however, by the pressure of maintaining success. Under the Kentucky Education Reform Act - an ambitious schoolreform movement 10 years old this week - schools not only have to achieve academic proficiency, marked by an average score of 100 on the assessment. They must continue to improve or face state intervention.

In that way, Audubon Traditional may provide a glimpse into the future of education reform. As schools rise out of mediocrity, they must find new ways to motivate students, parents and staff to reach for the stratosphere.

French-Coles admits to being a little nervous about a potential dip in scores from this year's tests, which students will take next week.

"That's good pressure," she said. "I think one of the greatest attributes of KERA is accountability."

Audubon is a districtwide magnet school that focuses on academics, discipline and parental involvement. With a waiting list of students, it has always done well academically. Its overall test

score last year was 78.4, placing it in the top 4 percent of elementary schools statewide.

The reform movement forced the school to pay more attention to all of its students, not just the ones who are easiest to teach, French-Coles said.

One change the school made was to pair students with teachers according to their preferred learning styles. Some students do well with the traditional format the school has used since its founding in the 1970s, while others thrive under an alternative approach, French-Coles said.

In 1998, Audubon made math a focus. Truitt helped lead the way by attending math curriculum workshops at every opportunity.

He tries to make the subject "real" by having students apply their knowledge to everyday problems - another hallmark of KERA reforms. Yesterday, for example, he asked his students to figure the winner of a foot race. Then he gave the finishing times for different runners in both fractions and decimals, forcing the students to convert the measurements.

His students like the class so much that math has become, well, cool. About 20 out of 25 students even admitted they liked math when asked yesterday.

"The old way was memorizing stuff," said Truitt, 62. "Today, we learn the application."

Students will be asked to prove their knowledge next week. Fortified by cookies and peppermints, they will spend hours laboring over tests in math, social studies, English and language arts.

Many of the questions require essay answers.

"It's kind of like 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire,' " said fifth-grader Benjamin Hack, 11, referring to the television game show in which contestants answer questions about pop culture. "But it's a lot harder. You don't even get a lifeline."

Caption: PHOTOS BY MICHAEL CLEVENGER, THE COURIER-JOURNAL
Demetris Vaughn, 11, worked on an English assignment in Benjamin Truitt's fifth-grade class at **Audubon Traditional Elementary**.

GRAPHIC: Benjamin Truitt, a retired U.S. Navy cryptologist, now teaches math and other subjects at **Audubon Traditional Elementary** School in Louisville.

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POTUS Remarks Re: Charter Schools

Divider Title: _____

Public Papers of the Presidents

January 27, 2000

HEADLINE: Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union

We know charter schools provide real public school choice. When I became President, there was just one independent public charter school in all America. Today, thanks to you, there are 1,700. I ask you now to help us meet our goal of 3,000 charter schools by next year.

Public Papers of the Presidents

October 1, 1999

HEADLINE: Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in Palo Alto

So the next big thing we've got to do is get more charter schools out there, more options, and then assist them where you end social promotion, but give kids the support they need. And you have to turn around failing schools or shut them down, but there are options like charter schools if the schools aren't working. That's the next big frontier there, but that's very important.

Public Papers of the Presidents.

July 14, 1999

HEADLINE: Remarks in the Democratic Leadership Council National Conversation in Baltimore, Maryland

The last point I'd like to make is that, going to what Ember said, when I became President, there was one charter school in the whole country -- one -- in Minnesota. Minnesota was also the first State in the country to have statewide school choice before the charter schools; Arkansas was the second -- I stole the idea from Minnesota. So I said, well, let's have 1,000 charter schools. Then I asked the Congress to give me enough money to help people set up 3,000 charter schools for this next year. We're going to be at 1,500 this fall. I think next year will be actually quite close to 3,000 nationwide, which is enough to have a profound impact.

But we won't really have a successful system until the things that make the charter schools work can be found in the other schools. And the voucher movement will never go away if people feel that they're trapped in failure. I've worked for school choice, I've worked for the charter schools, I believe in accountability. Actually, there is no evidence -- and there is quite a bit of evidence out there now on how well kids do who opt out and go to private schools -- there is no evidence that they're doing better. But if people feel their schools are unsafe or they're inadequate, the voucher movement will be out there, and it will be a difficult political issue for Democrats, for Republicans, for people who love public education.

We have got to prove that -- the one thing that we have never done -- and I've worked for 20 years on this deal now, more than 20 years now -- we have not

succeeded as a country in taking what works in public education in one place or two places or 10 places, modifying it for local conditions, yes, but implementing it somewhere else. And so you have to assume that parents and others who would go to the trouble to set up the charter schools wouldn't go to all the trouble unless they were committed to learning, unless they were really committed to what works.

But if I could have waved a magic wand as Governor when I was Governor and solved any problem in my State, it would have been that. I had poor little rural schools, I had some schools in poor urban areas that were doing stunningly well. But I never could either set up the systems or set up the incentives or convince people that everybody else ought to run through what they were doing and do it. Because this is not rocket science. This is not the same as walking on Mars within 5 years. In some ways, it's more difficult because it deals with the human psyche and all these human difficulties, but people can understand what works.

And I just think that the work you've done in Minnesota and what you're pushing now, this whole concept of charter districts -- I never even thought about it before you said it today -- but that's the sort of thing we need to be doing. We will never bring everybody into the big tent of our prosperity until we have not only the best higher education system in the world, but the best elementary and secondary education system in the world.

And you've got to give this lady and her colleagues in Minnesota an enormous amount of credit for what they have done now for more than a decade to make us think about this. But if I could say to all of you at the grassroots level, if you can figure out a way to make economic change faster, to bring opportunity to where it doesn't exist, and to bring more uniformity of excellence in public education -- if we could do those things, if that could be a huge part of the DLC's crusade for the next decade, I wouldn't be a bit worried about America's future.

Public Papers of the Presidents

January 19, 1999

HEADLINE: Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union

When I became President, there was just one independent public charter school in all America. With our support, on a bipartisan basis, today there are 1,100. My budget assures that early in the next century, there will be 3,000.

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Remarks at the National Education Summit in Palisades, New York,
September 30, 1999

Thank you very much. Good afternoon, Governors, education leaders, business leaders. I am delighted to be here. I thank my good friend, Governor Hunt, for his **remarks**. This year marks the 20-year anniversary from the time you and Secretary Riley and I started working together on education.

I want to thank Governor Thompson for his interest in this, and so many other issues. Tommy Thompson is the first Governor who told me that he thought that he could really move, literally, every able-bodied welfare recipient in Wisconsin to work. And I think they've had a 91 percent drop in the rolls. He nearly got it done. Congratulations, that's an amazing achievement.

And I want to especially thank Lou Gerstner and all the business leaders here, because you kept the idea of the summit alive and understood the importance of consistent and systematic followup with the Governors, with the educators. I am very grateful to you for doing this. Most people like you do a project like this for a year or 2 and then they forget it and go on to something else. And you haven't done it, and I'm very grateful.

And for all of you who were here 3½ years ago, who stayed involved in this, I thank you.

Governor Hunt—I was watching him on the monitor outside—talked about the issuance of the "Nation At Risk" report 16 years ago, the meeting we had 15 years ago. The first National Education Summit was in Charlottesville 10 years ago this week. And some of us were there then. President Bush, his Education Department, education leaders from around the country, we were all together. And we came together to embrace the concept and specifics of national education goals.

At the second summit, here in Palisades 3½ years ago, we supported the idea that every State should set standards. At this third summit I hope we will embrace with equal fervor the idea of accountability, for only by holding educators, schools, students, and ourselves accountable for meeting the standards we have set will we reach the goals we seek.

We have made significant progress, particularly in the ideas governing the way we look at this. More and more we're leaving behind the old divisions between one side saying "We need more money," and the other side saying "We shouldn't invest any more money in our public schools, it's hopeless." By and large, there is a new consensus for greater investment and greater accountability, greater investment and higher standards and higher quality teachers to help students reach the standards; holding the schools accountable for the results. That's the agenda of Achieve, the agenda of our administration, clearly the right agenda for the United States.

I think it is another mark of progress and something that many of you in this room can feel profoundly both proud of and grateful for, that 10 full years after Charlottesville and now more than 16 years after the issuance of the "Nation at Risk" report, there is still a passionate sense of national urgency about school reform and about lifting education standards. And there are people who get up every day full of energy about it, not cynical, not skeptical, not jaded, not tired, still eager to learn. People in Governors' offices, people [p.1866] in the schools of our country, business leaders, education leaders of all kind.

This is quite an astonishing thing. You cannot think of a single other issue that has had this long a life at this level of intense commitment. And I think it is a tribute to the love of the American people for their children, a tribute to the understanding of the American people of the importance of education in the global economy, and a sense that we know that we have both the largest and the most diverse student population in our history.

But if you just think about how people get tired of political issues, how everybody is supposed to want to read something new in the paper or seeing something new on the evening news, month-in and month-out, and you think about how long ago it was when Governor Caperton there decided to make all of his elementary students computer literate; how long Governor Engler has been in office; how long ago it was that Secretary Riley and Governor Hunt and I started fooling with all this—and the country is as hot to do the right thing, to improve the education of our children today as it was the day after the "Nation At Risk" report was issued. And that's a great source of comfort to me, and reassurance. And the business leaders, the educators, and the political leaders here in this room and like-minded people throughout this country deserve a lot of credit for that.

When I came to Washington 6½ years ago, all of you know that the number one problem I had to deal with was the deficit, because we quadrupled the debt in 4 years, interest rates were high, the economy was stagnant. We had to cut hundreds of programs, and we were determined to try to do it in a way that would increase our investment, not decrease our investment in education at the national level, and to do it in a way that, spearheaded by Secretary Riley, to give you more flexibility, but also to focus on the pressure points of reform that would likely give us the greatest returns.

I am very grateful that we have seen our deficit of \$290 billion turn into a surplus of \$115 billion. This year we'll have the first back-to-back surpluses in 42 years. And today we learned we have the lowest rate of poverty in America in 20 years. I am very grateful for that. But I'm also grateful that during this period we were able to early double the Federal investment in education, to help you provide your children and your schools with more of the tools they need. We've increased early childhood investment through Head Start. We've opened the doors of college wide by basically modeling a national version of Georgia's HOPE scholarship and providing tax credits for beyond the first 2 years of high school.

We have increased Pell grants and established education IRA's. We've begun to organize an army of tutors. We now have a thousand colleges and universities, I believe in every State in the country, involving themselves in America Reads, to try to make sure all 8-year-olds can read when they finish the third grade.

We've made an enormous amount of progress, and a lot of you have been active on this, in hooking up every school and library in the country to the Internet and with the e-rate making sure that the poorest schools can afford to participate in the information superhighway.

Last fall we fought for and won a big bipartisan consensus to make a downpayment of 30,000 teachers, on getting 100,000 more teachers out in the country to lower class sizes in the early grades. And we have supported a huge increase in the number of **charter schools** in America. When I became President in January of '93 there was only one charter school in the whole country, in the State of Minnesota. There are now 1,300.

We're in New York; the New York Legislature, I think, just authorized the establishment of the first **charter schools** here. In California, they just took the cap off the number of **charter schools** that they could have. We still have a lot of interest in magnet schools and other public school choice initiatives along with the other debates on this subject. But I think that we are well on our way to having 3,000 **charter schools** in the United States by next year, which is the goal that I set for our administration when we started down this path 6 years ago.

Now, in addition to what we've done, what's more important is what you've done and what the country's done. We have made [p.1867] truly remarkable progress in the standards movement, thanks in no small measure to the leadership of Governors and those of you who gathered here 3½ years ago. Our Goals 2000 legislation and the reforms in Title I we made have supported that. Today, almost every State has standards for what children should know in English, math, science, history, social studies. Next year, virtually every State will be testing students to see if they're meeting the standards.

Now, that is all very good news. My friend, Hugh Price, who is sitting back there to my left, leader of the Urban League, recently observed that people didn't talk much about standards and test scores 50 years ago because the output of the schools, whether it was good, bad or indifferent, more or less matched with the demands of a blue collar economy that needed strong backs more than well-developed minds. The problem now is that the economy has changed much faster than the schools.

People used to say, "You know, the schools just aren't what they used to be." The problem may be that too many of our schools are too much like they used to be, but the world the children move out into is not at all as it used to be. And that, of course, is what a lot of you are trying to help to change.

Now, as we move into this period of not only having standards but having accountability—that is consequences for the failure to meet them—there will be people who will, first of all, be elated at the evidence of improvement, which you can see all over the country where such things have been done from California to Houston to Chicago to Dade County to many other places in the country. Then there will be those who will want to shrink back because they fear the adverse consequences of failure and many people really don't believe all kids can learn. I think it would be a mistake to give into those fears.

And one of the things that I would hope will come out of this summit, Lou, is that all of you, in encouraging accountability, which is, I know, something you believe in, ask people not to be afraid when there are consequences.

I just saw the results in New York City, where the first group of children have gone—didn't score at the appropriate level. They went to summer school. Many that went to summer school are being prompted, but a few that went to summer school aren't, and all the ones that refused to go aren't.

And there may be some mistakes made. But as long as we send the message to these kids that "We're doing this for you. This doesn't mean there's something wrong with you, but we'll be hurting you worse if we tell you you're learning something when you're not. We'll be basically participating in a fraud which, ultimately, will cost you more personally, psychically and, of course, eventually financially, than any pain that comes in the moment."

But in order to do this, this whole issue will have to be really taken out of and kept out of the closet. Governors will have to look dead in the eye of some child that was held back and say, "That's okay, you can do it," and lift them up. We won't have to pretend that there will never be a moment of pain for anybody in any of this.

And similarly, business people and Governors will have to know that we have done everything we absolutely can to give every kid we can the chance not to be taken down by the system. It's one of the things that I liked about Chicago, where the summer school now for the children that don't make the grade is now the sixth biggest school district in the entire United States of America—the Chicago summer school, the sixth biggest school district in America. Why? Because they don't want to brand the kids as failures when the system didn't do for them what it should have.

And Secretary Riley and I have met with parents whose children have been through the system there, including parents of children who were held back and had to go to summer school. I have been into a poor neighborhood there where virtually all the kids had to go to summer school in a couple of the classes. And because they believed the system is honest and because they believe that the purpose of what is being done is not for some politician or educator to look tough or run up numbers in the polls or, say, have some easy sloganeering answer, but the purpose is to make sure these kids learn what they need to learn to have good lives, they [p.1868] support it. They support the standards. They support the mandatory summer school. They support what's being done in the after-school programs.

And it will happen everywhere in America. But we all have to commit the truth about this. And we can't pretend there will never be any painful consequences. But where there are painful consequences, all the Governors can do a world of good by going into those schools and say, "I'm doing this because I want you to have a good life. I'm doing this because it's not too late for you. This is just the beginning of your life. I'm doing this because your teachers and your principals and your parents and the business leaders in this community, we care about your future, and we're going to make this work." And I hope we can do that.

Let me just say very quickly, I think we have to have these basic standards in every State, and we have to make it possible, as Achieve has recommended, not only know whether the standards are being met but to give the parents some comparative information about how children in other States and other nations are doing. I think we have to recommit ourselves to extra support.

And Congress, when I sent this Education Accountability Act to Congress, saying that school districts accepting Federal money must ensure that teachers know the subject they're teaching, have reasonable discipline codes, empower parents with report cards, have a strategy—and I think this is very important—to turn around failing schools or close them down and, finally, a strategy to end social promotion that empowers children who aren't making the grade through the after-school programs, the summer school programs, and all the rest.

Now, we're having a big argument in Washington on the budget today. I don't want to get into a partisan rerun of that, but let me just say this: We can have the kind of budget we need that will help you to do what you need to do without—and we can meet the budget targets without coming up short in education, whether it's for Head Start or more teachers or the initiative to help States build and modernize 6,000 new schools or the American Reads program or this Gear Up program, all of which the Congress supported last year, by the way, to help mentor kids that are in trouble in junior high school, to try to get them into college by getting them over that rough patch. So I hope we can get that done.

I also wanted to say, emphasize something that I think is very important, our budget would provide \$200 million to help you turn around low-performing schools. I believe that it is not enough to say, no social promotion, strict accountability, and even summer school and after-school programs for kids, unless there is a strategy to turn around the low-performing schools. And I know that in North Carolina and in several other places where this has been done—I mentioned them earlier, Houston, Dade County, Chicago, and there are other places—but there is evidence now—we don't have to question this either—there is a lot of evidence that these low-performing schools can be turned around.

I went to an elementary school in Chicago, in the Robert Taylor housing project, where the reading scores had tripled and the math scores had doubled in 2 years. Were they on a low base? Yes. Were they where they ought to be? No. But does it prove you can turn things around, even in the most adverse circumstances? Absolutely. So I think that if we're going to have genuine accountability for standards, it is important that we have something to turn the schools around.

And again, I say—a lot of people in Congress don't want to adopt this accountability standard for Federal funds because they say that we shouldn't impose that on you. But I think all of you know that the five elements in the Federal bill were basically ideas we got straight out of local school districts and States. They weren't something that Dick Riley cooked up. It was something that the Education Department developed based on the proven experience and results of local school districts and States.

Finally, let me just give you something to feel good about again, at the end. In 1996, there were only 14 States with measurable standards. Today there are 50. That's the good news. Here's why you ought to focus on accountability. In 1996, there were only [p.1869] 11 States with systems that identify and sanction low-performing schools. Today there are only 16. This is the hard part.

But again, I say, we've got to give the schools the tools they need to do the job. And the Federal Government has an important role to play. We don't provide an enormous amount of the total funds for schools, but that amount was slipping for a while, and we got it going back up now. And I feel very strongly, as the Secretary of Education, that with the largest student population in history and with all this educational evidence about the benefits of smaller classes and with the imperative of ending the practice of social promotion, finishing the work of 100,000 teachers, helping you to build or remodel 6,000 schools so they'll be modern, and doing these other things are quite important.

Now, let me just make one other point. I'm encouraged by the movement to standards in the 3½ years since you had your last summit here, and you should be, too. That's a rather astonishing move. And it shows what can happen if you meet in an environment where you've got business and education and the political leadership working together, and Republicans and Democrats leave the party labels at the door, and everybody just works on what's good for the kids.

But this is the hard part. It's not an accident that we've gone from 16 to 50 standards and 11 to 16 in genuine accountability. It's hard. But you also can take a lot of pride in the fact that you have evidence, even in big urban areas with a lot of trouble, where this has worked. And the consequences are good.

Now, last February when the Governors were in the White House, I just noted that it took 100 years for laws mandating compulsory, free elementary education to spread from a few States to the whole Nation. When it comes to this accountability agenda, will we follow the model of the last 3½ years with standards and go from 16 to 50 in a hurry, or will we go back to the model of the earlier time? I think all of you know what we ought to do.

And I will say again, I think the fact that we have the largest number of children in our public schools in history, I think the fact that they are more diverse than ever before in terms of their backgrounds and their languages is a godsend for us for the 21st century in a global society if, but only if, we prove not only that they can all learn but that we can teach them all. We know they can all learn from—you can do a brain scan and determine that. That's always been—that's the wrong question. The question is, can we teach them all, and are we prepared to do it, and are we prepared to have constructive compassion for their present difficulties by having genuine accountability and also heartfelt support.

The reason that there is still so much enthusiasm for all this after—10 years after the Charlottesville Summit, 16 years after the "Nation at Risk," 20 or 30 years after all the Southerners figured out that it's the only way to lift our States out of the dirt—is that everybody knows that deep down inside it's still the most important public work.

Thank you very much.

Note: The President spoke at 3:40 p.m. in the Watson Room at the IBM Palisades Executive Conference Center. In his **remarks**, he referred to North Carolina Gov. James B. Hunt, Jr.; Wisconsin Gov. Tommy G. Thompson; Louis V. Gerstner, Jr., chairman and chief executive officer, IBM Corp.; former Gov. Gaston Caperton of West Virginia; Gov. John Engler of Michigan; and Hugh B. Price, president and chief executive officer, Urban League.

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35 Weekly Comp. Pres. Doc. 1669

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Public Papers of the Presidents

August 28, 1999

CITE: 35 Weekly Comp. Pres. Doc. 1669**LENGTH:** 746 words**HEADLINE:** The President's Radio Address**BODY:**

Good morning. This week students all over the country are getting ready for the first day of school. Like every year, parents will send their children off to school with new backpacks and fresh hopes that they'll get the world-class education they need and deserve. Today I want to talk about our continuing efforts to strengthen and renew our Nation's public schools, by encouraging more choice, competition, and creativity.

For more than 6 1/2 years now, Secretary Riley and I and our whole administration have worked hard to raise standards, raise expectations, and raise accountability in every public school in America. I have advanced a comprehensive plan to strengthen and renew our Nation's schools and education agenda for the 21st century -- from reducing class size to improving teacher quality, from modernizing and rebuilding thousands of schools to finishing the job of connecting every library and classroom to the Internet, from putting an end to social promotion to expanding after-school and summer school programs.

We've also worked hard to promote the creativity, competition, and accountability that can turn around failing schools and make our good schools even better. That's the big reason I've encouraged States to pass **charter school** laws and urge communities all across our country to give **charter schools** a chance.

Charter schools are innovative public schools started by educators, parents, and communities, open to students of every background or ability. But they're freer of redtape and top-down management than most of our schools are, and in return for greater flexibility, **charter schools** must set and meet the highest standards, and stay open only as long as they do.

Also, **charter schools** don't divert taxpayer dollars from our public school system; instead, they use those dollars to promote excellence and competition within the system. And in so doing, they spur all our public schools to improve.

I am proud of the progress we've made so far. When I was first elected President, there was only one **charter school** in the entire country. This year there will be more than 1,700 of them. We're well on our way to meeting my goal of establishing 3,000 **charter schools** nationwide in the first year of the new century.

For an increasing number of families, **charter schools** are the right choice. In fact, there are now waiting lists at 7 out of 10 existing **charter schools**, as more parents realize that more innovation

and creativity can produce good results for their children.

Let me give you just one example. When Bowling Green Elementary School in Sacramento ranked third from the bottom in its district, parents and teachers decided they had to do something to take control and turn the situation around. So they set up a **charter school** there. Since becoming a **charter school**, Bowling Green has seen student performance soar -- with greater gains in test scores than any other school in the school district.

The **charter school** movement is a real grassroots revolution in education. We must do everything we can to support it. Today I am pleased to announce nearly \$ 100 million in funding for **charter schools** all around America. These funds will help teachers and parents open new **charter schools** in 32 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

They will help existing **charter schools** hire more well-trained teachers, buy more books, computers, and educational software, and ensure that classrooms are safe and accessible for all students. Finally, these funds will help **charter schools** develop accountability systems to measure whether they are meeting or exceeding State standards.

Charter schools are living proof of what parents and teachers can do to reinvigorate public education. Investing in them means investing in accountability and excellence and a much better future for our children.

But just as our children are returning to class, the Republican leadership's risky tax cut plan would undermine these investments by forcing deep and irresponsible cuts in education and other important national priorities. So, as Congress comes back to Washington, let's remind them what the creators and the students of America's **charter schools** already know: We're all accountable for our children's future, and an investment in it is our best investment in all our future.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. from the Edgartown School in Martha's Vineyard, MA.

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Remarks to the American Legion Boys Nation, July 24, 1998

Thank you very much. Good morning. And thank you, Sheriff Riley, for that introduction and for your wonderful work for the education of our young people.

I'd like to welcome your Boys Nation director, Ron Engel; your legislative director, George Blume; your director of activities, Jack Mercier, celebrating 35 years with Boys Nation—he was here when I was here, back in the "dark ages"; your national chairman for the American Legion, Joseph Caouette; President Sladek; Vice President Rogers.

We've got a good representation for former Boys Nation people here. I know Fred Duval, my Deputy Assistant, who was in Boys Nation class of 1972, has already spoken to you. I'd also like to recognize Sean Stephenson, class of 1996, now an intern in Cabinet Affairs. Thank you for what you're doing here. And I'd like to acknowledge someone who has worked with Boys Nation year after year as long as I've been here in facilitating this event, a long, longtime friend of mine, Dan Wexler, who is leaving the White House. This is his very last event. And thank you, Mr. Wexler, for a wonderful job for the United States.

As some of you may know, a few days ago we had a reunion here at the White House for our 35th anniversary of our Boys Nation summer, and "Nightline" ran 2 nights on our reunion. I asked your president if he'd seen either one of them; he said he saw the first one, the second one he was here on duty. But I had an opportunity to meet with about half the men who were with me 35 years ago, and we were reminiscing. It was exactly 35 years ago on this day, July 24, 1963, that President Kennedy spoke to us right here in the Rose Garden about our future. He made us believe that together we could change the world. I still believe that, and I think it is no less true for your generation. Indeed, I believe you will live in the time of greatest possibility in all human history.

Today I want to talk with you a little bit about what we have to do as a country to make the most of those possibilities, specifically about what we have to do to strengthen our education system.

When I was here, President Kennedy complimented us for supporting civil rights legislation which the Nation's Governors had declined to do. I was very proud of that because two delegates from Louisiana and I and one from Mississippi were four Southerners who broke from the pack and ensured that the legislation would pass. But I have to say that, looking back over the years, we knew then that our school systems were separate and unequal and that we never could make them what we ought to until we integrated our schools so that we could integrate our country. What we did not see then and what we know now is that equal access to public schools does not guarantee the educational excellence that should be the birthright of every American on the edge of the 21st century.

Today we enjoy a remarkable amount of peace and prosperity and security. We have the lowest unemployment rate in 28 years, lowest percentage of our people on welfare in 29 years, lowest crime rate in 25 years. On October 1st we will realize the first balanced budget and surplus we have had in 29 years. We have the highest homeownership in history, and the Government has played an active role in this, but it is the smallest Government we have had in 35 years—since I was here where you are today.

Still, the world is changing fast, and it is full of challenges that we have to meet. We must build an alliance of nations, committed to freedom and human rights and to fighting against terrorism and organized crime and drug trafficking; against weapons of mass destruction, and racial, ethnic, and religious violence that bedevils so much of the world. We must build a global alliance against the global environmental and health challenges we face, including the degradation of our oceans and especially the problem of climate change. [p.1471]

Those of you who come from Texas and Arkansas and Oklahoma and the other places in the South that have been experiencing record heat know a little about this. But it's worth pointing out that the 9 hottest years on record have occurred in the last 11 years; 1997 was the hottest year ever recorded; each and every month of 1998 has broken a record. So unless something happens, notwithstanding this cool morning we're enjoying now, 1998 will be the hottest year on record. Unless we act now, by the time you're my age, you will have a much, much more severe problem to confront.

We have a lot of challenges here at home. We have to save Social Security and Medicare for the 21st century in a way that protects the retirement age of the baby boomers without bankrupting our children and our grandchildren. Until your generation—that is, you and all the people younger than you, starting the year before last—entered school, my generation—and I'm the oldest of the baby boomers—were the largest group of Americans ever. When our fathers came home to meet our mothers after World War II, there was a sense of enthusiasm and exuberance which manifested itself in unusually large families. [Laughter] And we all enjoyed being part of the baby boom generation, at least I think most of us did. But all of us now, I think without regard to our station in life, are quite concerned about the potential burdens we might impose on our children.

Not so long ago I had to go home to Arkansas because we had some serious tornadoes. After I toured the damage sites, I had dinner at the airport in Little Rock with about 20 people I grew up with. And I try to stay in touch with them, and we just went around the table, and most of them are just middle class working people. Everyone of them was absolutely determined that we had to make the changes now to prepare ourselves to retire in ways that didn't impose undue burdens on our children. Because when we begin to retire, when all the baby boomers get into their retirement age—that is over 65—at present birth rates and immigration rates and retirement rates, there will only be about two people working for every person retired.

Now, this is a significant challenge. But it can be met. It is in this way like the problem of climate change. If we act now and take modest, but disciplined steps now, well ahead of the time when we have to face the crisis, then we won't have to take big, dramatic, and maybe draconian steps later. So, especially saving Social Security is important.

And I'd like to say just a couple more words about it, because I want all of you to think about it; it's important. The idea behind Social Security is, number one, even though your retirement may be a long way off, you can know that it's going to be there for you. Number two, even though most Americans have something other than Social Security to retire on—and you should begin as soon as you get into the workforce to save and plan for your own retirement, because if you save a little bit when you're young, you'll have a whole lot when you're older—Social Security actually is responsible for keeping about half of our senior citizens out of poverty. And beginning about 10 or 15 years ago, we achieved a remarkable thing for a society. We had a poverty rate among seniors that was lower than the poverty rate for the society as a whole. We want to continue that, and we can.

Thanks to your fiscal discipline, we're going to have the first budget surplus we've had, as I said, in 29 years. And this gives us some money to help to pay for the transition. I believe it is very important to set aside every penny of this surplus until we save Social Security. Now, that's a big challenge here in Washington, because after all, it's an election year, and it's more popular to give tax cuts or even to have big new spending programs than to say to people, "Okay, we've got this money, but we don't want to spend it right now. We may well be able to afford new spending programs; we may well be able to afford a tax cut, but we need to know how much it's going to cost to fix Social Security and how we can make it as small a burden as possible today and tomorrow."

That's why I have said save Social Security first. If it doesn't take all the money of the projected surplus, then we can figure out what else to do with it. I believe that is important. Some people here disagree with me; [p.1472] some want a tax cut before we fix Social Security. I am determined not to let that happen, because I think we should invest in your future, not squander it.

I do not believe that those of us who are adults should enjoy a limited small tax cut now and sacrifice your future tomorrow. And I'm going to do what I can to stop that. I think there is broad support for this position among both Democrats and Republicans in Washington, and I hope very much that by the time you're out in the workforce and having children of your own, that this will be yesterday's problem and you will not have to confront it. And we're going to do our best to see that that happens.

Let me talk a little about, very briefly, some other challenges we face. We have to provide access to affordable quality health care to all Americans. More and more Americans, probably a lot of you here, are in managed care plans. Managed care has done a lot of good; it's cut a lot of inflation out of health care costs. But health care decisions ought to be made by doctors and patients, not by accountants and insurance company executives who are determined to save money whether or not it's the right thing to do for the patients. That's the idea behind the Patients' Bill of Rights we're trying to pass up here in this session of Congress.

I think it is very important that we recognize that in spite of all this economic growth there are still areas of our country which have not reaped the benefits of American enterprise. There are inner-city neighborhoods, there are Native American communities, and as a lot of our farmers have been telling America lately, there are a lot of rural American communities that still have not felt the benefits of the economic recovery. If we can't find a way to expand opportunity to these areas now, when we're doing so well, we will not be able to do it the next time a recession comes along. So that, I think, is a very important challenge.

I think it is very important that we build an America, as Secretary Riley says, that crosses the boundaries of race and religion and culture; that respects, revels in our diversity; that enjoys our heated arguments, but that recognizes that underneath it all we are bound together by those things that the framers laid out so long ago. We all believe in life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. We all believe that we have constituted a free Government of willing citizens because there are things we have to do together that we can't do alone. We all believe that America will always be on a permanent mission to form a more perfect Union.

So I say to all of you, even though I think it's a great thing to have vigorous debates, I love them, I think it's a good thing that we have different opinions. I think it is a terrific thing that we have people in America who come from every other country on Earth. Just across the Potomac River here, in Fairfax County, there are students from 180 different national, racial, and ethnic groups in one school district, and they come from 100 different language groups. That is great for America in a global society. But we still have to find a way to be one America, to recognize that what we have in common as human beings, as children of God, is more important than what divides us.

And finally let me say we have to build a world-class system of elementary and secondary education. You heard Secretary Riley say that we have done a lot of work to open the doors of college to everyone who is willing to work for it. And just about everyone in the world believes that America has the finest system of higher education in the world. Now we have the HOPE scholarship, a \$1,500 tax credit for the first 2 years of college; tax credits for the junior and senior year, for graduate school, for adults who have to go back for continuing education; a direct student loan program that allows you to borrow money and then pay it back as a percentage of your income so you don't ever have to worry about borrowing money, making you go broke later, just to get an education; more work-study positions, more Pell grants. We have the AmeriCorps program for young people who want to do national service for a year or two and then earn credit for college. And this has been a very, very good thing.

But almost no one believes that every American has access to world-class elementary and secondary education. And if you think about all the other challenges I have mentioned, they all rely on a well-educated, responsible citizenry. You have to be well [p.1473] educated, and you have to be a good citizen to say—take the Social Security challenge—don't give me a little bit of money now; save me a huge headache later. Save my children; save my grandchildren. I'll give it up right now so we can do something good for tomorrow.

You have to be well educated to imagine what the world would be like if this climate change continues and the polar ice caps melt and the water levels rise and the Everglades are buried or the Louisiana sugar plantations are underwater or Pacific island nations are buried, to understand what it means when the climate changes and mosquitoes bearing malaria go to higher and higher climates and infect more and more people, and then they get on airplanes and meet you in the airport. And now people in Norway come home with airport malaria. It sounds funny, but it's happening. You have to have an education to understand these things.

It helps to be well educated to understand the importance of diversity and respect for diversity, and still what we have in common. So every other challenge we face requires us to meet the challenge of educating all our citizens.

We've come a long way since 1963, when most of the schools in the South were segregated, and when I was here—listen to this—one quarter of our high school students dropped out of school before they graduated; less than half went on to college. Today almost 90 percent of high school students do graduate, and nearly 70 percent will get some further education.

Many of you are here, as I was 35 years ago, in part because of a special teacher who's had a positive influence on your life. Our schools have always been the cornerstone of our democracy. At a time of increasing diversity through immigration, they are more important than ever. Ninety percent of our children are in our public schools, and in an age of information and ideas, a strong education system is now even more important to you than it was to me when I was your age. Now is the time to strengthen public education, not to drain precious resources from it. That is America's first priority, and it is our administration's first priority.

If our schools are to succeed in the next century, however, it will require more than money. We have to raise standards for students and teachers. We have to heighten accountability. We should widen choices for parents and students. We have to expect more of everyone—of our students who must master the basics and more, and behave responsibly; of our teachers who must inspire students to learn and to be good citizens; and of our schools which must be safe and state-of-the-art.

We've worked hard to strengthen our public schools, to promote higher standards and to measure student progress, to do what we can to improve teaching, and to certify more master teachers throughout the country, to give schools the means to meet our national education goals, and to help students not going to 4-year colleges make the transition from school to work, to get more aid to students in schools with special challenges, and to hook all the classrooms and libraries in our country up to the Internet by the year 2000 and to have more public school choice.

But we clearly have to do more. I have called for smaller classes in our early grades and 100,000 new teachers to fill them—teachers that pass rigorous competency tests before they set foot in the classroom. I've called for an end to social promotion so that no child is passed from grade to grade, year after year, without mastering the materials and for extra help for those who don't pass—like the summer school program in Chicago.

Chicago now has mandatory—mandatory—summer school for children who don't make the social promotion hurdle. And the summer school there is now the sixth biggest school district in the entire United States of America. I don't think I have to tell you that more children are learning and the juvenile crime rate is way down. We need more of that in America.

These are important investments. We have to also do more. We need to build more schools and modernize more schools. I was in Philadelphia the other day where the average school building is 65 years old. They are magnificent old buildings; they're very well built, but they need to be modernized. A child that goes to school every day in a school where a whole floor is closed off or the roof [p.1474] leaks or the rooms are dark or the windows are cracked gets a signal, a clear signal, that he or she is not as important as we all say they are day in and day out.

I have been to school districts in Florida where there were more than a dozen trailers outside the main school building because the schools are so overcrowded and the districts don't have the funds to keep building schools to deal with the new students. We have to do that.

We have to finish our effort to connect all our classrooms to the Internet. We have got to, in other words, make these investments that will make our country strong.

President Kennedy said our progress as a Nation can be no swifter than our progress in education. That is more true now than ever before, and I hope in the remaining few days of this congressional session, our Congress will put progress above partisanship, leave politics at the schoolhouse door, and make the education of our children America's top priority.

We know our schools are strengthened also by innovation and competition brought about increasingly in our country by more choice in the public schools children attend. Public school choice gets parents and communities more involved in education, not just in helping with homework or attending parent-teacher conferences but actually in shaping the schools.

Some of you, having gone to public schools of choice, may know this from experience. David Haller, for example, from Arkansas, attends a school that's very close to my heart, in the town I grew up in, the Arkansas School of Math and Science in Hot Springs, which I help to found as Governor.

Across our Nation, public school choice, and in particular, **charter schools**, are renewing public education with new energy and new ideas. **Charter schools** are creative schools, innovative schools, public with open enrollment, strengthened by the commitment of parents and educators in the communities they serve. They can be models of accountability for all public schools, because they are chartered only when they meet rigorous standards of quality and they should remain open only as long as they meet those standards.

According to new data from Secretary Riley's Department of Education, parents are choosing **charter schools** more and more often because they're small, safe, supportive, and committed to academic excellence. We can do more of this.

I am pleased to report some interesting progress. When I was elected President, campaigning on the idea that we should have more of these **charter schools**, there was only one such school in the country. It was in the State of Minnesota. I am pleased to tell you that this fall there will be 1,000 of them, serving more than 200,000 children. We're well on our way to meeting my goal of creating 3,000 such schools by the beginning of the next century. And again I ask Congress to help us meet the goal and finish its work on the bipartisan charter school legislation that is now making its way through Congress.

The Department of Education has released a guidebook to help communities learn from each other's successes. I commend it to you. **Charter schools** do very well in general, but they face a lot of challenges, including finding the funding to get started and keep going. Lack of access to startup funding, as the report I release today shows, is the biggest obstacle facing more rapid development of these schools. To make it easier for parents and educators to innovate, I have proposed to increase the \$80 million for startup funds this year to 100 million next year. That's up from 6 million when we started in 1994.

Now, let me just say one other thing. A lot of you are going back for your senior years. You'll be leaving your hometown school; some of you will be going a long way away to college. I urge you to go wherever your dreams take you. But in the years to come, I hope you won't forget about your schools. I am very impressed by all the resolutions and the legislation that you have passed, and I have been given a review of it this morning before I came out here. But I'm also impressed by the commitment that so many of you have expressed to citizen service. I hope you will always take part of your time to be servants to young people who are younger than you are.

Some of you may become teachers or professors, but most of you won't. Wherever [p.1475] your life's travels take you, every one of you can find some enduring connection to education. I hope some of you will consider sometime during your next few years joining our national service program, AmeriCorps, and serving young people in your community and building up some more scholarship money. But whatever you do when you get out of school, I hope you will maintain a connection to young people and to their schools.

You can volunteer your time, you can mentor someone who needs guidance. You can remember that only a very few young people ever have the experience you're having now, but hundreds and thousands more can hear about it from you and be inspired by it, to believe in our country and to believe in themselves and their capacity to learn and live out their dreams.

As I get older and older I think more and more, as is natural, I suppose, about people who are coming along behind me. It's hard to get used to—most of us will tell you that we consider anyone who is a year younger than we are to be young, however old we are. I never will forget, once I was talking to Senator Mike Mansfield, who was our Ambassador to Japan, and Senator Mansfield must be about 96 now. He still walks about 5 miles a day. And he was having lunch with another former Senator, J. William Fulbright, who was a mentor of mine and for whom I worked when I was in college—when Senator Mansfield was 91, and Senator Fulbright was 87. He looked at him and he said, "Bill, how old are you now?" And he said, "I'm 87." And Mansfield said, "Oh, to be 87 again." [Laughter]

So we all get our perspective from our own age. And for you, your future is all ahead of you. But just think about how many Americans there already are who are younger than you are, and think about how many there are who would never have a chance like the one you've had this past week. And just remember, never, never, never underestimate your ability to teach, to inspire, to guide, to help them to love this country the way you do, to embrace concepts of good citizenship the way you have, and, frankly, to live a good, constructive, ambitious life the way you will. All of us—all of us—sometimes underestimate the enormous power that we have to influence other people one-on-one.

Alexis de Tocqueville said a long time ago that America is great because America is good. America cannot be good except through her people. To say America is good is to say the American people are good. We have all these big challenges; I'm convinced we will meet them, as we have all our other challenges for over 200 years, because America is good.

I ask your support in meeting those challenges, and I ask for your commitment never to forget all those young people who are coming along behind.

Good luck, and God bless you. Thank you very much.

Note: The President spoke at 9:25 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his **remarks**, he referred to Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley, who, as a boy, was elected sheriff of Boys State, South Carolina; and Kevin Sladek, president, and Jeffrey Rogers, vice president, 1998 Boys Nation Session.

Source: United States. Executive Office of the President, Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, Week Ending Friday, July 24, 1998 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1998), 34:1470-1475

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Opening **Remarks** at a Roundtable Discussion on Education and an Exchange With Reporters in Silver Spring, Maryland, March 16, 1998

The President. First of all, let me welcome you all here. Let me thank you for coming. Many have made an extraordinary effort to come from a long way away, and I thank you so much for that.

I want to make some brief opening **remarks** and ask Secretary Riley and Mr. Schmidt make some **remarks**, and then we'll just begin the roundtable. And I want to hear from everyone before we go.

Earlier this month, our country received a wakeup call. Our high school seniors ranked near the bottom in math and science achievement when compared with their peers around the world, according to the TIMSS test results. This must be a call to action for all of us. That's why I've asked some of America's top educators, advocates, political and business leaders here today, to mobilize our schools to raise standards, demand accountability, and specifically, to strengthen math and science education and performance all across America.

A little over 40 years ago—a lot of us are old enough to remember when America got another wakeup call—when the Soviets had just launched Sputnik and beat us into space. Then President Eisenhower said, if we were going to conquer the heavens, we had to strengthen math and science education here on Earth. Because we answered the call, in the years since, we have landed on the Moon, roved the surface of Mars, launched countless satellites that have revolutionized the way we live, work, and play here on Earth, and we're preparing to put the international space station into work.

The young people Eisenhower inspired are now fueling America's new economy. They work at NASA, at NIH, in high-tech labs in Silicon Valley, in Wall Street boardrooms, in classrooms all across our Nation. [p.442]

Now we have to strengthen math and science education for a new generation of Americans in the 21st century. We know that for our time we need a revolution in high standards, accountability, and rising expectations. We know the revolution works. A report released just today by the University of Minnesota has found that **charter schools** are meeting and sometimes exceeding their promises to raise academic achievement. Now we have to spread these lessons throughout the educational system.

In our balanced budget, I proposed a comprehensive strategy to help make our schools the best in the world: to have high national standards of academic achievement, national tests in fourth grade reading and eighth grade math, strengthening math instruction in middle school, providing smaller classes in the early grades so that teachers can give students the attention they deserve, working to hire more well-prepared and nationally certified teachers, modernizing our schools for the 21st century, supporting more **charter schools**, encouraging public school choice, ending social promotion, demanding greater accountability from students and teachers, principals and parents.

And we have to bring more mentors into our middle schools to inspire our students to prepare for college early. I am pleased that this strategy is already moving forward in many, many States; that our Nation's Governors and State legislators of both parties are choosing to make a solid commitment to boost education, to advocate high standards, and to take advantage of this era of budget surpluses and good times to make our schools better so that we'll have even better times in the future. We'll work hard with Congress to make sure this plan becomes a reality. I urge the Senate to take the first step by passing the proposals to modernize schools this week.

In this era of fiscal discipline, we have to recognize that Government alone cannot do the job. We also have to mobilize all other Americans in a concerted effort, especially let me say, on the topic we're here today—math and science education. States have to make sure that every math and science teacher is qualified to do the job. We have to insist that they've majored in their subjects in college.

Today nearly one of every five science teachers, more than a quarter of all math teachers, more than half of all physics teachers has neither majored in, nor minored in the subjects they teach. The typical elementary and middle school teacher has taken just three undergraduate math courses. We can, and we must, do better.

So I call on the States to require new math and science teachers to pass high-level competency tests in their subjects before getting licensed. The requirements must be vigorously enforced. School districts simply mustn't continue to hire people who don't meet the standards. Students must challenge themselves and take the most advanced math and science courses they can. Again, this is a big problem. Among college-bound seniors, half have not taken physics or trigonometry; three-quarters have not taken calculus. Around the world, middle students are learning algebra and geometry. Here at home, just a quarter of all students take algebra before high school. Our children must not glide through school without gaining these important skills. Business has to help us get the message out, too, so that they will hear that young people who study and do well will do better in the future.

Today I want to say that later this year I intend to convene a group of business leaders specifically to discuss ways that they can contribute to raising student performance across our country. Universities can also help by strengthening their programs in math and science teaching so that more students will consider teaching as a career, and so that our newest teachers will be better prepared than ever for the classrooms of the 21st century.

Finally, we need help from our parents, who should encourage and insist on teachers and students who do their best. I think it is profoundly important that parents keep up not only with the progress of their children in the courses they're taking but also in whether they're taking the right courses.

If we all do our part, I'm convinced this is a challenge that we can clearly meet.

Secretary Riley.

[At this point, Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley and William Schmidt, national [p.443] research coordinator, Third International Math and Science Study (TIMSS), made brief **remarks**.]

Kathleen Willey

Q. Mr. President, Kathleen Willey says that you made unwanted sexual advances toward her, and that directly contradicts your testimony. You can't both be telling the truth, can you?

The President. Well, I don't know what she said, because I didn't see the interview last night. But I can tell you this: Ever since this story came out months ago—and as you know, the story has been in three different incarnations—I have said that nothing improper happened. I told the truth then. I told the truth in the deposition.

I am mystified and disappointed by this turn of events. But it's been out there for several months, as well as conflicting stories from people who have discussed it with her. You'll have to find the answer to that riddle somewhere else. But I can just tell you that I have done everything I could do to clarify the situation. I have a very clear memory of the meeting, and I told the truth.

Q. Mr. President, do you stand by your full deposition—[inaudible]—in the Paula Jones case? And should that serve as your explanation to the American people of what went on—[inaudible]?

The President. I certainly stand by the deposition.

Q. Will you make a further explanation to the American people, as you suggested you would when this story first broke?

The President. Well, I did suggest that, but that was before the deposition was illegally released, and it basically states my position. Whether and what else will be said I think is something that we'll have to deal with in the future, depending on how circumstances unfold.

Note: The President spoke at 11:26 a.m. in the Media Center at Springbrook High School. In his **remarks**, he referred to Kathleen E. Willey, former White House volunteer who has given testimony in both the Paula Jones lawsuit and Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr's investigation. Mrs. Willey was interviewed on the CBS News "60 Minutes" program on March 15.

Source: United States. Executive Office of the President, Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, Week Ending Friday, March 20, 1998 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1998), 34:441-443

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Remarks in a Roundtable Discussion on **Charter Schools** at the San Carlos Charter Learning Center in San Carlos, California, September 20, 1997

The President. Thank you very much. First, thank all of you for coming here today and sharing your Saturday morning. I thank the superintendent for his really marvelous **remarks**. He talked about all the things that we have in common. I saw a living symbol of his dedication to education above all else and one thing that we have in common that he didn't mention. If you look closely at his tie, you will see it is a pattern of golf balls and tees. [Laughter] And on this beautiful Saturday morning he's here with us. [Laughter]

Let me thank your instructional coordinator, too, for being here, leaving her 11-day-old baby. I would like to see the 11-day-old baby, but I think it's—where's the baby? A wise mother leaves the baby outside. [Laughter]

Hillary and I are delighted to be here. And I want to spend most of my time just at this panel today. But I thank all of you for coming because I believe in **charter schools**, and I believe they are an important part of helping us to lift our standards and renew our schools and achieve the kind of educational excellence that all of our children need as we move into the 21st century.

I congratulate the San Carlos Learning Center for being the first of its kind in California, which obviously makes it among the very first in the United States.

Let me just give you a little, brief personal history here. When I was Governor of my State for 12 years, I spent a great deal of time working on school reform—and so did Hillary—spent lots of time in the schools, talking to teachers, talking to parents, talking to students, dealing with issues of curriculum development and teacher training and all those things. And when we were active in the 1980's, the State of Minnesota became the first State in the country to pass a public school choice law, to give parents and their children more choice among the public schools their children attended. I think we were the second State to pass that law. And we used it quite a lot.

Then, when I began to run for President in 1991, Minnesota became the first State in the country again to pass a charter school law, recognizing that sometimes it wasn't enough just to give the parents and the students choices but that we needed to give the educators and the parents and the students with whom they worked options to create schools that fit the mission needed by the children in the area, and that if you gave them options and held them accountable, we might be able to do something really spectacular. Then, 5 years ago today, I think, California became the second State in the country to adopt a charter school law, and then you became the first of those schools.

In 1994, I passed legislation in Congress to help us support more **charter schools**. By the end of 1995, there were about 300 **charter schools** in the country. Today there are 700 **charter schools** in the country. Many of them have been helped by the program we passed in Washington in 1994.

The historic balanced budget agreement that we just passed into law includes the largest commitment to new investment in education [p.1373] since 1965, among other things, expansion of Head Start programs, more funds to support computers in the schools—I'll say more about that in a moment—our America Reads initiative to help make sure every 8-year-old can read independently, and the biggest increased investment in helping people go to college since the GI bill passed 50 years ago: tax credits for the first 2 years of college, credits for the remainder of college, IRA's, Pell grants, work-study positions. All these together mean that for the first time ever we can really say, "If you're responsible enough to work for it, no matter what your income or your difficulties, college is now a real option for you in America, for every single American." And I'm very proud of all of that.

But one of the things that was in this balanced budget that didn't get a lot of notice is enough money for us to help to set up literally thousands more **charter schools** in America—because excellence in education is more than money. And from my point of view, having spent years and years and years working on this, we need two things. We need a set of national standards of academic excellence that will be internationally competitive in basic subjects, and then we need grassroots, school-based reform, because education is the magic that takes place in every classroom, and indeed in every student's mind, involving every teacher, every student, and also, hopefully, support from home.

So that's why these **charter schools** are so important to me. And that's why we've tried to help a lot more schools like San Carlos get started on the path that you've been on now for some years.

For people who don't know exactly what they are, let me say that **charter schools** are public schools that make a simple agreement. In exchange for public funding, they get fewer regulations and less redtape, but they have to meet high expectations, and they keep their charter only so long as their customers are satisfied they're doing a good job.

As I said, we've gone from—the day I took office, there was only one charter school in America—January of '93. Then, a couple years ago, we were up to 300. Now there are 700. And what started as a movement in Minnesota and California now encompasses 29 States; 27 more States have passed charter school laws.

These funds in our budget, as I said, should allow us to set up several thousand more over the next 4 years. Today I am pleased to announce that we're going to release \$40 million in grants to help **charter schools** open. Start-up costs are often the biggest obstacle. And in States that can't afford to help, it's a terrible problem. I see a lot of people nodding their heads out there who have had experience with this.

So we have curriculum development costs, teacher training costs, new technology costs—all these things can help. The \$40 million we're releasing today, of which about \$3.4 million will come to California, will help us to establish another 500 **charter schools** in 21 States. So we'll go from 700 to 500 in one pop here.

And as I said, pretty soon—and if all the States will join in, we obviously can help all of them—we'll have well over 3,000, perhaps even over 4,000 by the year 2000, which is enough to have a seismic echo effect in all the public school systems of America. So that's what we're trying to do.

Let me say that there are a couple of problems that we're going to face. Last week, the U.S. Senate, by a very narrow margin, supported an amendment that would make these **charter schools'** funding that I just announced the last such announcement that would ever be made, because it would lump all the education funds together and arbitrarily distribute them to the State without regard to whether these programs were continued or not. And in the process, it would abolish very specific and highly successful education reform programs like the **charter schools**, where we work with local communities and school districts. It would abolish our highly successful effort to put computers in the classrooms—I'll tell you how much movement has happened on there in just 2 years—and to create safe and drug-free schools. I think that would be a mistake.

The House of Representatives recently passed, although the Senate opposed them, an amendment that would prohibit us to pay for—not to develop but to pay for—a nonpolitical, private organization to develop voluntary [p.1374] national tests of excellence in mathematics and reading. I think that would be a mistake. This is the first time, last year, in history that our students in elementary schools scored above the international average in math and science. We're doing much better in America, but we don't test all of our kids. We just test a representative sample. I think we need to know how we're doing based on a common standard.

So we have these problems in the Congress, and if either one of these provisions makes it into the final bill, I will have to veto it. So I hope that we can continue to work on moving forward in the right direction. And in that connection, I'd like to say a special word of appreciation to Congresswoman Anna Eshoo, who I think is one of the—absolutely—even I would say this if I were in Washington—she really is one of the finest, most forward-looking Members of the United States Congress, and she's made a big difference in our country today.

Now, running these **charter schools**, as we are about to hear, is not easy. It's not self-evident how to do all this. It sounds great to say, "We'll cut you free of redtape and bureaucracy. You have to perform at a higher level. You've got to get the parents involved." There are all kinds of practical problems, and we'll hear about some of them.

The Secretary of Education, Dick Riley, is going to convene a national conference on **charter schools** in Washington this November to bring together teachers, administrators, parents, others who are interested in this to share best practices and look to the road ahead. But just think about where we can go with this. If we go—we've gone from one to 700, to 500 more, with a budget that calls for funds for 3,000 more—just this year's budget alone that will be funded starting October 1st, if we get the funds for it, will give us enough funds for another 700—or 900 to 1,000 schools.

So this movement can sweep the country and can literally revolutionize both community control and standards of excellence in education if we do it right. That's what the panel is about.

And before we start, let me just thank some of the business leaders who are here today for their commitment to educational excellence: Regis McKenna, David Ellington, Brook Byers, Terry Yang, Paul Lippe. And I'd like to say a special word of thanks to Larry Ellison who is up here on the platform. He's the chairman and CEO of Oracle Corporation.

Two years ago this week, I met with Larry and a number of other high-tech executives to talk about another one of my passions, which is to connect every classroom and library in every school in America to the Internet by the year 2000. And that, like everything else, it turned out to be more complicated. It sounded great, but we not only had to connect them, we had to make sure we had the hardware, the software, and the trained teachers to do the job.

So we got this group of business people who knew about all this, who are working very hard to try to make sure that we can do that, give all the support services to every school. We got the Federal Communications Commission to give what amounts to a \$2¼ billion a year subsidy to schools, to lower the rates they have to pay to hook onto the Internet. But to give you an example of what we can do when we work together, since we made that announcement 2 years ago, California has 65 percent of the schools connected, which is twice the percentage you had 2 years ago, and 4 times as many classrooms connected as just 2 years ago. That shows you how quickly we can move.

And Larry has not only sponsored the San Carlos Learning Center but yesterday he announced Oracle's promise to spend \$100 million in a foundation to help schools across America who need support to get the kind of connection to the future through telecommunications technology that we all want. So thank you, Larry, for doing that.

So this is a good news day, but what I want to do now is to turn it over to the panel, and let's get into the facts of the charter school movement and see. Hopefully, by being here today, this will encourage the 21 States who do not have charter school legislation to adopt it, it will encourage the Congress to fully fund the **charter schools** program for the next 4 years, and it will help us to take what you have done here and spread it all across America in a way that will guarantee international standards of excellence [p.1375] in the education of all of our children.

Thank you very much.

[At this point, the roundtable discussion began. At its conclusion, the First Lady spoke, and the President made the following **remarks**.]

The President. First of all, let me say I agree with everything she said. [Laughter] I'd just like to make a couple of brief points to build on what Hillary said. I want to say, first of all, I have no hidden agenda here. I believe the only way public schools can survive as the instrument by which we educate our children and socialize them and bring them together across all the lines that divide us is if all of our schools eventually—and hopefully, sooner rather than later—are run like these **charter schools**. That's what I believe. I am not running for office anymore. I have no political interest in this. I am thinking about what our country is going to be like 20, 30, 40, 50 years from now.

And you know what Tom said about the industrial model: That's part of the problem. A lot of our schools are organized on an industrial model—a lot of our middle schools are almost—are organized for when families were like Ozzie and Harriet, instead of like they are today. There are a lot of organizational problems. It's also true that our schools get money from a lot of different places and have to suffer rules from a lot of different places, and a lot of people think if they give up their rulemaking, they won't matter any-more. And in some way, the most important person here is the superintendent because he's here supporting this instead of figuring out how he can control it. And I think that's important.

And so Hillary and I have been working at this business for a long time now, seriously since 1983—really seriously. There has been a dramatic change in the attitudes of the teacher unions, which is positive. There have been dramatic advances in the attitude of administrators, which is positive.

But I just want to say, we cannot—there are a lot of people who believe in the information age, with things changing as fast as they are and with standards needing to be as high as they are, that we ought to just basically send everybody money and let them do whatever they want to about education and forget about the public education network—let it sink or swim. The problem with that theory is that the short-term costs to people who got left behind would be staggering.

But if we want to preserve excellence and the socially unifying impact of public schools over the next generation, I am telling you, every school in the country has got to become like this one. The power needs to be with the parents, with the children, with the teachers, with the principals. And those of us who are up the lines somewhere, up the food chain, what are we interested in? We're interested in what Kim said. We're interested in results. We don't need to make rules. We're interested in results, and we want to be able to measure them. We want to know our kids are going to be all right and our country is going to be all right.

Let them make the rules in the schools. Let them figure it out. And then education will be something that will get bright young lawyers to leave their more lucrative law practices to do something that doesn't pay as much but makes them feel good when they go to bed every night and get up in the morning. That's what we want. And until every school is run like that, you and I should not rest.

Thank you. God bless you.

Note: The President spoke at 11:19 a.m. in the gymnasium. In his **remarks**, he referred to Don Shalvey, superintendent, San Carlos School District; Elise Darwish, instructional coordinator, San Carlos Charter Learning Center; Regis McKenna, president, Regis McKenna, Inc.; David Ellington, chief executive officer, Net Noir; Brooks Byers, partner, Kleiner, Perkins, Caufield & Byers; Terry Yang, cofounder, Yahoo!; Paul Lippe, vice president, Synopsis; Tom Ruiz, teacher, International Studies Academy Charter School; and Kimberly Polese, president and chief executive officer, Marimba Inc. [p.1376]

Source: United States. Executive Office of the President, Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, Week Ending Friday, September 26, 1997 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1997), 33:1372-1375

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Remarks at the O'Farrell Community School in San Diego, California,
September 22, 1995

Thank you so much. Let's give Henry Walker another hand. Didn't he do a great job? [Applause] I sort of want him to keep on talking; I was having a good time. [Laughter]

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for the warm welcome. Thank you, Congressman Filner. Thank you, Dr. Bertha Pendleton, for doing such a good job with this school district. Thank you, Dr. Bob Stein, the O'Farrell chief educational officer. I want to say a special word of thanks to a group of parents and teachers and students and others who help to make this school successful, who met with me for about a half an hour, before we came out here, to talk about what they were doing. I'd like to ask them to stand up and be recognized. Let's give them a hand. They gave me an education today. [Applause]

I want to say to all of you how grateful I am to this school and to all the other schools here present for believing in our children. I believe in zero tolerance, and I thank you for that. I'm trying to get every place in the country to adopt that policy. And most importantly, I believe in the high expectations that are given to all children in this school, because all of your children can learn, and we should expect them to and help them to.

I want you to know why I came here today. You know, I like San Diego, and I came here to sign the Goals 2000 bill, and I like to be in a community that cares about education. But I wanted to come to this school today for a particular reason, and that is because O'Farrell is organized as a charter school. They call it a family. And as a school organized in this way, it's freed of a lot of the [p.1672] rules and regulations that keep some of our schools all across America from designing their own ways of educating children. They also are held accountable for results, and they do a good job.

I want the American people to see this because there are too many people in America that not only don't have high expectations of our students, they don't have high expectations of our schools anymore, and they don't understand how much good can be done in a good school when people are working together and they believe in their children and the promise of this future.

I have been promoting schools that are organized and operated like this school for more than 3 years now, and I asked the United States Congress to appropriate just a little money, as a part of the Goals 2000 program Congressman Filner referred to, to give schools all across America just a little start-up money if they wanted to become schools that were independent, that were energized, that were high-expectation schools like O'Farrell.

Today I'm pleased to say that the Department of Education has granted another \$6 million to open schools just like this one in 11 States across our country, including more schools in the State of California.

America has to be serious about education. We have to be serious about education if we want to have a strong economy, if we want these young people to live up to the fullest of their God-given abilities. If we really believe that our obligation to our children is to give them the ability to make the most of their own lives in the world we are living in, that means education, education, education. We must face it, embrace it, and be glad about it.

I wouldn't be President of the United States today if it weren't for the educational opportunities I had. I was raised by my grandparents until I was 4, boys and girls, and my grandfather left school after the 6th grade. But because I had a chance to go to a good school, I had a chance to get scholarships and loans and jobs to go to college, I had a chance to become President. None of it would have happened if it hadn't been for teachers like your teachers, parents like your parents, community leaders like your community leaders. It means everything, and it is more important today than it even was when I was your age. We have to give the children of this country a chance to get a good education.

There are a lot of things that have to be done here school by school, that a President can't do much about: teaching our young people to believe in themselves, organizing a system for high expectations and zero tolerance of destructive conduct, pointing out that freedom and opportunity requires a lot of personal responsibility. But I'll tell you something, there are a lot of things that we in public office can do to help. And I am tired of people in public life pointing the fingers at others and saying, you should do better, and then running away from their own responsibilities to education. That's not the example we should be setting for our children in this country.

Just yesterday in San Francisco, I announced a breakthrough that will enable, by the year 2000, every classroom in America to be connected for computers, if we do what people in California have promised to do—business leaders—which is to wire every school in California for the Internet and to do it soon. This is the kind of thing we have to do together.

But you heard Dr. Pendleton talk about the money that these schools get from the National Government to fight for better education for these children. Don't you let anyone convince you that this money cannot be well spent to improve education. And don't you let anyone convince you that we have to cut out this money to balance the Federal budget. It is not true.

I favor balancing the Federal budget, and I have given Congress a plan to do it. I hate the fact that we were up to our ears in debt when I took office. We had a deficit of \$290 billion a year when I became President, and in 3 years we've cut it from \$290 billion to \$160 billion. I want to go all the way and balance the budget.

But why are we balancing the budget? Because we care about our children. We want to lift the burden of debt off of them. We want to have a stronger economy for them. We want America to work better. Those are our values. If those are our values, we cannot [p.1673] balance the budget by destroying our commitment to education. Otherwise, we won't help our children and we won't strengthen our economy. So I say to you, my fellow Americans, we can balance the budget and increase our investment in education. And that is exactly what we ought to do.

We need to make sure our schools are safe and drug-free. We need to make sure when little children show up for school that they've been given a chance to get off to a good start. We need to make sure that schools that don't have the resources on their own can still have smaller classes and have technology and have the ability to have those higher expectations that were talked about here today. And your National Government has an obligation to help you do that. That is what I am fighting for in Washington today.

The right way to balance the budget is to balance the budget while keeping our commitments and our values to the future of our children intact. That's what I am fighting for. You heard Congressman Filner talk about it.

The alternative budget in Washington today, proposed by the congressional majority, would undermine dramatically our commitment to education. It would cut back on our ability to promote **charter schools** like this one. It would cut back on our ability to help with smaller classes and more computers. It would cut back on our ability to help assure safe and drug-free schools. It would cut back on our ability to make sure little kids from poor families show up ready to learn. It would cut back on the availability of scholarships to go to college and on the availability of low-cost college loans.

Now, California has seen what happens when you cut back on the availability of people to go to college. You have a decline in enrollment in your colleges because of the cost. I want to lower the cost and increase the enrollment of ordinary Americans in a college education.

I come here to San Diego to say to you that when things are really important in America, we ought to act like a family the way the O'Farrell family works.

Education is our meal ticket to the future. Let me tell you something, folks: There's not a country in the world in a better position for the next century, for the global economy, for the rapid movement of people and money and ideas and technology around the world. No one is better suited for that than the United States, because we are the greatest country, that has people from everywhere in our country and in our communities. Look around here today and you can see that. Look around here and you can see that.

But if we are going to fulfill our potential as a nation, these children have to fulfill their potential, every one of them. We have to believe in what they can become. We have to believe they can learn. We have to insist that they do learn. We have to help them to learn. And they can learn a very great deal. We have to believe that our schools can work. And yes, we've got to embrace all these new ideas, like **charter schools**, but we also have to invest in them.

Before I came out here, the students were given a chance to ask me questions, and one of the students who is sitting right back there stood up and said, "If we really care about education, how come we pay professional athletes who never get off the bench 10 times as much as the schoolteachers make?"

This is not about money. It is about our values. It's about what kind of people we are. If you believe that every person should be responsible, that every person should be a good citizen, but that every person should have the opportunity to make the most of his or her own life, then you are required to say we have obligations to each other. We owe something to each other. Yes, we can put a bunch of our money into entertainment and let those folks make a lot, but we have to invest some of our money where our values are, where our future lies, where everybody can come together.

This should not be a partisan political deal. America's existence as a great, free, democracy depends upon developing the ability of all the children who are here and the people they represent all over America. So I ask you, I ask you, without regard to your political party, your income, what you do for a living, your ethnic background, if you believe this, if you believe this, if you believe that one of these little kids could grow up to be President of the United States, with a good education, if you believe that all of these little children can assure that America will remain [p.1674] the strongest, greatest country in the world, if you believe it is not an accident that people here have gotten together and done something that is the envy of America in education, then I plead with you, send a message to the Congress that it shouldn't be a matter of partisan politics, we must balance the budget and invest in education to keep faith with the future of our children and the future of America.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

Note: The President spoke at 4:39 p.m. in the courtyard. In his **remarks**, he referred to Henry Walker, parent of an O'Farrell Community School student; Bertha Pendleton, superintendent, San Diego Unified School District; and Bob Stein, chief educational officer, O'Farrell Community School. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Source: United States. Executive Office of the President, Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, Week Ending Friday, September 29, 1995 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1995), 31:1671-1674

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Press Re: Charter Schools

Divider Title: _____



Overview of Charter Schools

Last Updated: 10-1-99

[FAQ for Reporters](#)

Definition

Charter schools are nonsectarian public schools of choice that operate with freedom from many of the regulations that apply to traditional public schools. The "charter" establishing each such school is a performance contract detailing the school's mission, program, goals, students served, methods of assessment, and ways to measure success. The length of time for which charters are granted varies, but most are granted for 3-5 years. At the end of the term, the entity granting the charter may renew the school's contract. Charter schools are accountable to their sponsor-- usually a state or local school board-- to produce positive academic results and adhere to the charter contract. The basic concept of charter schools is that they exercise increased autonomy in return for this accountability. They are accountable for both academic results and fiscal practices to several groups: the sponsor that grants them, the parents who choose them, and the public that funds them.

For the legal definition of a charter school in a particular state, consult that state's charter school law through our [State Information and Contacts](#) area. We also provide a sampling of other charter school [definitions](#). For listings and summaries of research on charter schools, see our [Reports and Research](#) section or the [Charter School Research Site](#).

Benefits

The intention of most charter school legislation is to:

- Increase opportunities for learning and access to quality education for all students
- Create choice for parents and students within the public school system
- Provide a system of accountability for results in public education
- Encourage innovative teaching practices
- Create new professional opportunities for teachers
- Encourage community and parent involvement in public education
- Leverage improved public education broadly

People establish charter schools for a variety of reasons. The founders generally fall into three groups: grassroots organizations of parents, teachers and community members; entrepreneurs; or existing schools converting to charter status. According to the first-year report of the [National Study of Charter Schools](#), the three reasons most often cited to create a charter school are to:

- Realize an educational vision
- Gain autonomy
- Serve a special population

Parents and teachers choose charter schools primarily for educational reasons--high academic standards, small class size, innovative approaches, or educational philosophies in line with their own. Some also have chosen charter schools for their small size and associated safety (charter schools serve an average of 250 students).

Brief History

The charter school movement has roots in a number of other reform ideas, from

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alternative schools, to site-based management, magnet schools, public school choice, privatization, and community-parental empowerment. The term "charter" may have originated in the 1970s when New England educator Ray Budde suggested that small groups of teachers be given contracts or "charters" by their local school boards to explore new approaches. Albert Shanker, former president of the AFT, then publicized the idea, suggesting that local boards could charter an entire school with union and teacher approval. In the late 1980s Philadelphia started a number of schools-within-schools and called them "charters." Some of them were schools of choice. The idea was further refined in Minnesota and based on three basic values: opportunity, choice, and responsibility for results.

In 1991 Minnesota passed the first charter school law, with California following suit in 1992. By 1995, 19 states had signed laws allowing for the creation of charter schools, and by 1999 that number increased to 36 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia. Charter schools are one of the fastest growing innovations in education policy, enjoying broad bipartisan support from governors, state legislators, and past and present secretaries of education. President Clinton has also supported them, calling in his 1997 State of the Union Address for the creation of 3,000 charter schools by the year 2000 and delivering [remarks](#) for the 1999 Charter Schools National Conference. Since 1994 the federal Department of Education has provided grants to support states' charter school efforts, from \$6 million in fiscal year 1995, to \$100 million in fiscal year 1999.

National Statistics

Thirty-six states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico have passed charter school laws (AK, AR, AZ, CA, CO, CT, DE, FL, GA, HI, ID, IL, KS, LA, MA, MI, MN, MO, MS, NC, NH, NJ, NM, NV, NY, OH, OK, OR, PA, RI, SC, TX, UT, VA, WI, WY). The most recent, Oklahoma and Oregon, came on board in 1999. Thirty-two states, D.C., and Puerto Rico currently have charter schools. Arkansas, New Hampshire, Virginia, and Wyoming have charter laws but no charter schools. During the 1998-1999 school year charter schools opened for the first time in Ohio, Idaho, Mississippi, and Nevada. The U.S. Department of Education estimates that 1735-1790 charter schools will operate in 1999-2000. The [Center for Education Reform](#) estimates that 350,000 students will attend these schools in the fall of 1999. CER's [1998-1999 National Charter School Directory](#) reports that last year 1,205 charter schools served every grade from pre-K to adult. Of these, 58% were elementary schools, 20% were secondary schools, and 22% included grades at both levels. Arizona leads the nation in number of charters, with nearly 350 schools currently in operation, followed by California (234), Michigan (over 175), Texas (over 150), and Florida (112).

For more detailed information on each state and the status of its charter school efforts, please see our [State Information & Contacts](#) area or CER's [Charter School Highlights and Statistics](#).

Characteristics of Charter Laws

Charter schools vary from state to state, not only because the individual charters set out unique mission and goal statements, but also because state charter laws, which significantly influence the development of charter schools, also vary. The laws cover seven basic policy and legal areas:

- **Charter development:** who may propose a charter, how charters are granted, the number of charter schools allowed, and related issues.
- **School status:** how the school is legally defined and related governance, operations, and liability issues.
- **Fiscal:** the level and types of funding provided and the amount of fiscal independence and autonomy.

- **Students:** how schools are to address admissions, non-discrimination, racial/ethnic balance, discipline, and special education.
- **Staffing and Labor Relations:** whether the school may act as an employer, which labor relations laws apply, and other staff rights and privileges.
- **Instruction:** the degree of control a charter school has over the development of its instructional goals and practices.
- **Accountability:** whether the charter serves as a performance-based contract, how assessment methods are selected, and charter revocation and renewal issues.

Some groups have compared and/or ranked state charter laws according to various criteria. For instance, the Center for Education Reform considers laws "strong" or "weak" depending on how much they foster the development of numerous, independent charter schools. See CER's [discussion](#) and [ranking](#) of charter laws. Other analysts address issues of accountability or quality in charter school operations. These analyses, however, can oversimplify the complex range of state approaches to charter laws. For a broad look at state approaches, see [A Comparison of Charter School Legislation](#) (1998) by RPP International.

Resources

The following links contain lists of useful on-line resources.

- [Legislative Initiatives and Issues](#)
- [State and Regional Information](#)
- [News](#)



WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT CHARTER SCHOOLS?

Our knowledge about charter schools is very limited -- only 250 schools have been approved, and of those only 226 are currently in operation. Most of these schools are less than three years old and located in only six of the 25 states that have charter legislation on the books. Furthermore, a GAO report (1995) found that no state laws require the collection of baseline data, some have no reporting requirements, and some encourage local discretion with regard to the type of data collected, so our knowledge about charter schools and their operations is necessarily spotty at this time. Nonetheless, we do have some very preliminary information about these institutions and the experiences that states and locals have had in the implementation process.

What are the Characteristics of Charter Schools?

The Schools

The legislation varies from state to state as to the types of schools that can operate under a charter. In some states *existing public schools* can, under certain conditions, be converted to charter schools. In Arizona, *existing private schools* can also request permission to become a charter school. In some states only new schools, with no previous history as either a public or a private school, can become charter schools. The legislation defines the kinds of charter schools that can be created. Where no "conversion" is allowed, the charter schools tend to serve smaller numbers of students than regular public schools (Buechler, 1996).

The large majority of charter schools are elementary schools or serve elementary school children in addition to other students:

- Only four of the 76 schools chartered in California through 1994 were high schools, 13 others served middle school or middle school and elementary students, and the rest were elementary schools (Berman, Diamond and Premack, 1995).
- Medler and Nathan (1995), surveyed approved charter schools in 1995 and found that only 16 of those responding were high schools. Another 24 served high school students along with other grades, and 91 served elementary students entirely or as part of a wider grade span.

The Students

Studies to date indicate that the charter school movement is educating minority children at about the same rate that they are represented in the states where the charters are granted (Buechler, 1996). Several phenomena may account for this finding:

- first, some state legislation either explicitly encourages or requires charter schools to be targeted on at-risk groups, where minority children tend to be overrepresented;
- second, sponsoring agencies, e.g., local school boards, are more likely to grant charters to schools designed to educate children who are at-risk of being unsuccessful in the current public schools;
- third, many of the larger schools are conversion schools; and
- fourth, some of the comparisons are made between the charter school population in a state and the minority population in that state, rather than between the minority population in the district where the charter school is located and the individual charter school population.

But, an initial look at enrollment patterns in California schools raised questions about where charter schools were likely to be developed and what possible long-term effects bear watching. A Southwest Education Development Laboratory report observed:

Although charter schools have often been touted as a choice strategy to improve educational opportunities for disadvantaged students, the vast majority of existing schools do not target low-achieving student populations. This is true in Colorado, where only a few of the state's sixteen charter schools are designed to attract at-risk students, and in California, where charter schools are often clustered in wealthier communities serving more advantaged student populations (Insights, 1995, p. 5).

Furthermore, certain charter school policies such as requiring investment of substantial amounts of time and/or money (donations) may serve to further deter students from economically impoverished backgrounds.

The information concerning the education of special needs children in charter schools is mixed. Preliminary data bring both good news and some concerns. As mentioned earlier, some of the schools target children with special needs, but other schools do not, and initial findings indicate some problems associated with the funding of services to special needs students who are part of an inclusion policy and some difficulties with charter schools regarding adherence to rules and regulations (federal and, therefore, unwaivable) related to special needs youngsters (Finn, et al., 1996).

As noted in our earlier analysis of the legislation, three states permit the targeting of students based on academic ability, and two states are either vague or silent on this matter. To date there is no evidence of discrimination based on high academic performance requirements, but this bears watching as the number of charter schools expands.

The Educational Programs

Charter school descriptors and national surveys reveal the following characteristics in charter school educational programs:

- thematic/interdisciplinary instruction,
- expanded use of technology,
- parent involvement,
- performance assessment/exhibitions/portfolios,
- back-to-basics/core curriculum,
- community as classroom/real-world focus,
- individualized education plans,
- multi-age grouping,
- focus on a particular curriculum (such as arts or math),
- home study,
- extended school day/year,
- character instruction, and
- vocational/technical education (Buechler, 1996).

Two things about this list are noteworthy. First, the kinds of programs being conducted in charter schools are in some measure also present in public schools. Second, many of the programs are hardly "innovative" by any common understanding of that word. The notion that charter schools provide an opportunity for the development of "innovative schools" that otherwise might not operate is hard to substantiate. But the issue to be examined in these schools is not so much the description of the instructional program, but rather what policies and practices charter schools have adopted (and what policies they have been freed from) that make the delivery of such programs high quality (i.e., have improved student learning), and how such policies and practices can be extended to other schools.

What Have We Learned about Success?

It is too early to make any definitive statements about the success of charter schools. Some of the available data support initial claims of advocates, while other data give cause for concern of what the ultimate impact of charter schools will be. Of central concern, and that which we know least about, are two major criteria for the creation and expansion of charter schools:

- **Charter schools will improve the learning of their students in ways that would not have occurred had they remained in their former public school placements.** Most reformers agree that change takes time. Legislation for charter schools gives from three to five years for charter schools to demonstrate their efficacy. Only a handful of schools have been operating for three years or more, and it is too early to know whether the student achievement in these schools

is greater than if the children had remained in their traditional public school settings. It is not too early to note, however, that a recent GAO report (1995) found that no state laws required the collection of baseline data that would be essential to determining whether charter schools are more effective in educating students. Furthermore, a recent report observed, "We have yet to see a single state with a thoughtful and well formed plan for evaluating its charter school program" (Finn, et. al., 1996, p. 9).

- **Charter schools will be innovative and provide models that stimulate the public schools to change.** Although charter schools have a wide range of programs, they do not represent choices that have never been tried before. Virtually all of the approaches being employed in charter schools are or have been implemented in regular public schools. Indeed, back-to-basics is a popular charter school program, hardly what one imagines when one talks about innovation. Nonetheless, some data indicate that school systems have put programs in place as a result of pressure on local school boards to be more responsive to parent demands. In his review of the first four years of experience with charter schools, Buechler concluded that at present:

The effect of charter schools on the system as a whole appears to have been rather limited thus far. Only 24 percent of the charter schools surveyed in California reported that their districts had liberalized restructuring policies in response to charter schools, and 27 percent that the districts planned to disseminate practices used by charter schools (Corwin and Dianda, 1994). Likewise, Urahn and Stewart (1994) report that, in Minnesota, "Most charter schools have had little effect on their sponsoring district" (p. 41) (Buechler, 1996, p. 35).

Center for Education Reform

Making Schools Work Better for All Children

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CER RELEASES OFFICIAL CHARTER SCHOOL NUMBERS FOR 1999-2000 SCHOOL YEAR **1,682 scheduled to open**

(August 30, 1999) As the kids go back to school nationwide, an unprecedented number of them will be attending charter schools. According to the Center for Education Reform's official numbers, 1,682 charter schools will open their doors to approximately 350,000 children in 31 states and the District of Columbia. Another five states have laws but will not have any charter schools this year (Arkansas, New Hampshire, Oklahoma, Virginia and Wyoming).

"Since the first charter school opened its doors in 1992, public school systems have begun to respond and more children are getting the education they deserve," said CER president Jeanne Allen. "Our research proves that charter schools can and will set the example for the future of public education. Charter schools have created not just a ripple but a tidal wave on the educational scene," Allen added.

State laws in 36 states and the District - many of which CER helped establish - provide the opportunity to parents, teachers, and civic and community leaders to establish schools that meet the needs of families whose children don't fit a "one size fits all" system.

Charter schools now involve millions of Americans. Involvement in charter schools includes not only the families attending them, but the school staffs, the policymakers involved, the private resource centers and civic groups aiding charter schools and the research teams, authorizers and associations whose jobs involve charter school oversight and support.

Although charter schools are widely embraced by the general public, the majority of traditional education groups still fight to limit their scope and independence. In fact, at the National Education Association's summer meeting, even First Lady Hillary Clinton got a chilly reception to her vocal support for charter schools. It was the only policy line she used during the speech that didn't get wild applause from the NEA delegates.

The sharp rise in charter schools is a result in large part of strong law states. The Center for Education Reform officially ranks state charter laws on a continuum from weak to strong using 10 widely respected criteria. This analysis of charter laws, the four-part Charter School Progress Report series

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and other supporting information is available by contacting the Center or by surfing over to our [Charter Schools](#) page.



In other news, school choice supporters are relieved by Ohio Judge Solomon Oliver's decision to finally allow Cleveland's choice children to return to their schools, but are not satisfied that new children are excluded. In protest of Oliver's legislating from the bench, choice activists are holding candlelight vigils in cities nationwide tomorrow, August 31st at 8 pm. For more information about the vigils, contact the Center. For more details on the recent court action visit our [School Choice](#) page.

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First in CER's [Back-to-School Series](#).

The Center for Education Reform is a national, independent, non-profit advocacy organization providing support and guidance to individuals, community and civic groups, policymakers and others who are working to bring fundamental reforms to their schools. For additional information on school choice or education reform please call CER at (202) 822-9000.

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THE Center for Education Reform

Making Schools Work Better for All Children

CER Letter to the Editor

CHARTER SCHOOLS DELIVERING RESULTS

By Jeanne Allen

Takoma News Tribune, March 7, 2000

The evidence on charter schools is plentiful. So we were stunned reading Patrice Griffith's letter (TNT, 2-24).

Of the more than 50 national, regional and state studies done exploring the effects of charter schools, more than 80 percent prove that charter schools have a positive impact. Charter schools are improving opportunities for a wonderfully diverse lot of children. Charters are causing districts to behave differently and become more responsive to the public and more focused on results.

Ms. Griffith was selective with her evidence. In California, a state that has begun to rank every school, it is not charters that are at the bottom of the heap. Michigan charter students outperformed their counterparts when compared to schools of similar demographics. In Colorado, recent test scores revealed that charter school scores on the state standards test exceed the statewide average by 16 percentage points.

Thousands of charter schools have proven successful. Isn't it time for courageous, innovative action?

###

Jeanne Allen is president of The Center for Education Reform, a national, independent, nonprofit advocacy organization. Founded in 1993, the Center provides support and guidance to individuals, community and civic groups, policy-makers and others who are working to bring fundamental reforms to their schools.

For more information on charter school activity and charter school achievement, see Charter Schools Today, and our web library About Charter Schools.

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State
CHARTER
Schools

2000

NATIONAL
STUDY OF
CHARTER
SCHOOLS

FOURTH - YEAR REPORT

OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND IMPROVEMENT
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State CHARTER Schools 2000

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January 2000

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Tables and figures in this book that do not include source information are taken from the surveys and site visits conducted in the National Study of Charter Schools.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors are grateful to the many people who contributed either directly or indirectly to this Report. Almost 1,000 directors of charter schools responded to our surveys, graciously taking time from their school responsibilities to answer our questions, share their insights, and provide the data that serves as the basis for this report. Staff at many state and national organizations focused on education policy or technical assistance also provided us with valuable resources and information. We extend a special thanks to Field Research for the care and professionalism they displayed in administering our surveys and to the directors in the 37 state charter offices for their patient and timely responses to our queries on the counts and status of charter schools in their states. We especially appreciate the administrators, teachers, students, and parents of the 91 charter schools that generously agreed to be part of this longitudinal study. In successive years, they invited us into their schools and classrooms, shared their thoughts and feelings, provided key information on their schools and students, and helped us understand and learn from their struggles and triumphs. Together, these individuals and organizations have made our work and this report possible. We offer this final yearly report as a token of appreciation for their efforts to improve education for all students.

We would like to give a special thanks to our partner in the National Study of Charter Schools, the Institute for Responsive Education (IRE), a non-profit research firm in Boston. IRE played an instrumental role in refining and implementing the Study's research design. We would especially like to thank our esteemed colleague Abby Weiss for her keen insight and tireless work.

Many others read and provided invaluable feedback on drafts of the Report. We appreciate the thoughtful and insightful ideas, contributions, and comments of the Study's Advisory Board. The members of the Advisory Board are: Jose Afonso, Massachusetts Department of Education; William Lowe Boyd, Department of Education Policy Studies at The Pennsylvania State University; Rexford Brown, P.S.1 Charter School; Joan Buckley, American Federation of Teachers; Faith Crampton, National Education Association; Gary Hart, Institute for Education Reform at California State University, Sacramento; Ted Kolderie, Center for Policy Studies; and Joe Nathan, Center for School Change, Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota.

In addition, a group of reviewers from the U.S. Department of Education reviewed the report and provided helpful comments and insights that improved the Report. From the Department, we would like to thank Caroline Chang, Office of Educational Research and Improvement; Alexander Choi, Office of Civil Rights; David Cleary, Office of the UnderSecretary; Cathy Grimes-Miller, Office of the General Counsel; Judith Holt, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services; Lonna B. Jones, Office of the UnderSecretary; Alex Medler, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education; Meredith Miller, Planning and Evaluation Service; and Robert Scott, Office of Vocational and Adult Education. Three peer reviewers also provided helpful feedback on the content of this report—we appreciate the helpful advice we received from Linda Brown, Massachusetts Charter Resource Center; Jeffrey R. Henig, the George Washington University; and F. Howard Nelson, American Federation of Teachers.

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While appreciating the contributions of all of the reviewers, the authors accept full responsibility for the content of the Report.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Charter schools are public schools that come into existence through a contract with either a state agency or a local school board. The charter—or contract—establishes the framework within which the school operates and provides public support for the school for a specified period of time. The school's charter gives the school autonomy over its operation and frees the school from regulations that other public schools must follow. In exchange for the flexibility afforded by the charter, the schools are held accountable for achieving the goals set out in the charter including improving student performance.

This Fourth-Year Report of the National Study of Charter Schools provides descriptive information on charter schools that were operating in the 1998–99 school year. Additional reports of the National Study address broad policy issues concerning the charter school movement and its potential effects on America's system of public education.

Growth Trends: The number of states with charter legislation and the number of charter schools continued to expand in 1999.

- During the 1999 legislative session, three states—New York, Oklahoma, and Oregon—passed charter legislation, bringing the total number of jurisdictions with charter laws to 36 states and the District of Columbia. Charter laws have not remained static. Several states amended their charter laws during the 1999 legislative session. One state increased the number of charters that can be granted; two states that previously only allowed pre-existing public schools authorized newly created charter schools; two states expanded the number of agencies allowed to grant charters; and several states adjusted their charter school financing mechanisms.
- Of the 36 states and the District of Columbia with charter laws, 30 states and the District of Columbia had operational charter schools as of September 1999. Three of the 31 jurisdictions first opened charter schools in September 1999. Twenty-eight jurisdictions had operational charter schools at the time of our Spring 1999 survey. Nevada had only one operational charter school in Spring 1999 and that school did not respond to the survey, therefore, the school-level data reported here rely on responses from schools in 27 states.

- An additional 421 charter schools opened in 1999, bringing the total to 1,484 charter schools in operation in 31 states and the District of Columbia as of September 1999. Including multiple branches of a school operating under the same charter, the total number of charter school sites operating was 1,605 as of September 1999.

- The demand for charter schools remains high—7 of 10 charter schools reported that they have a waiting list. This percentage is the same as reported for 1997–98.

- Twenty-seven charter schools closed during the 1998–99 school year. Since the first charter school opened in 1992, a total of 59 charter schools—nearly 4 percent of all charter schools that have ever opened—have closed.

- The number of students in charter schools increased in the 1998–99 school year by nearly 90,000, bringing the total to more than 250,000 students. This total represents 0.8 percent of all public school students in the 27 states with open charter schools as of the 1998–99 school year.

Characteristics of Charter Schools: Most charter schools are newly created, small schools.

- Most charter schools are small schools—the median enrollment in all charter school sites is 137 students per school, whereas all public schools in the charter states had a median enrollment of about 475 students. This is similar to the median charter school size of 132 reported for 1998–99.

- Nearly half of the charter schools have a grade configuration that deviates from the traditional elementary, middle, high school configuration. In 1998–99, one-quarter of the charter schools spanned K–8, K–12, or were ungraded compared to less than one-tenth of all public schools.

- Seven of 10 charter schools are newly created schools. Schools that opened in the 1998–99 school year continued the trend from previous years that most schools opening in the year were newly created. Newly created charter schools, with a median enrollment of 128 students, are smaller, on average, than converted pre-existing public schools.

- Eleven of the 36 states with charter laws allow private schools to convert to charter schools. The District of Columbia also allows private schools to convert to charter status. Ten percent of all charter schools were private schools prior to their conversion to charter status.

- The median student to teacher ratio for charter schools, 16 students per teacher, was slightly lower than the ratio for all public schools—17.2.

- About two-thirds of charter schools had a student to computer ratio of fewer than 10 students per computer. About two-thirds of all schools with computers used for instruction had computers in 75 percent of their classrooms.

Students of Charter Schools: Nationwide, students in charter schools have similar demographic characteristics to students in all public schools. However, charter schools in some states serve significantly higher percentages of minority or economically disadvantaged students.

- White students made up about 48 percent of charter school enrollment in 1998 compared to about 59 percent of public school enrollment in 1997–98. The percentage of white students in charter schools is slightly lower than reported in 1997–98

- Charter schools in several states—Connecticut, Illinois, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, North Carolina, and Texas—enroll a much higher percentage of students of color than all public schools in those states. Charter schools in Alaska, California, and Georgia serve a higher proportion of white students than do all public schools in those states.

- Nearly 7 of 10 charter schools have a student racial/ethnic composition that is similar to their surrounding district. About 17 percent of charter schools serve a higher percentage of students of color than their surrounding district while about 14 percent have a lower percentage of students of color.

- Charter schools enroll a slightly higher percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch than do all public schools in the 27 charter states.

- The estimated percentage of limited English proficient (LEP) students in charter schools is about 10 percent, which is about the same as for all public schools in the 27 charter states. The percentage of LEP students is about the same as reported for 1997–98.

- Without regard to differences across states, the reported percentage of students with disabilities at charter schools is about 8 percent, which is lower than the 11 percent for all public schools in these states.

The Founding of Charter Schools: Most charter schools seek to realize an alternative vision of schooling.

- Nearly two-thirds of newly created charter schools seek to realize an alternative vision of schooling, and an additional one-quarter of newly created schools were founded primarily to serve a special target population of students. More than one-third of pre-existing public schools report that they converted to charter status in order to gain autonomy from district and state regulations.

- Nearly 4 of 10 charter schools that were previously private schools converted to charter status to realize an alternative vision of education.

Challenges Implementing Charter Schools: Practically all charter schools have had to overcome obstacles during their development. Many of the obstacles have to do with resource limitations.

- Most charter schools continue to cite resource limitations—either lack of start-up funds or inadequate operating funds—as serious challenges to their implementation.

- Newly created charter schools were more likely to cite resource limitations as a major difficulty than pre-existing charter schools.

- A much lower percentage of charter schools that first opened in the 1998–99 school year report that start up funding was a major difficulty. For schools that opened in 1998–99 school year, 39 percent cited start up funds as a limitation, down from 59 percent for schools that opened in 1997–98 school year. The reduction is likely to reflect support from the federal charter school start up funding program.

- About 4 of 10 charter schools that were pre-existing public schools reported that state or local board opposition or regulations presented obstacles to their school's implementation. About 1 in 5 schools that were formerly public indicated that they had difficulty with teacher unions or collective bargaining agreements. Fewer than 1 of 20 charter schools reported implementation difficulty due to federal regulations.

Autonomy and Accountability: Charter schools have considerable autonomy. They are also held accountable to provide financial and student achievement reports to different constituencies.

- The majority of charter schools reported they had primary control over most areas critical to school operations, including purchasing, hiring, scheduling, and curriculum. Slightly fewer charter schools reported that they had control over student admissions, student assessment, and budget. Compared to newly created charter schools, a lower proportion of pre-existing public schools said they had primary control in every category of control.
- Most charter schools provide one or more non-instructional services (e.g., health services, social services, and before and after school care). Newly created charter schools that provided services were about equally likely to provide the services themselves or to make arrangements for an outside provider. In contrast, about 6 of 10 pre-existing charter schools rely on districts to provide services. Pre-existing private schools were equally likely to provide services themselves and use an outside provider.

- More than 9 of 10 charter schools were monitored for accountability in terms of school finances; nearly 9 of 10 for student achievement and for compliance with regulations; more than 8 of 10 for student attendance; and more than 6 of 10 for instructional practices. Each of these represent an increase in the percentage of schools reporting monitoring in these areas in 1996–97.
- The 27 charter states differ greatly in how they approach accountability, with some following a “centralized” state agency approach, others a “market-driven” approach, and still others a “district-based” approach that relies on local accountability within a framework of state testing.
- More than 70 percent of charter schools (based on a selected sample of schools) said they made reports during the 1997–98 school year for accountability purposes to one or more constituencies, including their chartering agency, school governing board, state department of education, parents, the community, or private funders.
- More than 9 of 10 charter schools used student achievement tests, augmented by other measures of student performance and school success, to make reports to their chartering agency, the school's governing board, and/or parents. More than one-third of charter schools used at least seven measures of school performance, including standardized tests and other measures of student achievement, parent and student surveys, and behavioral indicators.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

The National Study of Charter Schools (the Study) is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education as authorized by the 1994 amendments to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The Study is a 4-year research program to document and analyze the charter school movement.

THE STUDY'S FOCUS

The Study addresses three major research questions:

- How have charter schools been implemented?
- Under what conditions, if any, have they improved student achievement?
- What impact have they had on public education?

Drawing from research evidence, the Study also asks broad policy questions:

- What models of education have charter schools developed that can be used by other public schools?
- What lessons can be learned from the charter school experience for public education, and what implications should be drawn for state and national policy?
- How might charter schools evolve in the coming decade?

THE STUDY'S RESEARCH APPROACH

The Study's research consists of (1) annual phone surveys of all charter schools; (2) repeated field visits to a sample of charter schools and their surrounding districts; (3) the administration of student achievement tests over time at a sample of charter schools; (4) the administration of teacher surveys to teachers in all field visit sites; (5) analyses across states of charter laws, state agency rulings and procedures, court rulings, and education policies; and (6) an examination of how charter school legislation and the existence of charter schools have affected school districts.

This Report, the fourth annual report from the Study, presents findings that focus on describing how charter schools are being implemented. Other Study reports address the remaining questions listed above. This Report in particular provides concise summaries of data that describe selected characteristics of charter schools in comparison, wherever possible, to other public schools.

Section A begins with an overview of the charter movement. It describes the growth of charter schools, paying particular attention to the differences across the charter states in terms of the number of charter schools and when they became operational. Since charter school legislation is unique to each state, we summarize key characteristics of the charter laws by state.

Section B summarizes basic characteristics of charter schools compared to other public schools. School characteristics included in this section are school size, grade level configuration, student to teacher ratio, and student to computer ratio.

Section C focuses on student demographic features of charter schools compared to other public schools. This section briefly describes the racial/ethnic composition of the schools, and the percentages of students that are low income, have disabilities, or have limited proficiency in English.

Section D reviews data on several issues that are central to understanding how charter schools may operate differently from other public schools. These issues include the reasons why charter schools were started, challenges they have encountered during implementation, the autonomy they have for making critical decisions, and the ways in which they may be held accountable.

THE REPORT'S DATA

The findings presented in this Report rely on four waves of telephone surveys to all cooperating charter schools that were open between the 1995-96 and 1998-99 school years, visits to 91 field sites across the country, and extensive analysis of state charter laws.

In the first year of a school's involvement in the study, a school administrator was asked to respond to a new charter school telephone survey. In each subsequent year, the school administrator was asked to respond to a follow-up telephone survey. For the first wave of data collection (Spring 1996), 252 charter schools had opened prior to or during the 1995-96 school year. These schools were asked to respond to the new school survey in 1996 and follow-up surveys in 1997, 1998, and 1999. For the second wave of data collection (Spring 1997), 178 additional charter schools had opened and were asked to respond to the new school survey in 1997 and the follow-up surveys in 1988 and 1999. For the third wave of data collection (Spring 1998), 284 additional charter schools had opened and were asked to respond to the new school survey in 1998 and the follow-up survey in 1999. For the fourth wave of data collection (Spring 1999), an additional 401 charter schools had opened and were asked to respond to the new school survey in 1999. Survey response rates ranged from 78 to 91 percent. The number of charter schools surveyed and the number that responded are included in the table below.

In general, this Report relies on the most recent information available but also draws from a range of years (1996-99). Unless otherwise noted, all charter school data presented in this report is drawn from the annual telephone survey data. Where possible, 1999 data are used. If we did not have data from a 1999 survey, the information is taken from previous surveys, the most recent of the 1998, 1997, or 1996 surveys. For a small number of questions, we asked for information

only on selected surveys. In some cases, we only asked a question on the initial survey and not the follow-up survey. In those cases, we report the responses for all operating charter schools at the time of their first survey. In other cases, we only asked the question on a follow-up survey. When we report on data gathered only on a selected survey, we refer to a selected sample of schools. Responses for questions asked only on the 1998 and 1999 follow-up survey represent 87 percent of available charter schools (534 schools of a possible 614 responded).

It should be noted that for tables in the Report that present data by state, we have omitted states where three or fewer charter schools responded to the survey in order to protect school confidentiality. We make an exception to this rule in reporting school enrollment data and in reporting data on the charter creation status. In addition, state-level data from states that have fewer than 10 charter schools may not be meaningful and should be interpreted with caution. It is also the case that some individual school data may be incomplete if specific survey items were not answered. All figures and tables report the total number of responses on which the findings are based.

For some tables in the Report, data other than the telephone survey were gathered. To estimate charter school enrollment, we supplemented our telephone survey data with information from other sources. We drew on state sources in California, Colorado, the District of Columbia, Florida, North Carolina, Ohio, and Pennsylvania to include 1998-99 enrollment data for 36 missing schools in those states. The number of charter schools represented by these data is 1,011, which is 94 percent of our estimate of the 1,078 charter schools in operation during 1998-99. Enrollment for schools with multiple branches was summed across all branches.

¹ The Study's definition of a charter school is a school operating under state charter legislation. This definition excludes from the Study some charter-like schools. We have opted to exclude single state-sponsored specialty schools (e.g., state schools for the arts, or schools for low-incidence special education students) even if they operate pursuant to the terms of a state-granted or charter-like contract. We have also excluded some states that do not have formal charter legislation but have policies that create schools that share some charter-like characteristics (Puerto Rico).

Some tables in this Report provide comparison information about all public schools in the 27 states with operating charter schools. (For the purposes of the remainder of this Report, we refer to the District of Columbia as a "state.") Public school data come from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data Survey 1997-98. These data refer to all public schools (including charter schools) in the 27 charter states. For

public school information on racial demographics, 1,177 schools or 2.1 percent of all 56,640 public schools reported racial information that was considered invalid because it did not match the total enrollment information. An additional 714 public schools did not report ethnicity data. The ethnicity tables are therefore calculated on the basis of 54,749 public schools. In all cases, we drew on the best comparative data available.

Number of Charter Schools in the National Telephone Survey

		Schools opened prior to or during the 1995-1996 school year	Additional schools as of the 1996-1997 school year	Additional schools as of the 1997-1998 school year	Additional schools as of the 1998-1999 school year	Total as of September, 1999
		1996	1997	1998	1999	
New charter school survey	Asked¹	252	178	284	401	1115
	Answered	230	153	246	369	998 ²
First follow- up survey	Asked	X	228	149	240	617
	Answered	X	178	118	203	499
Second follow- up survey	Asked	X	X	224	145	369
	Answered	X	X	175	114	289
Third follow- up survey	Asked	X	X	X	215	215
	Answered	X	X	X	171	171

² This number does not reflect schools that opened during a particular year, but the number of schools surveyed. Schools may have been surveyed for the first time in a year later than they first opened because they were either non-respondents in a previous survey year or we were unable to identify them as an operational charter school in the school year in which they opened.

¹ This number includes 23 schools that were closed as of the 1998-1999 school year; 12 from the first wave of data collection (schools opened prior to the 1995-96 school year), 6 from the second wave of data collection (schools opened as of the 1996-97 school year), and 5 from the third wave of data collection (schools opened as of the 1997-98 school year). The 59 charter schools that have closed among all charter schools include schools that closed before the Study began, schools that did not respond to the telephone survey, and schools that closed in their first year before the Study was able to survey them. For the 1999 survey, an additional 60 schools were surveyed that had not responded to previous new school surveys.

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THE EXPANDING CHARTER SCHOOL MOVEMENT

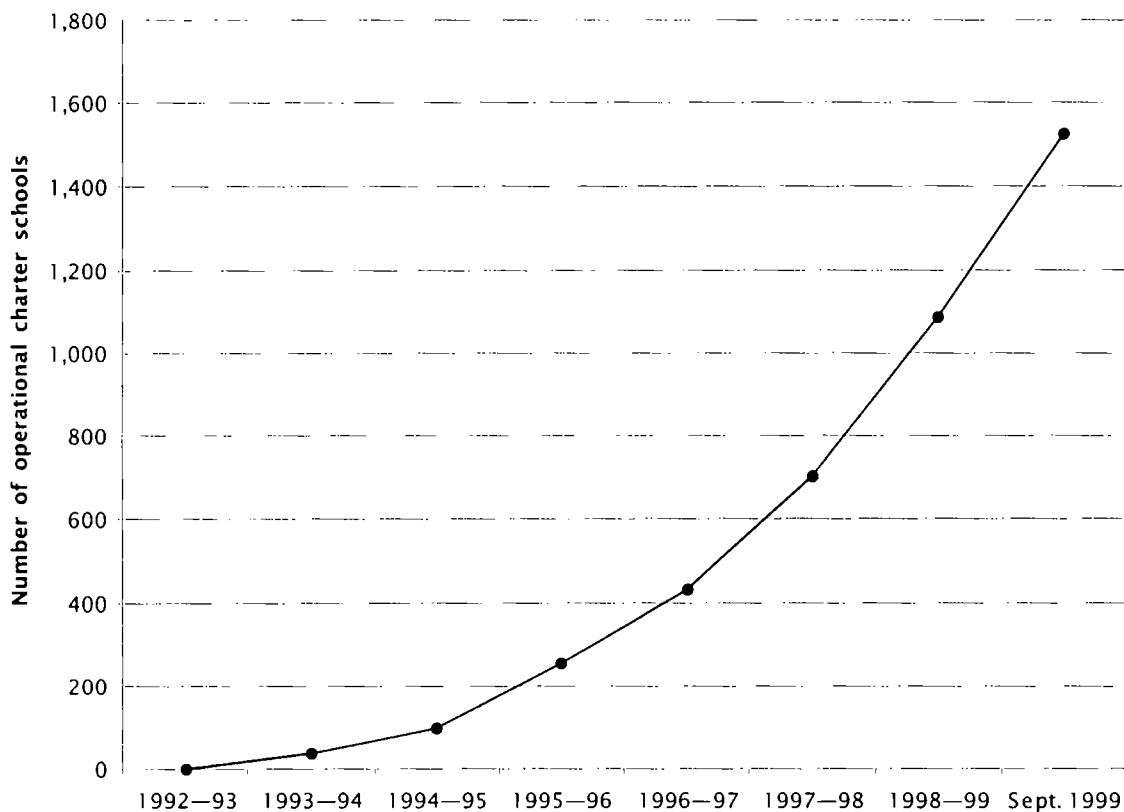
Charter schools have spread rapidly across the country since the first two charter schools opened in 1992. The number of states with charter legislation continues to rise, as does the number of charter schools. State laws differ, but all grant charter schools some degree of autonomy over their educational programs and operations in exchange for greater accountability for student outcomes.

- As of September 1999, 36 states and the District of Columbia had passed charter legislation and charter schools were in operation in 32 states. Three states—New York, Oklahoma, and Oregon—enacted charter legislation in the 1998–99 legislative session.
- As of September 1999, more than 1,400 charter schools were in operation. Counting “branch schools” in Arizona, in which similar instructional programs are operated at several school sites under one charter, there were more than 1,600 charter school sites in operation.
- Continuing the trend, the largest yearly increase in the number of charter schools came in the most recent year, with 421 new schools opened as of September, 1999. This growth in the number of charter schools was

driven in part by large increases in several states. In Texas, 64 new schools opened in fall of 1999, while California had 56 new schools open. Charter schools continued to be concentrated in a small number of states: 50 percent of charter schools were located in Arizona, California, Michigan, and Texas.

- By the beginning of the 1999–2000 school year, 59 charter schools, nearly 4 percent of all charter schools ever opened, had closed. The largest number of closures, 16 schools, came in Arizona, also the state with the largest number of charter schools. The closure rate in Arizona is slightly larger than the national average with more than 6 percent of schools closing.

Estimated Number of Operational Charter Schools, by Year



1. The Expanding Charter School Movement

States with Charter Legislation by Year Passed as of September 1999

1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Minnesota	California	Colorado Georgia Massachusetts Michigan New Mexico Wisconsin	Arizona Hawaii Kansas	Alaska Arkansas Delaware New Hampshire Louisiana Rhode Island Wyoming	Connecticut District of Col. Florida Illinois New Jersey North Carolina South Carolina Texas	Mississippi Nevada Ohio Pennsylvania	Idaho Missouri Utah Virginia	New York Oklahoma Oregon

Estimated Number of Charter Schools in Operation as of September 1999, by State

	Number of charter schools starting in the year							Total schools closed as of Sept. 1999 ¹	New schools as of Sept. 1999	Total schools operating Sept. 1999
	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98 ²	1998-99			
Total	2	34	64	154	178	289	401	59	421	1,484
Minnesota	2	5	7	3	3	8	12	3	17	54
California		28	36	30	21	19	29	9	56	210
Colorado		1	13	10	8	19	10	1	8	68
Michigan			2	41	33	36	24	5	15	146
New Mexico			4	0	1	0	0	3	1	3
Wisconsin			2	3	6	7	12	1	11	40
Arizona				47	58	45	44	16	44	222
Georgia				3	9	9	7	1	4	31
Hawaii				2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Massachusetts				15	7	3	10	1	5	39
Alaska					2	13	2	1	2	18
Delaware					2	1	1	0	1	5
District of Col.					2	1	17	2	10	28
Florida					5	28	42	4	38	109
Illinois					1	7	6	1	7	20
Louisiana					3	3	5	0	7	18
Texas					17	21	71	5	64	168
Connecticut						12	4	1	2	17
Kansas						1	14	0	0	15
New Jersey						13	17	0	19	49
North Carolina						34	26	5	23	78
Pennsylvania						6	25	0	17	48
Rhode Island						1	1	0	0	2
South Carolina						2	3	0	5	10
Idaho							2	0	6	8
Mississippi							1	0	0	1
Nevada							1	0	0	1
Ohio							15	0	31	46
New York									5	5
Missouri									15	15
Utah									6	6
Oklahoma									2	2

NOTE: The Study reports the number of charters given to individual entities, though some charters may use space within another school or be connected to another school by another arrangement. The number of charters shown above does not include the total number of school sites operating under a charter. Some charters, particularly in Arizona, run similar programs in several sites. In those cases, the Study only counts the charter once. Several charters in California were awarded to districts or complexes of schools. Since previously each school within the group was a separate school, the Study counts each school as a separate charter school. Taking into account multiple school sites operating under a single charter (121), the Study estimates that the total number of school sites operating under charters was 1,605 (1,484+121) as of September 1999.

SOURCE: The Study contacted officials at each state department of education and supplemented their information from a variety of sources, including the Common Core of Data Survey (1997-98), charter school directories, and state charter school resource centers.

¹ The column "Total schools closed as of Sept. 1999" reflects the cumulative number of charter schools closed since 1992.

² The number of schools that opened in the 1998-99 school year is slightly different for some states than the number of schools reported as of September 1998. The 1998-99 column includes several schools that opened later in the 1998-99 school year.

A. STATES AND CHARTER SCHOOLS

STATE CHARTER LEGISLATION

Charter schools are a state phenomenon. Each piece of legislation grows from a state context and the laws create differences in the types and number of charter schools opened in each state, the level of freedom afforded charter schools, and the amount of accountability required of the schools.

- **Who can grant charters:** The number and types of agencies allowed to grant charters differ by state. In 14 states, only the local board can grant charters and in 8 of those states, the decision of the local board can be appealed to a higher authority. In seven states, some state level agency (usually the State Board of Education) is the only charter granting agency. In the remaining 16 states, multiple agencies are authorized to grant charters—usually local boards and a state body. In five states with multiple charter granting agencies, universities (IHEs) also can grant charters.
- **Charter creation status:** Charter schools can either be newly created or can be schools that were previously district public schools or private schools. Each of the 37 states with charter legislation allows pre-existing public schools to convert to charter status. All states except Mississippi allow newly created schools. Legislation in 10 states allows private schools to convert directly to

charter status, while an additional 3 states allow private schools to become charters under specific conditions.

- **Number of charter schools allowed:** Thirteen of the 37 charter states do not limit the number of charter schools allowed to open in the state. Two states (Texas and Nevada) place some limit on the number of charter schools but do not limit the number of schools that enroll at-risk students. The remaining 22 states either limit the total number of schools in the state, the number allowed by district, or the number allowed per year.

- **Duration of charter term:** Charter schools are established as limited-term contracts—at the end of the contract period, the charter must be renewed. Charter terms range between 3 and 5 years in 31 states. Arizona and the District of Columbia have the longest charter terms—15 years although both states require a review at the end of 5 years.

Key Dimensions of Charter Legislation, by State

State	Who can grant charter	Charter creation status			Number of charter schools allowed	Duration of charter term (years)
		Newly created	Pre-existing public	Pre-existing private		
Alaska	Local boards	Yes	Yes	No	30	Up to 5
Arizona	Local boards, State board, and State charter board	Yes	Yes	Yes	No limit	15
Arkansas	State board	Yes	Yes	No	No limit	3
California	Local boards + appeals	Yes	Yes	No	100 annually	5
Colorado	Local boards + appeals	Yes	Yes	No	No limit	5
Connecticut	State board	Yes	Yes	No	24	5
Delaware	Local boards for conversions and State Board for newly created	Yes	Yes	No	No limit	3
District of Col.	Local boards, State board, and State charter board + appeals	Yes	Yes	Yes	20 annually	15
Florida	Local boards + appeals	Yes	Yes	No ¹	Other limits ²	3
Georgia	State board	Yes	Yes	No	No limit	5
Hawaii	State board	Yes	Yes	No	25	4
Idaho	Local boards + appeals	Yes	Yes	No	60 ¹	Up to 5
Illinois	Local boards with State board review + appeals	Yes	Yes	No ⁴	45	3-5
Kansas	Local boards	Yes	Yes	No	15	3
Louisiana	Local boards and State board + appeals	Yes	Yes	No	42	5

2. State Charter Legislation

State	Who can grant charter	Charter creation status			Number of charter schools allowed	Duration of charter term (years)
		Newly created	Pre-existing public	Pre-existing private		
Massachusetts	Local boards for conversions and State board for newly created	Yes	Yes	No	50	5
Michigan	Local boards and IHEs	Yes	Yes	Yes	No limit	Up to 10
Minnesota	Local boards and IHEs + appeals	Yes	Yes	Yes	No limit	3
Mississippi	Local boards and State board	No	Yes	No	6	4 to 6
Missouri	Local boards, IHEs, and community colleges ¹	Yes	Yes	Yes	Other limits ⁶	5-10
Nevada	Both Local boards and State board	Yes	Yes	No	Other limits ⁷	3
New Hampshire	Local boards + appeals	Yes	Yes	No	10 annually ⁸	5
New Jersey	State Commissioner	Yes	Yes	No	135 ⁹	4
New Mexico	Local boards and State board	Yes	Yes	No	20 annually ¹⁰	5
New York	Local boards, state board, SUNY board of trustees	Yes	Yes	No	100 new; unlimited public conversion	5
North Carolina	Local boards, State board, and IHEs	Yes	Yes	Yes	100	5
Ohio	Local boards and State board	Yes	Yes	No	No limit	Up to 5
Oklahoma	Local boards + appeals	Yes	Yes	No	Other limits ¹¹	3
Oregon	Local boards and State board	Yes	Yes	No	Other limits ¹²	Up to 5
Pennsylvania	Local boards	Yes	Yes	Yes	No limit	3 to 5
Rhode Island	State board	Yes	Yes	No	20	Up to 5
South Carolina	Local boards + appeals	Yes	Yes	Yes	No limit	3
Texas	Local boards for conversions and State board for newly created	Yes	Yes	Yes	No limit ¹³	Specified in charter
Utah	State board	Yes	Yes	No	8	3
Virginia	Local boards	Yes	Yes	No	2 per district	3
Wisconsin	Local boards	Yes	Yes	Yes ¹⁴	No limit	Up to 5
Wyoming	Local boards	Yes	Yes	No	No limit	Up to 5

¹ Although Florida's legislation does not allow private schools to apply directly for charter status, the state allows private schools to convert to charter status if they disband, reincorporate as a new organization with a new board, and enroll students in a public lottery.

² While Florida's legislation does not specify a statewide limit on the number of charter schools, the legislation does restrict the number of charters granted in each district based on district size. The effective cap for the state is 974 schools.

³ Illinois' legislation stipulates that a private school must cease operation as a private school before applying for charter status.

⁴ Idaho's legislation limits the annual number of new charters to 12 with a statewide limit of 60.

⁵ Missouri's legislation limits charter schools to St. Louis and Kansas City with those districts, colleges and universities, and community colleges authorized to grant charters only in St. Louis and Kansas City.

⁶ Missouri's legislation states that no more than 5 percent of the buildings used for instruction in a district may be converted to charter schools.

⁷ Nevada's legislation limits the number of charters granted in each district based on district size, creating an effective cap of about 17 schools, with an exception for schools focusing on at-risk students.

⁸ New Hampshire's legislation allows 10 new charters annually until the year 2000.

⁹ Charter legislation in New Jersey requires a legislative review (including a review of the number of charter schools allowed) in 2000.

¹⁰ New Mexico's legislation allows up to 20 new schools annually up to a maximum of 100 schools.

¹¹ Oklahoma's legislation only allows charter schools in districts enrolling 5,000 or more students.

¹² Oregon's legislation limits charter school enrollment to 10 percent of the total number of students enrolled in public schools in the district.

¹³ Texas' legislation does not limit campus charters (schools that were previously district public schools) but limits open-enrollment charters (newly created schools or previously private schools) to 100 with no limit for charters serving at-risk students.

¹⁴ Wisconsin's legislation allows the conversion of private schools only in Milwaukee.

A. STATES AND CHARTER SCHOOLS

NEWLY CREATED AND PRE-EXISTING CHARTER SCHOOLS

Charter school legislation allows charter schools to be created in several different ways. Groups of parents, teachers, and community members can start newly created schools. In addition, public and private schools may be able to convert to charter school status. Because the types of authorized charter schools vary state by state, characteristics of charter schools often differ from one state to another. Some states have many charter schools that were pre-existing public schools, while in other states there are few.

- As of the 1998–99 school year, 72 percent of all charter schools were newly created schools. An additional 18 percent had been pre-existing public schools before becoming charter schools, while 10 percent had been pre-existing private schools.
- Newly created schools continued to make up the majority of charter schools created in each year. Pre-existing public schools, which constituted 44 percent of all charter schools opened in the 1994–95 school year or earlier, constituted only 15 percent of charter schools opened in the 1998–99 school year. This decline in the percentage of charter schools that converted from pre-existing public schools was due in part to the fact that 37 percent of charter schools that were pre-existing public schools were located in California and converted in the first years that California had a charter school law.
- Legislation in the 27 states with operating charter schools in 1998–99 permits the conversion of existing public schools to charter schools. In 26 of these states, state charter legislation allows the creation of new charter schools as well. Twelve states permit pre-existing private schools to become charter schools, although some states require that the private schools disband and reconstitute themselves before applying for a charter or limit the geographic areas in which private schools may convert to become charter schools.

Estimated Percentage of Charter Schools, by Creation Status

Newly created 72%

Pre-existing public 18%

Pre-existing private 10%

NOTE: These data are based on responses from all 975 open charter schools that responded to the survey. Although Nevada had one open charter school as of the 1998–99 school year, that school did not respond to the survey.

3. Newly Created and Pre-existing Charter Schools

Estimated Number and Percentage of Newly Created and Pre-existing Charter Schools, by Year of School Opening

	Number of charter schools	Newly created	Pre-existing public	Pre-existing private
Total in 1998-99	975	704	173	98
% of Total		72.2	17.7	10.1
Percentage of schools (%)				
Opened 1994-95 or earlier	94	53.2	43.6	3.2
Opened 1995-96	145	64.1	20.7	15.2
Opened 1996-97	171	66.7	17.5	15.8
Opened 1997-98	252	82.5	9.9	7.5
Opened 1998-99	313	76.4	15.0	8.6

Estimated Number and Percentages of Charter Schools, by Creation Status and State¹

	Total	Newly created		Pre-existing public		Pre-existing private	
	All schools	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total	975	704	72.2	173	17.7	98	10.1
Alaska	16	16	100.0	0	0.0	NA	NA
Arizona	166	119	71.7	18	10.8	29	17.5
California	149	85	57.0	64	43.0	NA	NA
Colorado	59	52	88.1	6	10.2	1 ²	1.7
Connecticut	16	16	100.0	0	0.0	NA	NA
Delaware	4	4	100.0	0	0.0	NA	NA
District of Columbia	15	10	66.7	3	20.0	2	13.3
Florida	65	58	89.2	2	3.1	5 ³	7.7
Georgia ⁴	25	2	8.0	23	92.0	NA	NA
Hawaii	2	0	0.0	2	100.0	NA	NA
Idaho	2	1	50.0	1	50.0	NA	NA
Illinois	12	9	75.0	1	8.3	2 ⁵	16.7
Kansas	15	7	46.7	7	46.7	1 ⁶	6.7
Louisiana	11	8	72.7	3	27.3	NA	NA
Massachusetts	34	30	88.2	4	11.8	NA	NA
Michigan	124	90	72.6	8	6.5	26	21.0
Minnesota	37	31	83.8	4	10.8	2	5.4
Mississippi	1	NA	NA	1	100.0	NA	NA
New Jersey	26	26	100.0	0	0.0	NA	NA
New Mexico	5	NA ⁷	NA	5	100.0	NA	NA
North Carolina	52	43	82.7	2	3.8	7	13.5
Ohio	7	7	100.0	0	0.0	NA	NA
Pennsylvania	23	19	82.6	0	0.0	4	17.4
Rhode Island	2	1	50.0	1	50.0	NA	NA
South Carolina	4	2	50.0	2	50.0	0	0.0
Texas	77	52	67.5	9	11.7	16	20.8
Wisconsin	26	16	61.5	7	26.9	3 ⁸	11.5

NOTE: These data are based on responses from all 975 open charter schools that responded to the survey.

¹ NA indicates that the state's legislation did not allow for that type of charter school when the schools that responded to our survey received their charters. Several states have since changed their laws to allow more types of charter schools.

² Colorado does not allow private schools to become charter schools, but one charter school was a pre-existing program for adjudicated youth.

³ Although Florida's law does not allow private schools to apply directly to become charter schools, private schools may disband, reincorporate as new organizations with new boards, and apply for charters if they agree to enroll students through a public lottery.

⁴ The original charter laws in Georgia, New Mexico, and Arkansas did not permit newly created charter schools, but legislative changes in 1998-99 have resulted in laws that now allow newly created charter schools.

⁵ Illinois charter legislation stipulates that a private school must cease operation as a private school before applying for charter status.

⁶ Kansas law does not allow private schools to become charter schools. We are still clarifying the status of one school that reported it was previously a private school.

⁷ New Mexico legislation was amended in 1999 to allow newly created schools, but this change was too early for newly created schools to be surveyed for this report.

⁸ Wisconsin's law allows for the conversion of private schools only in Milwaukee.

B. BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF CHARTER SCHOOLS

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B. BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF CHARTER SCHOOLS

ENROLLMENT BY STATE

As in past years, charter schools enrolled a relatively small percentage of public school students nationwide. Only three states had 2 percent or more of their public school enrollment in charter schools, with the District of Columbia enrolling the greatest percentage of students in charter schools. However, the number of students enrolled in charter schools continued to grow, with California charter schools continuing to enroll the greatest number of students. As the number of charter schools increases and student enrollment in charter schools expands, their potential impact on public education also increases.

- In 1998–99, the Study estimated that charter school enrollment totaled 252,009 in the 27 states with open charter schools. This enrollment was 0.8 percent of all students in public schools in the 27 charter states.
- With 73,905 students in charter schools, California had the most charter school students of any state. More than half of all charter school students (52 percent) are enrolled in charter schools in three states: Arizona, California, and Michigan.
- The District of Columbia, with an estimated 3,364 students enrolled in charter schools, had more than 4 percent of its public school students enrolled in charter schools, the highest percentage of public school students enrolled in charter schools in all 27 charter states. Arizona had 4 percent of their public school students enrolled in charter schools, while Colorado had 2 percent.
- The percentage of public school students enrolled in charter schools increased in all 27 charter states in the 1998–99 school year as compared to the 1997–98 school year.

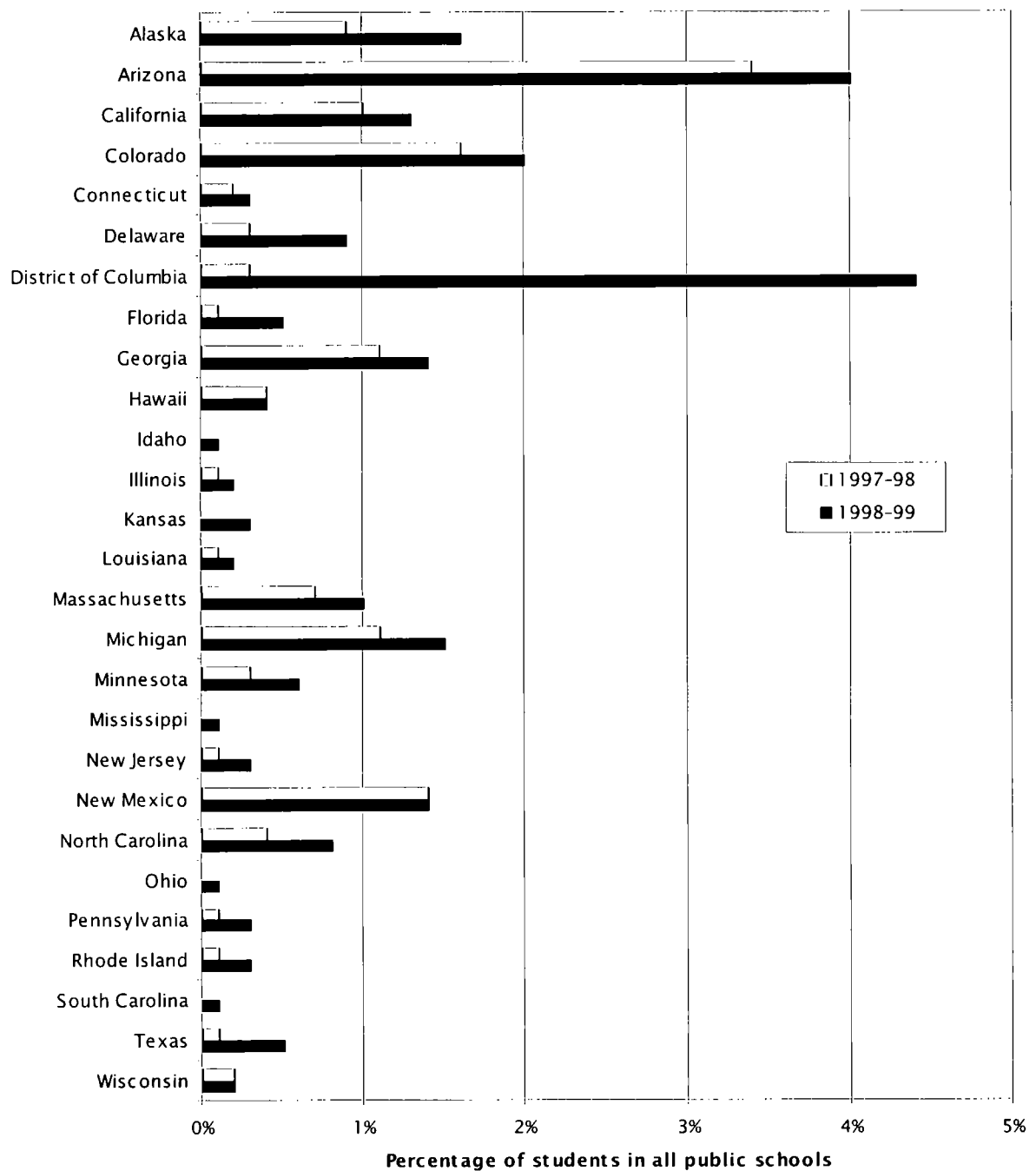
Estimated Enrollment in Charter Schools and All Public Schools in the 27 Charter States

State	Charter school enrollment, 1998-99	All public school enrollment, Fall 1997	% of public school students who are in charter schools
Total	252,009	31,526,771	0.8
Alaska	2,047	132,122	1.6
Arizona	32,209	815,388	4.0
California	73,905	5,728,341	1.3
Colorado	13,911	687,167	2.0
Connecticut	1,613	535,162	0.3
Delaware	988	111,960	0.9
District of Columbia	3,364	77,111	4.4
Florida	10,561	2,294,001	0.5
Georgia	18,611	1,375,980	1.4
Hawaii	790	189,887	0.4
Idaho	57	244,341	0.1
Illinois	3,333	2,008,519	0.2
Kansas	1,545	468,687	0.3
Louisiana	1,589	776,305	0.2
Massachusetts	9,673	949,006	1.0
Michigan	25,294	1,686,760	1.5
Minnesota	4,670	851,772	0.6
Mississippi	340	507,776	0.1
New Jersey	4,001	1,249,910	0.3
New Mexico	4,601	331,673	1.4
North Carolina	9,513	1,236,063	0.8
Ohio	2,509	1,871,195	0.1
Pennsylvania	5,474	1,815,151	0.3
Rhode Island	397	153,321	0.3
South Carolina	364	650,755	0.1
Texas	18,590	3,896,638	0.5
Wisconsin	2,060	881,780	0.2

NOTE: Charter school enrollment includes data for 1,010 charter schools and is based on responses from all 975 open charter schools that responded to the survey, supplemented with data from state departments of education.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data Survey, 1997–98.

Charter School Enrollment as a Percentage of Public School Enrollment, by State¹



¹ We do not have 1998-99 data for Idaho, Mississippi, and Ohio because their charter schools were not open at the time of our 1998-99 survey. In 1997-98, the number of students enrolled in South Carolina charter schools was too small to register on the scale.

B. BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF CHARTER SCHOOLS

SCHOOL SIZE

As in past years, charter schools continued to be small schools. In fact, a high percentage of charter schools enrolled fewer than 200 students. Newly created charter schools especially continued to enroll, on average, fewer students than other public schools. This tendency towards small school size may reflect a desire on the part of charter school founders and parents for structuring their schools in a way that enables them to provide intimate, nurturing school communities.

- Charter schools tend to enroll, on average, fewer students than all public schools. During the 1998–99 school year, the median number of students in charter schools was 137, compared to a median of 475 in all public schools.
- Similar to data reported in previous years, in 1998–99 more than 3 times as many charter schools as compared to other public schools enrolled fewer than 200 students (65 percent and 17 percent respectively). Nearly 4 times as many charter schools as compared to other public schools enrolled fewer than 100 students (35 percent and 9 percent respectively).
- Newly created charter schools were especially likely to be smaller schools than other public schools, with a median enrollment of 128. Charter schools that were pre-existing public schools had a median enrollment of 368, much closer to the median enrollment of all public schools.
- Only 8 percent of charter schools enrolled more than 600 students, as opposed to 35 percent of all public schools. And only 1 percent of charter schools enrolled more than 1,000 students, as compared to 11 percent of all public schools.
- Few newly created schools enrolled large numbers of students, with only 10 schools, slightly more than 1 percent, enrolling more than 1,000. Pre-existing public and all public schools each had approximately 10 percent of their schools enrolling more than 1,000 students. Since the Study's last report, the median size of newly created charter schools increased from 111 to 128.

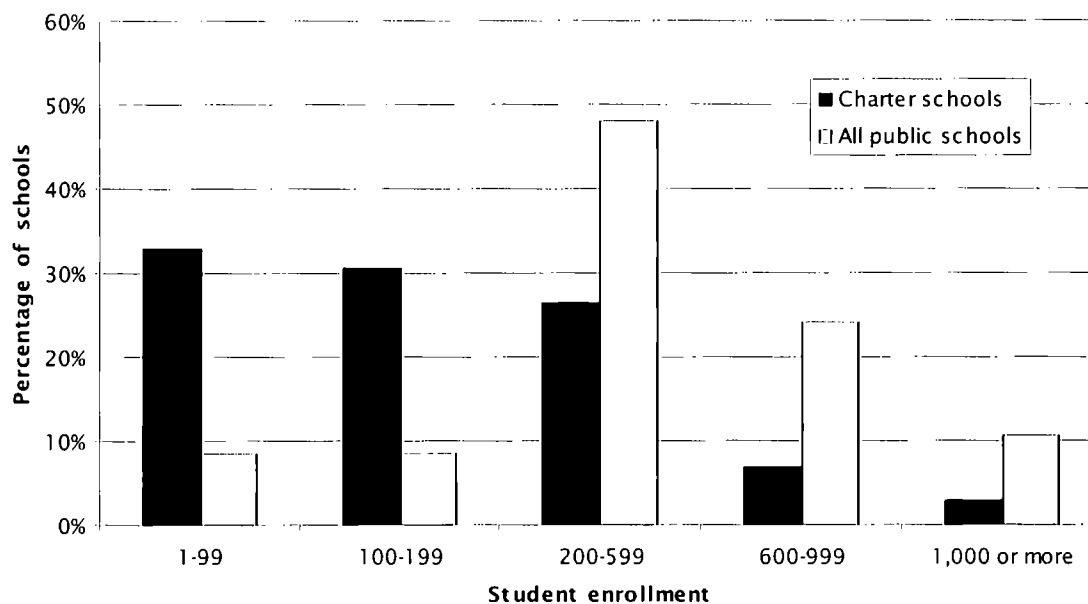
Estimated School Size for Charter Schools and All Public Schools in the 27 Charter States

	All public schools	Charter school sites	Charter School Creation Status		
			Newly created	Pre-existing public	Pre-existing private
Number of schools	56,640	1,046	704	173	98
Median number of students	475	137	128	368	159
School Enrollment Range	% of schools				
1–99	8.6	34.8	36.5	19.1	32.7
100–199	8.6	30.4	32.5	19.7	35.7
200–599	48.2	25.6	26.1	27.2	28.6
600–999	24.2	6.4	3.4	23.7	2.0
1,000 or more	10.6	1.2	1.4	10.4	1.0

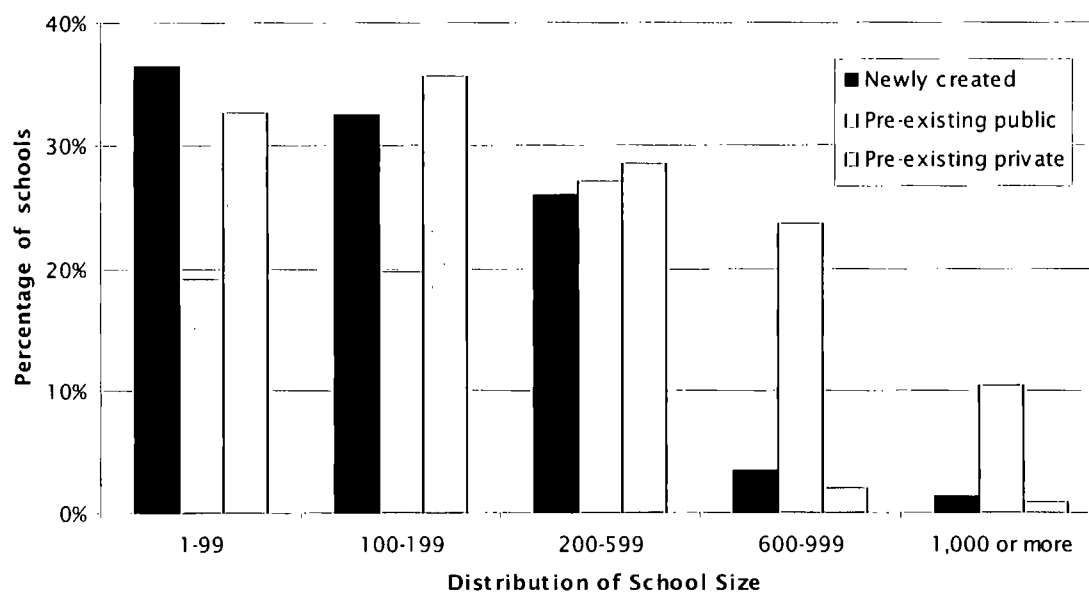
NOTE: The third column called "Charter school sites" includes data for 1,046 charter schools and is based on 2 sources of data: (1) responses from 1,010 open charter schools and individual branches that responded to the survey and (2) enrollment data for 36 charter schools from state-level sources. The percentages in columns 4, 5, and 6 for the different types of charter schools includes data on all 975 charter schools that responded to the survey; we were unable to obtain information on charter school creation status for the 36 charter schools for whom enrollment data was obtained from state-level sources.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data Survey, 1997–98.

Estimated Distribution of School Size for Charter Schools and All Public Schools



Estimated Distribution of School Size for Newly Created and Pre-existing Charter Schools



B. BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF CHARTER SCHOOLS

GRADE LEVEL CONFIGURATION

State charter laws give charter developers the freedom to choose the grade structure and age range of the students their schools will serve. A large number of charter schools have chosen to reduce the number of transitions from school to school by keeping their students at the same school for an extended period of time. At least twice as many charter schools as compared to all public schools served students in K-8, K-12, or ungraded grade spans. In addition, the vast majority of charter schools that reported "other" grade configurations served students in at least two of the traditional elementary, middle, and high school grade configurations.

- In 1998–99, about one-half (52 percent) of all charter schools were structured according to a traditional grade-level configuration of elementary, middle, or high school as compared to more than three-fourths (78 percent) of all public schools in the 27 charter states (in 1997–98).
- In comparison to other public schools, almost 3 times as many charter schools spanned kindergarten through 8th grade (16 percent), almost 4 times as many charter schools spanned kindergarten through 12th grade (8 percent), almost twice as many charter schools spanned the middle-high grades (10 percent), and over twice as many charter schools had "other" grade configurations (5 percent).
- The highest percentage of both charter and other public schools were elementary schools—but nearly twice as many other public schools were elementary (47 percent) as compared to charter schools (25 percent).
- The high school grade configuration was the only one with approximately equal percentages in both charter (17 percent) and other public schools (15 percent). Pre-existing public charter schools were more likely to be high schools (23 percent) than were either newly created (16 percent) or pre-existing private charter schools (10 percent). Charter schools that were pre-existing private or newly created were more likely to serve primary, K–8, K–12, and other grade levels than were pre-existing public schools.

Estimated Grade Level Distribution for Charter Schools and All Public Schools in the 27 Charter States¹

Number of schools	All public schools 56,640	Charter schools 975	Charter School Creation Status		
			Newly created 704	Pre-existing public 173	Pre-existing private 98
			% of schools		
Primary	6.0	8.0	8.2	4.6	12.2
Elementary	46.9	25.2	23.2	35.8	21.4
Middle	15.2	9.7	11.5	8.1	0.0
K–8	5.6	15.7	15.8	9.8	25.5
Middle-high	5.7	9.9	9.8	9.8	11.2
High	15.4	16.6	16.1	22.5	10.2
K–12	2.3	8.0	8.0	5.2	13.3
Other	2.2	5.0	5.8	1.7	5.1
Ungraded	0.8	1.7	1.7	2.3	1.0

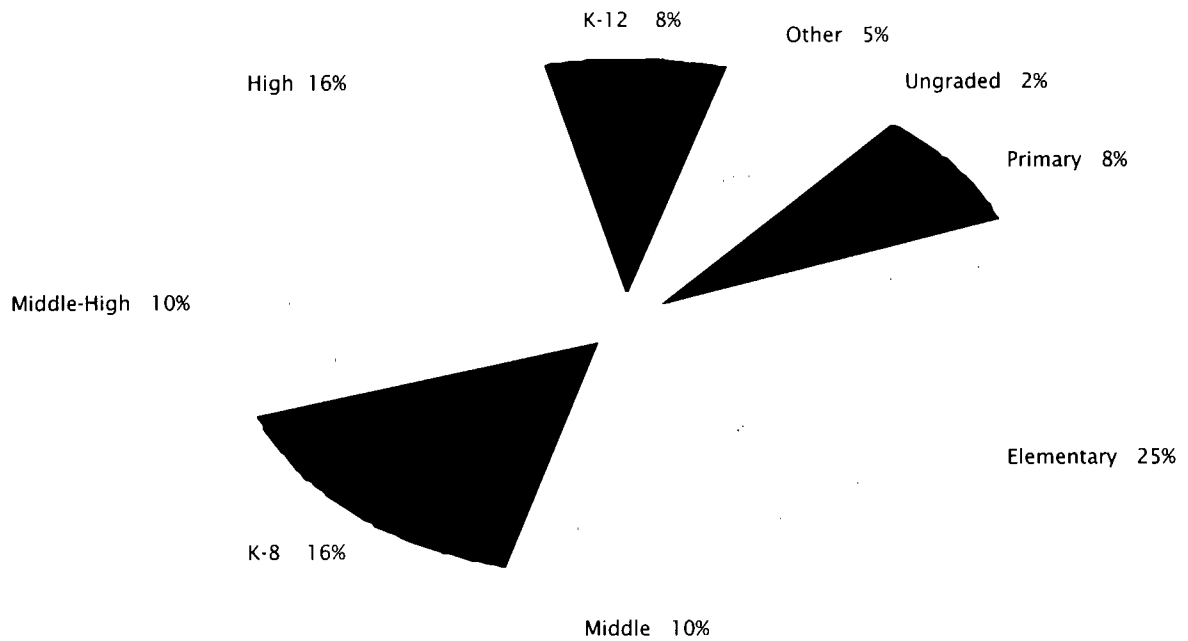
NOTE: These data are based on responses from all 975 open charter schools that responded to the survey.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data Survey, 1997–98.

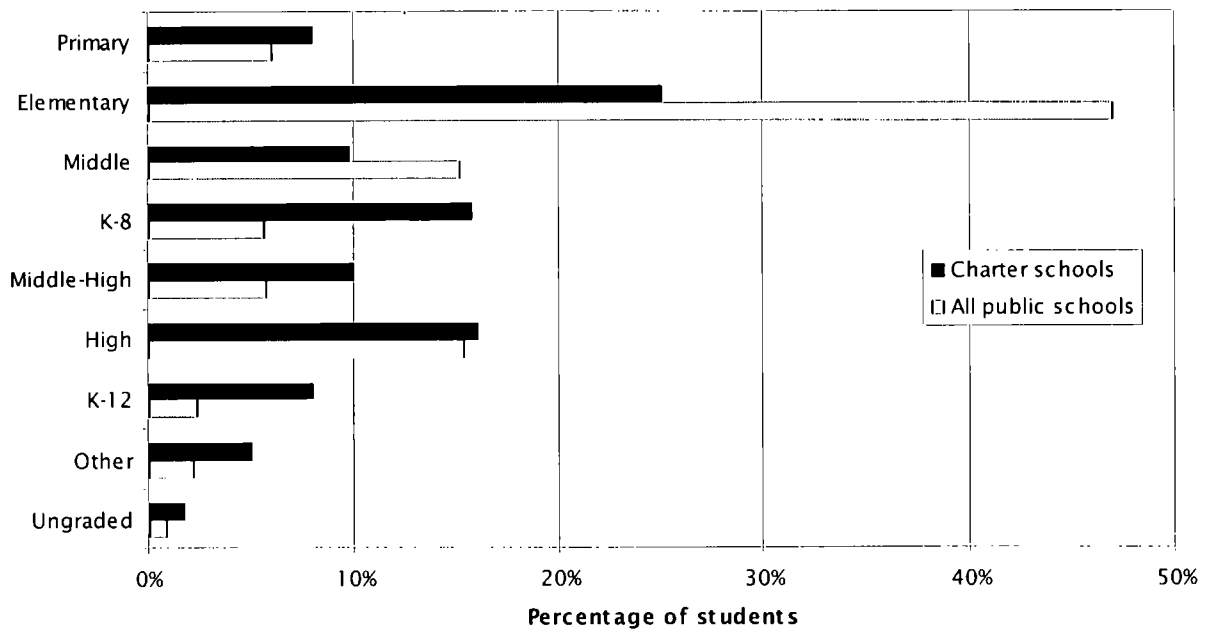
¹ Grade levels are defined as follows: Primary includes only grades K–3; Elementary includes any of grades K–3 and at least one of grades 4–6; Middle includes any of grades 5–8 and no grades K–4 or 9–12; K–8 includes any of grades K–1, and any of grades 4–6 and any of grades 7–8 and no grades 9–12; Middle-high includes any of grades 6–8 and any of grades 9–12 and no grades K–5; High includes any of grades 9–12 and no grades K–8; K–12 includes any of grades K–3 and any of grades 4–6 and any of grades 7–8 and any of grades 9–12; Other includes all other grade breakdowns; Ungraded indicates that no grade levels are used at the school.

6. Grade Level Configuration

Estimated Grade Level Distribution for Charter Schools



Estimated Grade Level Distribution for Charter Schools and All Public Schools in the 27 Charter States



B. BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF CHARTER SCHOOLS

STUDENT TO TEACHER RATIO

Many charter school developers reported that they created their schools in part to provide smaller classes and that parents often chose their schools because their class sizes were low. Using a common approximation of class size—the student to teacher ratio—we found that class sizes were slightly smaller, on average, in charter schools than in other public schools, although there was variation across schools with different grade configurations. Charter school class sizes varied more than class sizes in other public schools. Class sizes at charter schools were likely to be smaller when compared to other public schools at schools that served younger students. Charter schools that served high-school students tended to have class sizes that were the same or larger than other public schools.

- In 1998–99, most charter schools had a slightly lower teacher to student ratio than did all public schools in the 27 charter states (in 1997–98). The median student to teacher ratio for charter schools was 16.0 as compared to 17.2 for all public schools.
- The difference between charter and all public schools in the median teacher to student ratio was about two students per teacher at the primary, K–12, and “other” grade levels. The gap was less than one at the elementary, K–8, middle, middle-high, and high school levels.
- The most noticeable difference between the charter school and the all public school median student to teacher ratio was at the ungraded schools, with ungraded charter schools having a much higher student to teacher ratio, 18.8 students per teacher, as compared to 8.8 students per teacher in other public schools.
- A higher proportion of all public schools had student to teacher ratios in the mid-range (16–20 students per teacher), while charter schools were more likely to have both smaller and larger class sizes. Some cases of high student to teacher ratios for charter schools—especially at the high school level—may reflect the school’s use of non-traditional educational approaches such as self-paced computer assisted instruction and distance learning.

Student to Teacher Ratio for Charter Schools and all Public Schools in the 27 Charter States¹

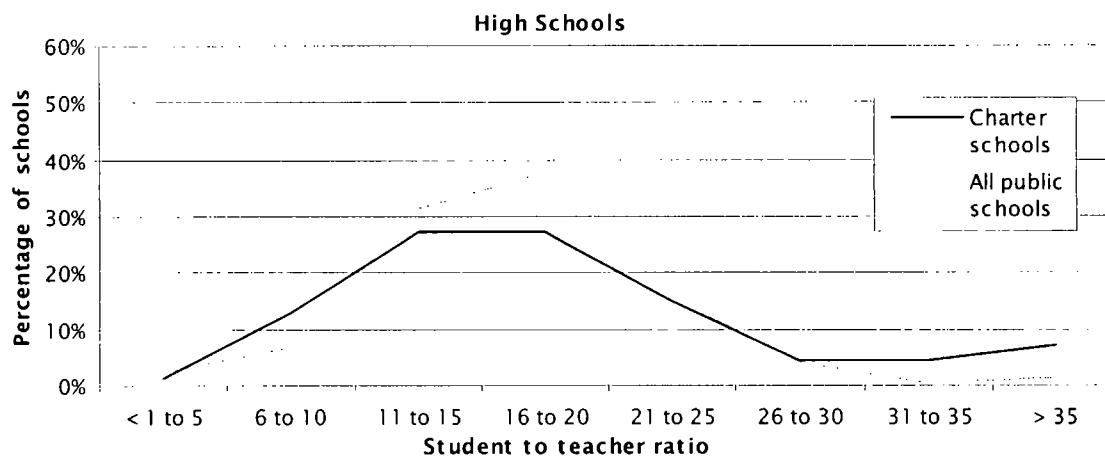
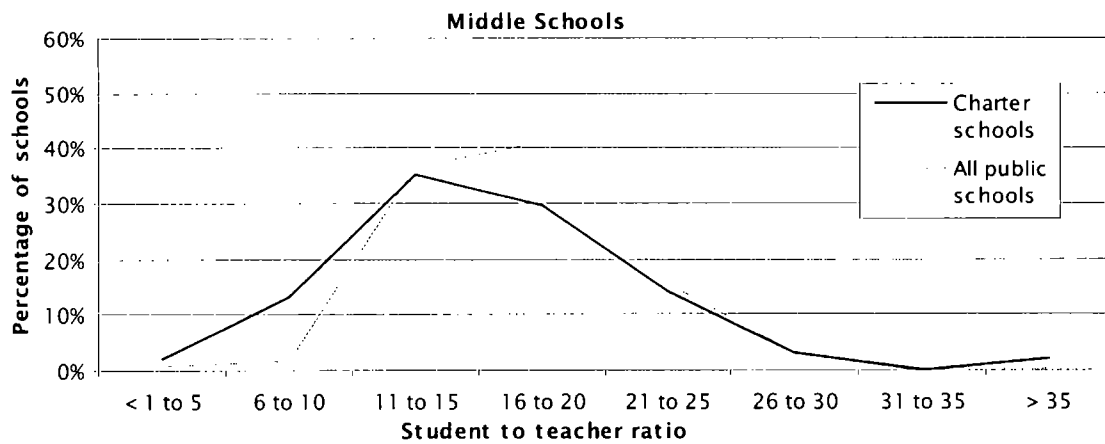
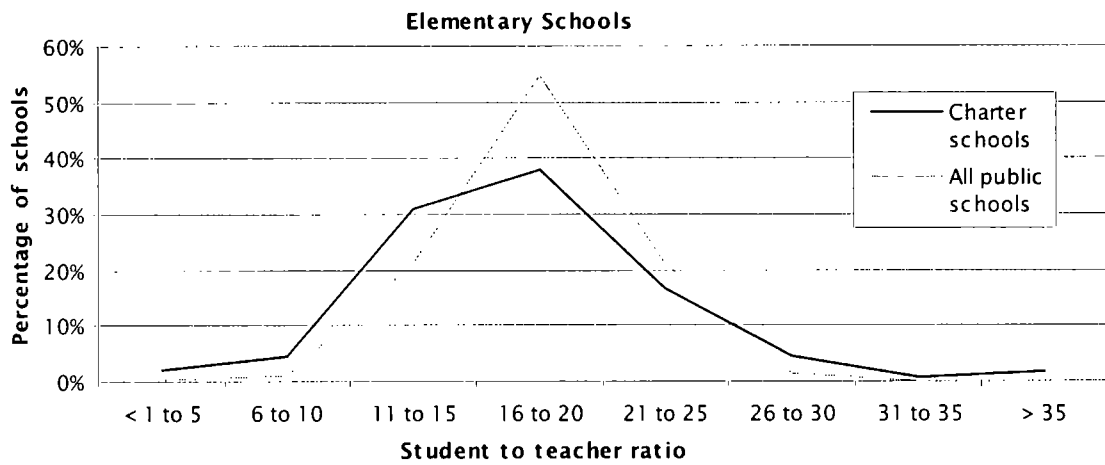
	Charter schools		All public schools	
	Number of schools	Median student-teacher ratio	Number of schools	Median student-teacher ratio
Total	945	16.0	51,505	17.2
Primary	77	15.8	2,880	17.6
Elementary	238	17.1	24,596	17.8
K–8	151	16.3	2,985	17.0
Middle	91	15.4	8,015	16.4
Middle-high	95	15.0	2,532	14.9
High	154	16.4	7,859	16.5
K–12	73	15.0	1,179	13.1
Other	49	14.6	1,097	16.1
Ungraded	17	18.8	362	8.8

NOTE: These data are based on responses from 945 of the 975 open charter schools that responded to the survey. Of the missing 30 schools, 20 did not respond to the relevant survey questions and 10 which reported zero instructional staff were removed from the computation.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data Survey, 1997–98.

¹ We were able to obtain all public schools data on the number of students and the number of classroom teachers by school. Similarly, most of the charter schools (828 out of 945) provided information on number of full-time equivalent teachers, including regular classroom teachers, special area or resource teachers, and long-term substitutes. This number of teachers excludes instructional aides. Because of differing survey questions from year to year, the remaining 117 schools that did not complete a 1999 survey were asked to provide information on instructional staff, including certified classroom teachers, noncertified classroom teachers, resource teachers, certified special education teachers, and other instructional staff (excluding instructional aides). The definition of number of classroom teachers will therefore vary somewhat according to the year in which the school responded.

Estimated Percentage of Instructional Staff in Charter Schools and All Public Schools in the 27 Charter States



B. BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF CHARTER SCHOOLS

COMPUTERS FOR INSTRUCTION

Computers are essential tools in today's technological workplaces. One way in which schools can help prepare their students for the future is to provide significant exposure to computers at an early age. The varied nature of each school's educational vision in combination with often limited finances may determine the extent to which schools view technology as a priority. Most charter school classrooms were equipped with computers for instruction, student-computer ratios were low, and the majority of computers were capable of running advanced applications. These findings are similar to the findings reported last year, although this year there was a decrease in the percentage of schools reporting no classrooms with computers used for instruction.

- Averaging across schools, the estimated mean student to computer ratio in charter schools was 8.9 students per computer, which was slightly lower than the estimated average (10.0 students per computer) for all public schools in 1996-97.¹ Two-thirds of our sample of charter schools had a student to computer ratio of fewer than 10 students per computer and almost one-third had student to computer ratios of less than 5 students per computer. Of the charter schools that reported having computers, the estimated median student to computer ratio was 6.2 students per computer.
- Of those charter schools that used computers for instruction, nearly two-thirds (66 percent) had at least three-quarters of their computers capable of running multimedia applications. Only a small proportion of charter schools (6 percent) did not have any computers capable of running advanced applications.
- The majority of charter schools made student use of computers a part of classroom instruction—96 percent of charter schools had classrooms equipped with computers. Approximately two-thirds (67 percent) of these charter schools had computers available for instruction in more than three-quarters of their classrooms. Only 13 percent of the schools with computers available for student instruction had no classrooms with computers.

Estimated Student to Computer Ratio for a Selected Sample of Charter Schools

Total in sample	# of schools	921	% of schools
1 to less than 5	277		30.1
5 to less than 10	332		36.0
10 or more	275		29.9
0 computers used for instruction	37		4.0

Estimated Percentage of Charter Schools Using Computers in their Classrooms and Percentage of Computers Capable of Running Multimedia Applications

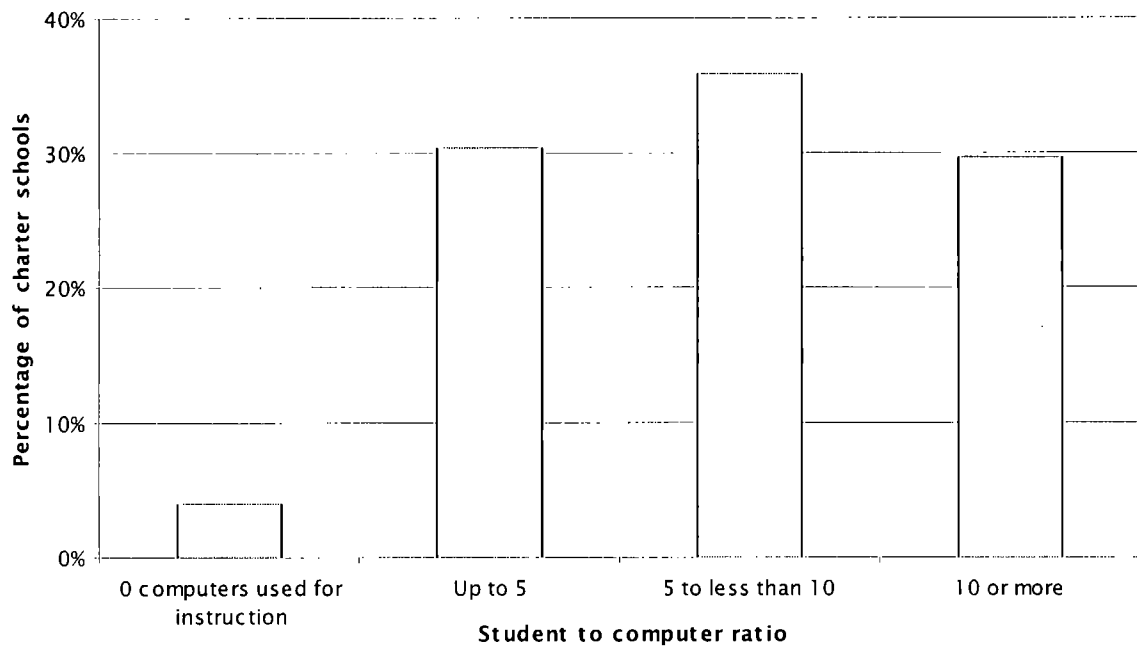
Total in sample	Charter schools that have the following proportion of			
	Classrooms with computers used for instruction		Computers with multimedia capacity ¹	
	# of schools	% of schools	# of schools	% of schools
	882		876	
None	116	13.2	49	5.6
Up to one-quarter	77	8.7	80	9.1
One-quarter to one-half	66	7.5	105	12.0
One-half to three-quarters	33	3.7	68	7.8
Three-quarters to all	590	66.9	574	65.5

NOTE: These data are based on responses from 921 of the 975 open charter schools that responded to the survey and provided information on computers for instruction (4 schools were excluded because their student to computer ratios were too high to be considered valid). The second table relies on the 888 open charter schools that reported they had at least one computer. In columns 2 and 3, 6 schools did not report on percent of classrooms with computers, and in columns 4 and 5, 12 schools did not report on the percentage of multimedia computers.

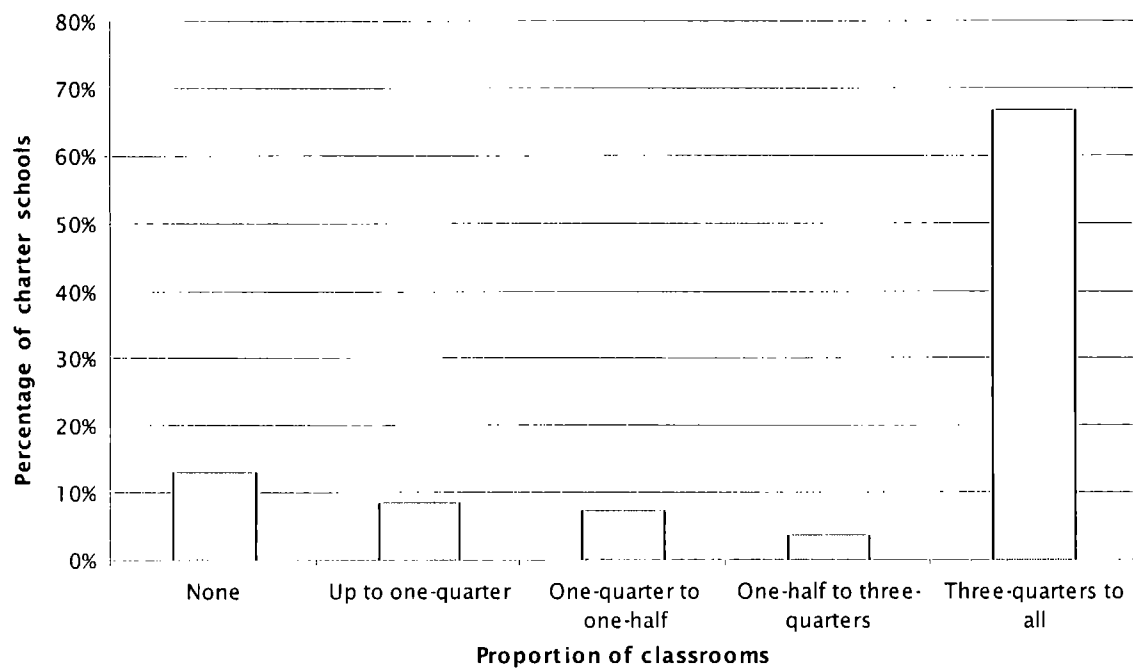
¹ Computers and Classrooms: The Status of Technology in U.S. High Schools. May 1997, Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service, Policy Information Center. This average represents all 50 states.

² The distribution of schools with multimedia or advanced capacity is similar across charter schools without regard to the number of computers at the school with one exception, schools with 10 or fewer computers are less likely to have multimedia capacity than schools with more than 10.

Estimated Student to Computer Ratio for a Selected Sample of Charter Schools



Estimated Percentage of Classrooms in Charter Schools with Computers Used for Instruction



C. STUDENTS OF CHARTER SCHOOLS

STUDENT RACIAL/ETHNIC COMPOSITION	30
SCHOOL RACIAL/ETHNIC DISTRIBUTION	32
STUDENT ELIGIBILITY FOR FREE AND REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH	34
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C. STUDENTS OF CHARTER SCHOOLS

STUDENT RACIAL/ETHNIC COMPOSITION

Critics and advocates alike have feared that charter schools would primarily serve white students. This has not turned out to be the case. Overall, charter schools enrolled a larger percentage of students of color than all public schools in the states with open charter schools. Over the last 3 years, the percentage of white students served by charter schools has slightly declined. At the local level, most charter schools had about the same proportion of white students (within 20 percent) as their surrounding districts.

- In 1998–99, using the total number of students as the base for calculation, charter schools enrolled approximately 11 percent fewer white students than all public schools (48 percent versus 59 percent) in the 27 charter states (in 1997–98). Charter schools were more likely than all public schools to serve black students (almost 24 percent versus 17 percent) and Hispanic students (21 percent versus 18 percent).
- In order to examine the racial/ethnic variability across schools, we also calculated the average of the schools' racial/ethnic percentages. On average, charter schools enrolled a significantly lower percentage of white students (50 percent versus 63 percent) and a much larger percentage of black students (27 percent versus 17 percent) than all public schools in the 27 charter states.
- The percentage of white students in charter schools declined from 52 percent in the 1996–97 school year to about 48 percent in the 1998–99 school year.
- Sixty-nine percent of charter schools were within 20 percent of their surrounding district's percentage of nonwhite students, while almost 18 percent had a distinctly higher percentage of students of color than their surrounding district. Approximately 14 percent of schools had a lower percentage of students of color than their surrounding district.

Racial/Ethnic Composition of Charter School Students Compared to All Public School Students in the 27 Charter States

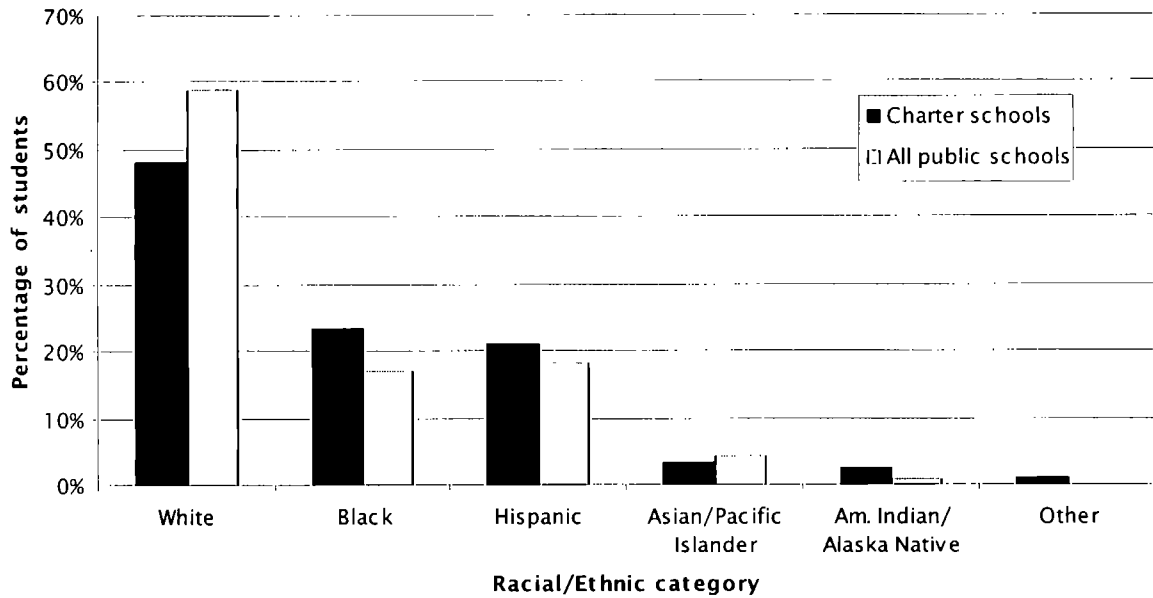
Racial/ethnic categories	Students				Schools	
	# of students in category		% of students in category		Average of school % of students in racial category	
	Charter schools	All public schools	Charter schools	All public schools	Charter schools	All public schools
Total Number	230,299	30,689,016			927	54,749
White, not of Hispanic origin	110,434	18,102,767	48.2	59.0	50.0	62.7
Black, not of Hispanic origin	53,926	5,289,814	23.5	17.2	26.8	16.6
Hispanic	48,352	5,657,976	21.1	18.4	16.2	15.8
Asian or Pacific Islander	7,687	1,354,509	3.4	4.4	2.4	3.4
American Indian or Alaska Native	5,976	283,950	2.6	1.0	3.8	1.5
Other ¹	2,712	NA	1.2	NA	0.9	NA

NOTE: The data for the table on this page are based on responses from 927 of the 975 open charter schools that responded to the survey. The 927 schools were those with valid racial data; that is, schools where the number of students in the racial/ethnic categories was equal to the total student enrollment reported. The data comparing charter student racial/ethnic composition to their surrounding districts on the facing page are based on responses from 924 of the 975 open charter schools that responded to our survey and where the relevant district could be identified.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data Survey, 1997–98.

¹ The National Center for Education Statistics does not report an "other" racial category.

Charter School Enrollment by Race Compared to Public School Enrollment in the 27 Charter States



Student Racial Composition of Charter Schools Compared to their Surrounding Districts²

69% of charter schools are not distinct from the district [within 20% of district average]

17% of charter schools have a higher % non-white students than the district [>20% above district average]

14% of charter schools have a lower % non-white students than the district [>20% below district average]

² In general, we relied on schools to report their surrounding district when they responded to the survey. In a few cases where schools did not report district information, we were able to match charter schools and districts by zip code using the 1997-98 Common Core of Data Survey.

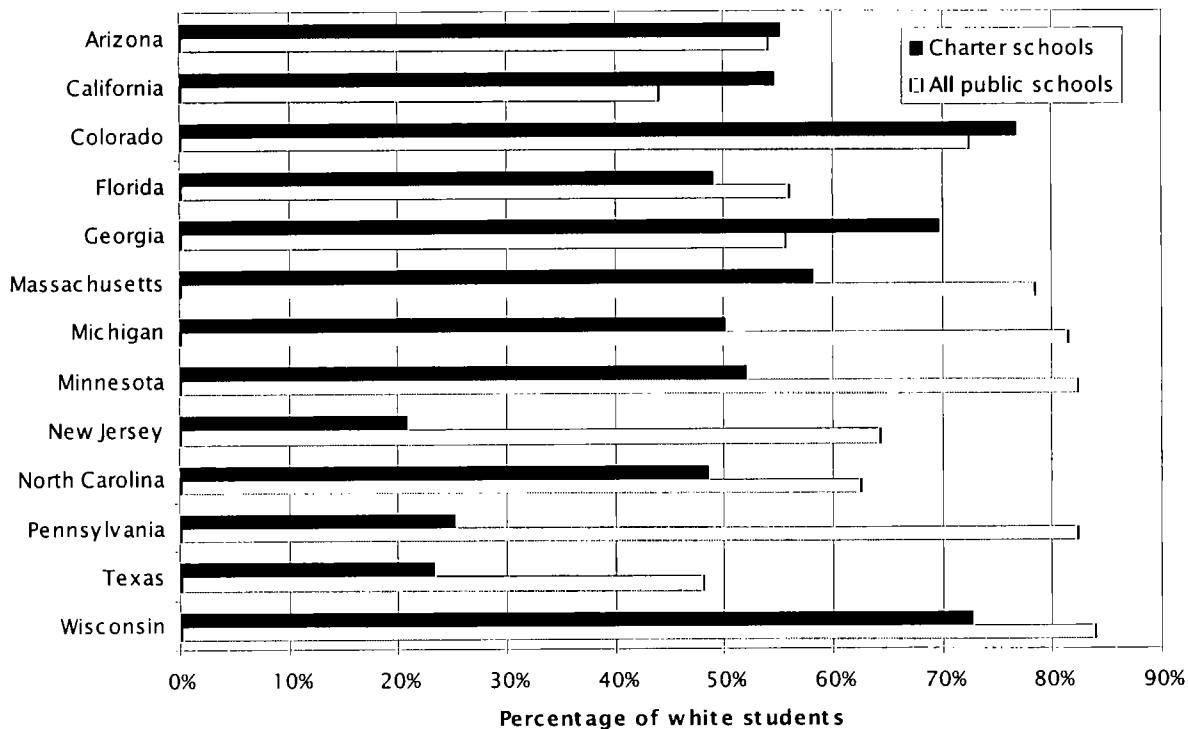
C. STUDENTS OF CHARTER SCHOOLS

STUDENT RACIAL/ETHNIC DISTRIBUTION

The racial/ethnic composition of students in both charter schools and all public schools varies greatly by state. In most states, the racial/ethnic distribution of charter schools did not mirror the distribution in all public schools. Charter schools in approximately three-fifths of the charter states enrolled a higher percentage of nonwhite students than all public schools in those states. In slightly less than one-fifth of the charter states, charter schools enrolled a lower percentage of nonwhite students.

- In 1998–99, charter schools in 19 states enrolled an equal or greater percentage (by at least 5 percent) of nonwhite students than all public schools in those states (in 1997–98).
- In 14 states, the percentage of nonwhite students enrolled in charter schools was higher (by at least 5 percent) than the percentage of nonwhite students in all public schools. Charter schools in 6 of the 13 states that had 20 or more charter schools—Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Texas—enrolled at least 20 percent more nonwhite students than all public schools in those states.
- In six states, charter schools and all public schools served approximately the same percentage of nonwhite students (within 5 percent). Two of these states (Arizona and Colorado) had more than 20 charter schools.
- Charter schools in four states enrolled fewer nonwhite students (by at least 5 percent) than all public schools in those states. In 2 of the 13 states that had more than 20 charter schools—California and Georgia—charter schools enrolled at least 10 percent fewer nonwhite students than all public schools in those states.
- For students of color, the distribution of black students in charter schools showed the greatest variation in comparison to all public schools. Charter schools in 15 states enrolled a higher percentage of black students (by at least 5 percent) than all public schools in those states. Charter schools enrolled lower percentages of black students (by at least 5 percent) than all public schools in three states.

Estimated Average of School Racial Percentages across Charter Schools and All Public Schools in States with more than 20 Charter Schools



10. Student Racial/Ethnic Distribution

Estimated Average of School Racial Percentages Across Charter Schools and All Public Schools

State		# of schools	% White	% Black	% Hispanic	% Asian/ Pac. Is.	% Am.Indian Alaska Native	% Other ¹
Alaska	charter	13	70.7	2.6	2.6	1.6	22.4	0.1
	all public	497	46.9	2.5	1.7	2.7	46.3	
Arizona	charter	155	55.1	7.8	23.4	1.3	12.1	0.4
	all public	1,385	54.0	4.5	31.3	1.5	8.7	
California	charter	143	54.5	10.8	26.6	4.4	2.5	1.1
	all public	8,177	44.0	8.4	36.4	9.7	1.5	
Colorado	charter	57	76.6	6.0	14.0	2.0	0.9	0.4
	all public	1,497	72.4	4.5	19.8	2.1	1.3	
Connecticut	charter	16	32.5	45.0	21.0	1.0	0.5	0.0
	all public	1,058	71.4	14.3	11.8	2.3	0.3	
District of Columbia	charter	14	1.0	74.3	19.9	3.6	0.0	1.3
	all public	170	4.9	86.5	7.1	1.5	0.1	
Delaware	charter	4	56.2	39.0	2.6	2.2	0.0	0.0
	all public	185	60.4	32.7	5.1	1.7	0.2	
Florida	charter	60	48.8	40.3	9.6	0.5	0.2	0.6
	all public	2,877	56.0	28.6	13.8	1.4	0.3	
Georgia	charter	25	69.6	23.4	3.4	2.1	0.2	1.3
	all public	1,823	55.6	39.6	3.0	1.5	0.1	
Illinois	charter	11	8.6	67.0	23.2	1.0	0.1	0.1
	all public	4,228	69.4	19.0	9.3	2.2	0.1	
Kansas	charter	14	90.2	1.2	6.4	0.5	1.4	0.4
	all public	1,451	85.1	6.5	6.0	1.3	1.1	
Louisiana	charter	10	25.0	72.4	0.4	0.7	1.2	0.3
	all public	1,476	49.4	47.9	1.1	1.0	0.7	
Massachusetts	charter	32	58.0	20.1	13.8	2.0	1.1	4.2
	all public	1,830	78.4	8.7	9.0	3.8	0.2	
Michigan	charter	121	50.0	41.4	4.6	0.8	2.1	1.1
	all public	3,139	81.3	12.7	3.3	1.5	1.3	
Minnesota	charter	37	51.9	26.7	3.4	10.3	7.0	0.7
	all public	1,553	82.2	7.2	3.0	4.5	3.1	
New Jersey	charter	21	20.6	62.1	13.5	3.3	0.1	0.4
	all public	2,313	64.3	17.7	12.5	5.3	0.2	
New Mexico	charter	5	35.3	2.1	56.8	1.3	4.5	0.0
	all public	743	36.7	2.1	49.3	0.8	11.2	
North Carolina	charter	51	48.4	47.3	1.6	0.6	1.3	0.8
	all public	1,753	62.4	31.8	2.6	1.4	1.6	
Ohio	charter	7	44.1	49.8	1.0	0.0	0.0	5.2
	all public	3,842	83.6	14.0	1.4	0.9	0.1	
Pennsylvania	charter	22	25.1	59.1	13.8	1.8	0.0	0.1
	all public	3,113	82.3	12.9	3.2	1.5	0.1	
South Carolina	charter	4	23.1	72.3	0.0	0.0	4.6	0.0
	all public	1,026	52.3	45.9	1.0	0.7	0.2	
Texas	charter	72	23.1	33.9	39.5	2.5	0.4	0.6
	all public	7,062	48.0	13.9	36.3	1.6	0.3	
Wisconsin	charter	26	72.6	16.0	2.7	2.8	5.3	0.7
	all public	2,112	83.3	8.8	3.2	2.6	1.5	

NOTE: These data are based on responses from 927 of the 975 open charter schools that responded to the survey. Of the 927 schools, 7 schools in 4 states (Hawaii, Idaho, Mississippi, and Rhode Island) are not displayed in the table because each state has 3 or fewer charter schools which provided information on racial/ethnic distribution and percentages are not meaningful. All schools in this chart have valid racial data; that is, schools where the number of students in the racial/ethnic categories was equal to the total student enrollment reported.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data Survey, 1997-98.

¹ The National Center for Education Statistics does not report an "other" racial category.

C. STUDENTS OF CHARTER SCHOOLS

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY FOR FREE OR REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH

Students' eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch under the National School Lunch program is a common measure of economic disadvantage. Over the last 2 years, the percentage of eligible charter school students has increased. In contrast to last year when charter schools served a slightly lower percentage of economically disadvantaged students than all public schools in the 27 charter states, this year charter schools served a slightly higher percentage.

- In 1998–99, charter schools served a slightly higher percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch than all public schools (in 1994–95) in the 27 charter states (39 percent versus 37 percent).
- The percentage of eligible charter students ranged from 4 percent in Alaska to 95 percent in South Carolina. This variation was much greater than in all public schools in the 27 charter states, which ranged from almost 23 percent in Connecticut to 60 percent in the District of Columbia.
- In six of the charter states—Alaska, California, Colorado, Delaware, Georgia, and New Mexico—the percentage of eligible students was at least 10 points lower in charter schools than in all public schools.
- The percentage of eligible students was at least 10 points higher in charter than in all public schools in 11 of the charter states: Connecticut, Illinois, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Texas.
- In Michigan and California, the percentage of eligible students charter schools and all public schools enrolled was within 10 points last year. This year, charters in Michigan served at least 10 percent more and charters in California served at least 10 percent fewer eligible students than all public schools in those states. In Michigan, recently opened schools have higher percentages of eligible students and in California recently opened schools have lower percentages of eligible students, especially in newly created schools.

Estimated Number of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Lunch in the 27 Charter States

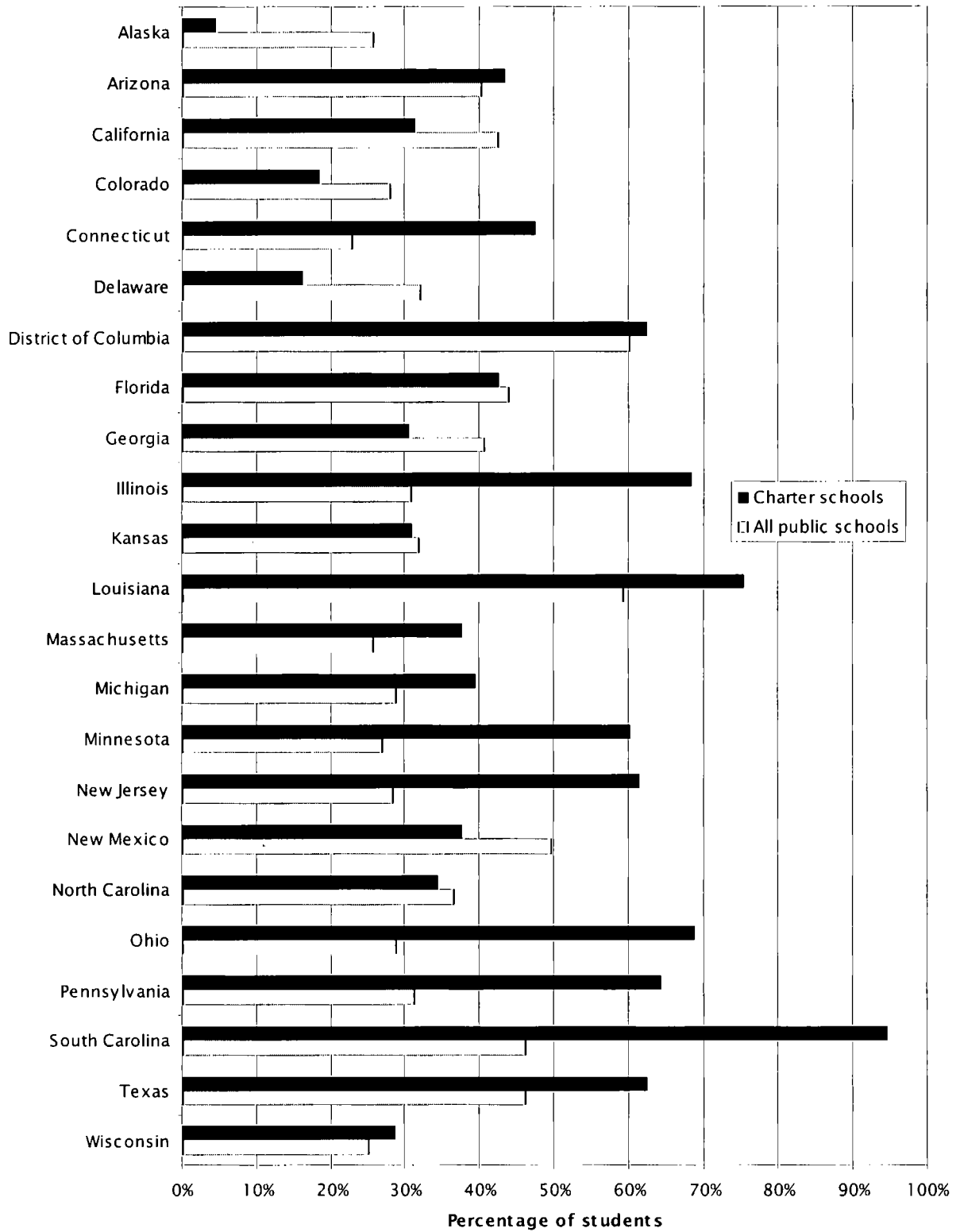
	Charter schools (1998–99)		All public schools (1994–95)	
	# eligible students	% of all students	# eligible students	% of all students
Total	94,246	38.7	11,016,537	37.3
Alaska	88	4.3	32,340	25.7
Arizona	13,915	43.2	284,357	40.1
California	22,691	31.1	2,257,008	42.4
Colorado	2,522	18.2	174,023	27.8
Connecticut	764	47.4	113,221	22.8
Delaware	157	15.9	33,738	32.0
District of Columbia	1,733	62.3	48,370	60.0
Florida	3,803	42.4	895,510	43.9
Georgia	5,638	30.3	501,824	40.6
Illinois	2,275	68.3	583,238	30.8
Kansas	476	30.8	145,115	31.7
Louisiana	1,197	75.3	474,608	59.3
Massachusetts	3,620	37.4	225,110	25.6
Michigan	9,937	39.3	459,747	28.7
Minnesota	2,807	60.1	217,376	26.8
New Jersey	2,449	61.2	326,022	28.3
New Mexico	1,724	37.5	159,740	49.6
North Carolina	2,721	34.3	413,729	36.5
Ohio	713	68.6	518,635	28.7
Pennsylvania	2,208	64.1	541,793	31.1
South Carolina	344	94.5	297,560	46.2
Texas	11,561	62.2	1,662,900	46.1
Wisconsin	585	28.4	210,011	24.9

NOTE: These data are based on responses from 847 of the 975 open charter schools that responded to the survey. Of the 847 schools, 7 schools in 4 states (Hawaii, Idaho, Mississippi, and Rhode Island) are not displayed in the table because each state has 3 or fewer charter schools that provided information about this question and percentages are not meaningful. The "Total" row includes data from all 27 of the charter states.

SOURCE: The numerator (eligibility counts by state) was drawn from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services, Program Information Division, for 1994–95, the last year eligibility was published for just public schools. The denominator was drawn from the 1998 *Digest of Education Statistics*, U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (1993 data), to obtain data from a year close to the numerator.

11. Student Eligibility for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

Percentage of Students Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch in Charter Schools and All Public Schools



C. STUDENTS OF CHARTER SCHOOLS

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Like all public schools, charter schools are required to provide access and services to students with disabilities. Over the last 3 years, charter schools have served a slightly lower proportion of students with disabilities than all public schools in the charter states, and this finding continued to be true this year. Across states, the percentage of students with disabilities served by charter schools continued to vary significantly, in part because a higher proportion of charter schools in some states were specifically designed to serve this population of students.

- In 1998–99, charter schools enrolled 3 percent fewer students with disabilities than all public schools (8 percent versus 11 percent) in the 27 charter states (in 1997–98).
- The percentage of students with disabilities in charter schools and all public schools was within 5 percent in most states. Ohio was the only state where the percentage of students with disabilities was at least 5 points higher in charter schools than in all public schools. The percentage of students with disabilities was at least 5 points lower in charter schools than in all public schools in six states: Alaska, Connecticut, Delaware, Louisiana, Michigan, and New Jersey.
- The percentage of students with disabilities varied more from state to state for charter than for all public schools in the 27 charter states. The percentage of charter students with disabilities ranged from 5 percent in Delaware and Louisiana to 18 percent in Florida. In comparison, the percentage of students with disabilities in all public schools in the 27 charter states ranged from 9 percent in Arizona to 16 percent in Massachusetts.
- Last year, the numbers of student with disabilities in charter schools versus all public schools was more than 10 percent higher in Florida and more than 10 percent lower in New Jersey. These differences decreased to 4 percent in Florida and 8 percent in New Jersey this year.

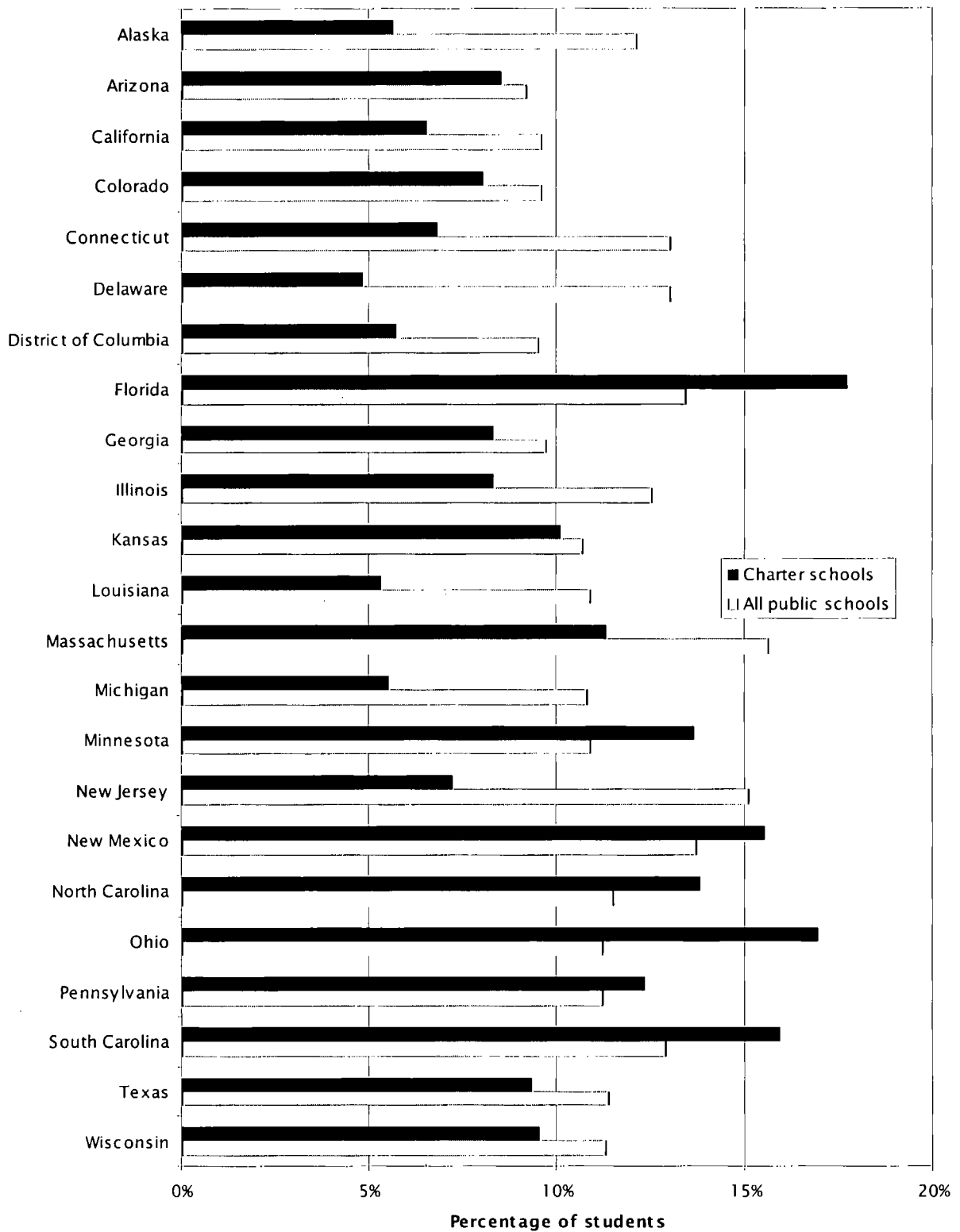
Estimated Number and Percentage of Students with Disabilities in the 27 Charter States

	Charter schools (1998–99)		All public schools (1997–98)	
	# of students	% of students	# of students	% of students
Total	20,571	8.4	3,552,784	11.3
Alaska	114	5.6	16,005	12.1
Arizona	2,744	8.5	75,240	9.2
California	4,681	6.4	547,309	9.6
Colorado	1,114	8.0	65,734	9.6
Connecticut	109	6.8	69,352	13.0
Delaware	47	4.8	14,559	13.0
District of Columbia	159	5.7	7,292	9.5
Florida	1,588	17.7	307,149	13.4
Georgia	1,551	8.3	133,347	9.7
Illinois	276	8.3	250,193	12.5
Kansas	156	10.1	50,027	10.7
Louisiana	84	5.3	84,690	10.9
Massachusetts	1,096	11.3	148,364	15.6
Michigan	1,394	5.5	181,678	10.8
Minnesota	634	13.6	92,966	10.9
New Jersey	289	7.2	189,219	15.1
New Mexico	713	15.5	15,319	13.7
North Carolina	1,095	13.8	142,628	11.5
Ohio	176	16.9	208,954	11.2
Pennsylvania	423	12.3	202,655	11.2
South Carolina	58	15.9	84,223	12.9
Texas	1,745	9.4	443,341	11.4
Wisconsin	195	9.5	100,027	11.3

NOTE: These data are based on 931 of the 975 open charter schools that responded to the survey and reported numbers of students with disabilities. Of the 931 schools in the table, 7 schools in 4 states (Hawaii, Idaho, Mississippi, and Rhode Island) are not displayed because each state has 3 or fewer charter schools which provided information about students with disabilities and percentages are not meaningful. The "Total" row includes data from all 27 of the charter states.

SOURCE: The numerator (number of students served under IDEA) was drawn from the *Twenty-First Annual Report to Congress of the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*, U.S. Department of Education, (forthcoming). The denominator (enrollment in the 27 charter states) was drawn from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data Survey, 1997–98.

Estimated Percentage of Students with Disabilities in Charter Schools and All Public Schools



C. STUDENTS OF CHARTER SCHOOLS

LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT STUDENTS

The percentage of limited English proficient (LEP) students served by charter schools and all public schools was approximately the same; however, the number of LEP students in charter schools and all public schools varied considerably by state. Over the past 3 years, the percentage of LEP students enrolled in charter schools in all charter states has declined as more charter schools have opened in states with lower concentrations of LEP students.

- Charter schools (in 1998–99) and all public schools in the 27 charter states (in 1996–97) both served approximately 10 percent limited English proficient (LEP) students.
- The percentage of LEP students in charter schools varied widely across states. The states with very low or very high percentages of LEP students in charter schools were also the states with very small or very large numbers of LEP students overall.
- In 17 states, charter schools served approximately the same number of LEP students (within 5 percent) as all public schools in those states. Charter schools in three states—Alaska, Colorado, and Florida—served a lower percentage of LEP students than all public schools in those states (by at least 5 percent). In Minnesota and the District of Columbia, charter schools served a higher percentage of LEP students (by at least 5 percent) compared to all public schools in those states.
- The percentage of LEP students enrolled in charter schools declined from almost 13 percent in the 1996–97 school year to 10 percent in the 1998–99 school year.

Estimated Number and Percentage of LEP Students in Charter Schools and All Public Schools in the 27 Charter States

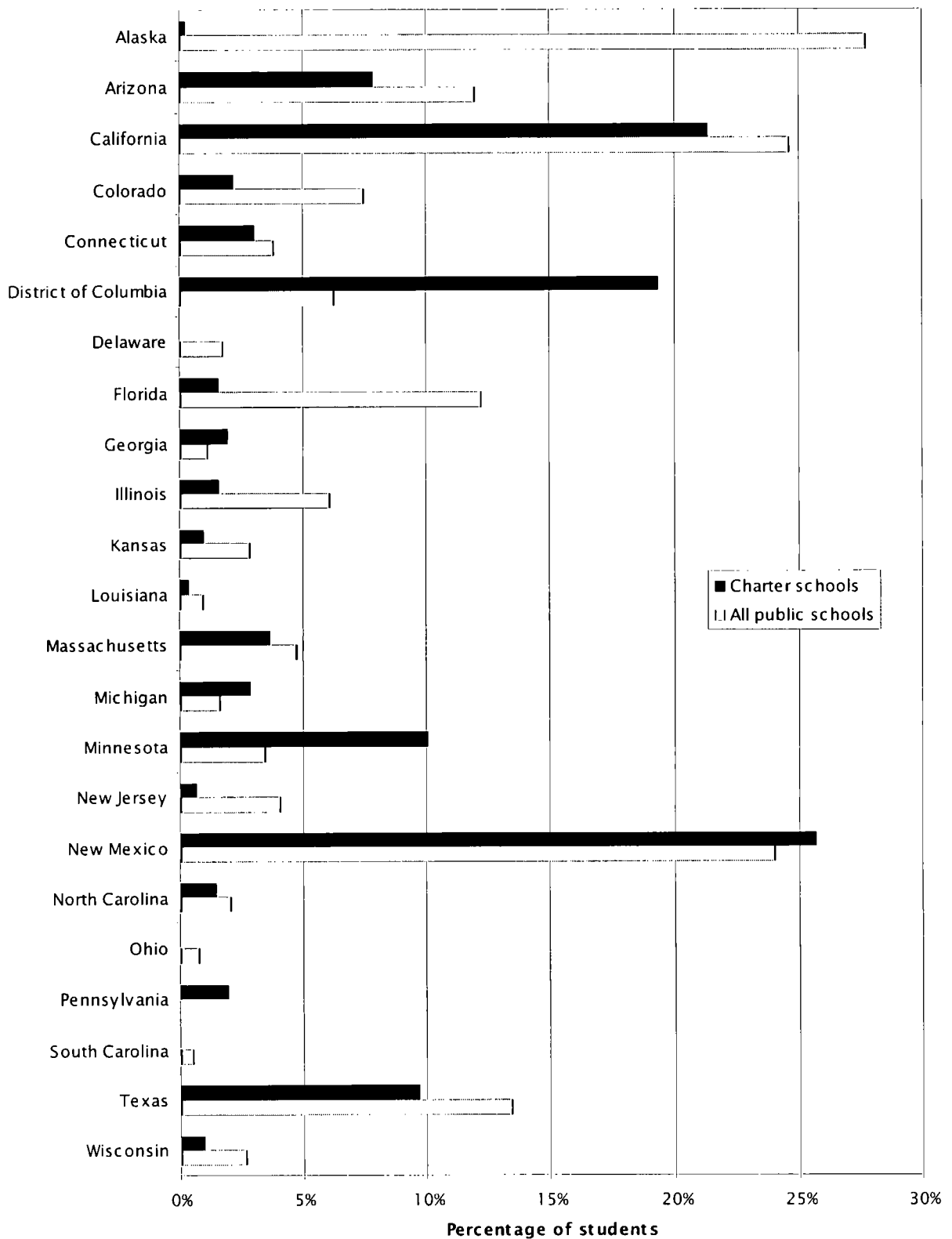
State	Estimated LEP students			
	Charter schools (1998–99)		All public schools (1996–97) ¹	
	# of students	% of students	# of students	% of students
Total	24,248	9.9	2,841,177	9.8
Alaska	4	0.2	34,942	27.7
Arizona	2,511	7.8	93,528	11.9
California	15,563	21.3	1,381,393	24.6
Colorado	298	2.1	24,675	7.4
Connecticut	49	3.0	19,819	3.8
District of Columbia	536	19.3	4,911	6.2
Delaware	0	0.0	1,928	1.7
Florida	135	1.5	288,603	12.2
Georgia	353	1.9	14,339	1.1
Illinois	51	1.5	118,246	6.0
Kansas	14	0.9	12,843	2.8
Louisiana	5	0.3	6,494	0.9
Massachusetts	344	3.6	44,394	4.7
Michigan	703	2.8	25,988	1.6
Minnesota	468	10.0	28,237	3.4
New Jersey	25	0.6	49,300	4.0
New Mexico	1,178	25.6	78,107	24.0
North Carolina	110	1.4	24,771	2.0
Ohio	0	0.0	12,391	0.7
Pennsylvania	67	1.9	NA	NA
South Carolina	0	0.0	3,202	0.5
Texas	1,778	9.6	513,634	13.4
Wisconsin	18	0.9	23,270	2.6

NOTE: These data are based on all 975 open charter schools that responded to the survey. Of the 975 schools, 7 schools from 4 states (Hawaii, Idaho, Mississippi, and Rhode Island) are not displayed in the table because each state has fewer than 3 charter schools which provided information about LEP students and the percentages are not meaningful. The "Total" row includes data from all 27 charter states. For each state, the percentage of LEP students is computed by dividing the number of LEP students by the total number of enrolled students.

SOURCE: Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs, Summary Report of the Survey of the States' Limited English Proficient Students and Available Educational Programs and Services 1996–97: Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 1998.

¹ The total excludes data from the state of Pennsylvania, which did not report information on LEP students for all public schools.

Estimated Number and Percentage of LEP Students in Charter Schools and All Public Schools



D. STARTING, IMPLEMENTING, AND BEING ACCOUNTABLE

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D. STARTING, IMPLEMENTING, AND BEING ACCOUNTABLE

WHY CHARTER SCHOOLS ARE STARTED

Educators, parents, and community leaders found charter schools for a variety of reasons. Regardless of creation status, the primary motivation for founding a charter school was to seek an alternative vision of schooling that could not be realized in the traditional public school system. Newly created schools, in particular, reported on alternative curriculum and instructional approaches and a vision for the organizational climate they wished to create. While vision was also an important founding reason for public and private conversion schools, many pre-existing public schools converted to charter status in order to gain increased autonomy, while many pre-existing private schools sought to attain stable funding and attract students to their educational approach. Increasingly, newly created and pre-existing charter schools are being founded to serve a special population of students. About one in four charter schools established their charter to serve a special population of students, often students considered "at-risk."

- Realizing an alternative vision for schooling was the most important reason for founding charter schools—three-quarters (75 percent) of charter schools cited vision among other reasons for founding and 59 percent of charter schools were founded primarily to realize an alternative vision for schooling.
- More charter schools opening in 1998–99 than those founded prior to 1998 were founded to serve a special population of students. In 1998–99, 28 percent of charter schools were founded with the primary motivation to serve a special population of students as compared to 19 percent of all charter schools founded prior to 1998.
- Regardless of creation status, the primary reason for founding charter schools was to realize an alternative vision for schooling. However, a greater percentage of newly created than pre-existing public or private schools were founded primarily to realize an alternative vision for schooling. About two-thirds of newly created charter schools were founded primarily to realize an alternative vision for schooling (64 percent) whereas less than one-half of pre-existing public schools (44 percent) or pre-existing private schools (39 percent) were founded primarily to realize an alternative vision.
- Other important reasons for founding were dependent on creation status. Approximately one-quarter (26 percent) of the newly created schools were founded primarily to serve a special population. Pre-existing public schools were founded to gain autonomy from state or district regulation (35 percent), or to serve a special population (11 percent). Pre-existing private schools converted to charter to serve a special population (21 percent), to attract students (19 percent), or for financial reasons (16 percent).

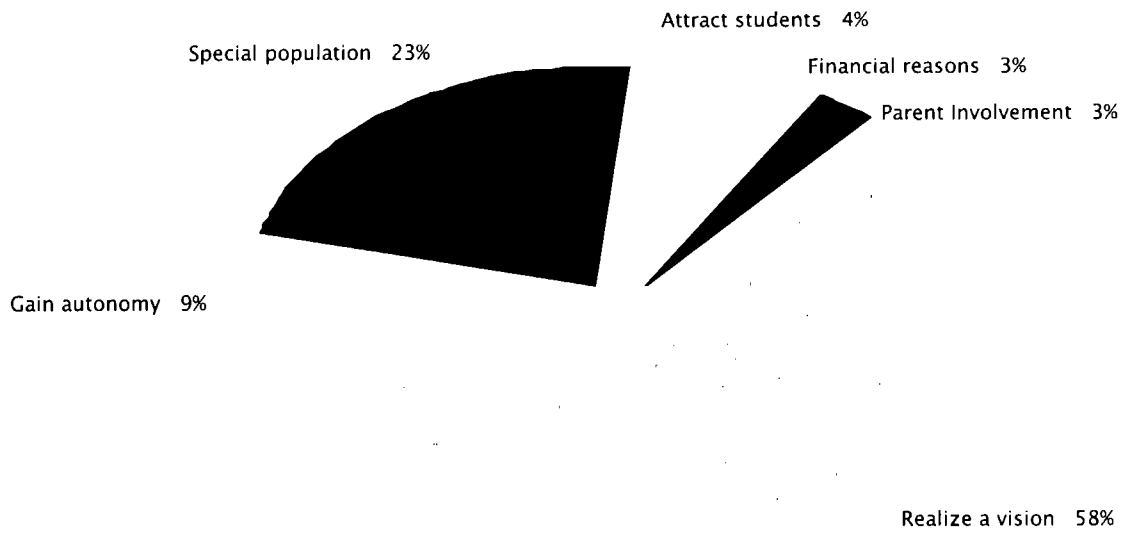
Estimated Percentage of Charter Schools by Reasons for Founding

Reason for founding charter school	Percentage that cited each reason	Percentage that cited <i>most</i> important reason by charter school creation status			
		Total	Newly created	Pre-existing public	Pre-existing private
Number of schools	971	946	688	168	90
		Percentage of schools (%)			
Realize an alternative vision	75.2	59.0	64.4	43.5	38.9
Gain autonomy/flexibility	16.8	8.6	2.9	34.5	4.4
Serve special population	30.4	22.8	25.9	11.3	21.1
Attract students	9.1	3.8	2.3	1.8	18.9
Financial reasons	7.5	3.0	0.7	5.4	15.6
Parent involvement	8.9	2.7	2.8	3.6	1.1

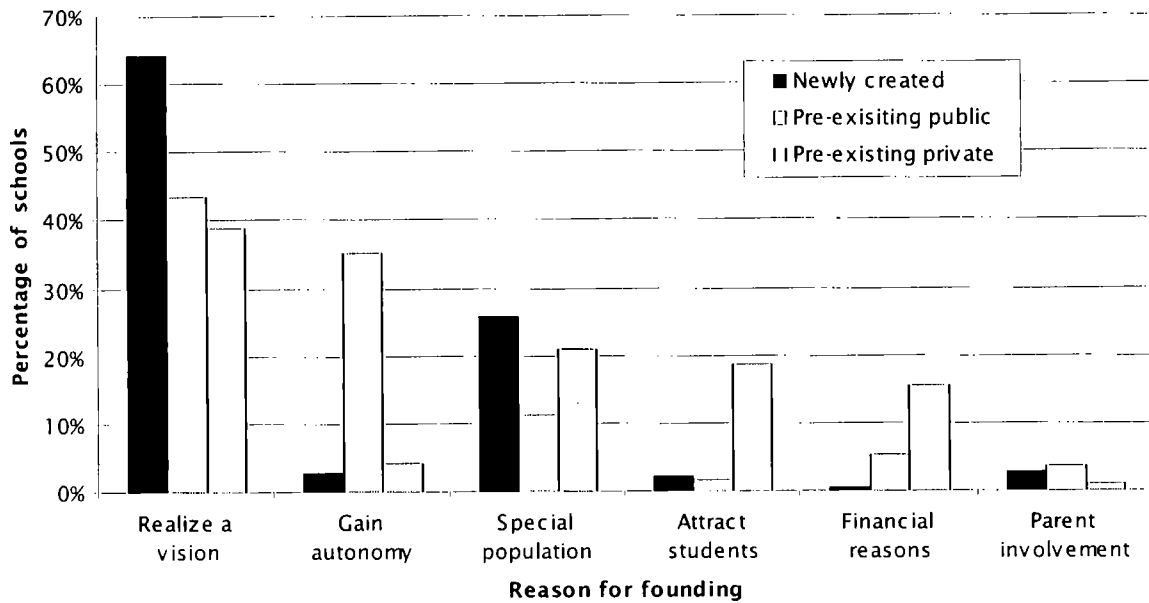
NOTE: These data are based on responses from 971 of the 975 open charter schools that responded to the survey. Schools were asked about their reasons for founding the first time they were surveyed. For data reported in column 2 above, schools were asked the reason for founding their schools and they could reply with more than one reason. For data reported in columns 3 through 6 above, schools were asked to choose one of the named reasons as the primary reason for founding their school; these data are based on responses from 946 of the 971 charter schools because 29 schools did not choose a primary reason—11 gave no response and 18 cited more than one primary reason for founding. The data presented in columns 4 through 6 represent the percentage of the total number of each type of school and includes responses from 168 out of 173 open pre-existing public schools, 90 out of 98 open pre-existing private schools, and 688 out of 704 open newly created schools.

14. Why Charter Schools are Started

Percentage of Charter Schools by Most Important Reason for Founding



Percentage of Newly Created versus Pre-existing Charter Schools by Most Important Reason for Founding



D. STARTING, IMPLEMENTING, AND BEING ACCOUNTABLE

IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

Charter schools face significant challenges as they get underway and as they continue to implement their programs. We asked a knowledgeable individual at each charter school to rate the difficulty of overcoming each barrier in a list of possible barriers to implementation. Financial difficulties continued to be among the largest challenges that charter schools faced, although there has been a marked decline over time in the percentage of schools facing problems with start-up funding.

- In 1998–99, the most frequent barriers charter schools faced during implementation were lack of start-up and operating funds (49 and 37 percent respectively), lack of planning time (35 percent), and inadequate facilities (32 percent).
- Schools first surveyed in 1998–99 were less likely to face start-up funding difficulties than were schools first surveyed in earlier years, decreasing from 59 percent in 1996 to 39 percent in 1999. This finding likely reflects increased federal start-up funding for charter schools and that some states are providing charter school start-up funds. Schools surveyed more recently were more likely to face difficulties with hiring staff than schools in previous years. This finding may reflect the nationwide teacher shortage.
- Newly created schools were more likely than pre-existing schools to face difficulties with inadequate operating funds, lack of planning time, inadequate facilities, internal conflicts, school administration and management, teacher turnover, community opposition, and communication with parents.
- Pre-existing private and newly created charter schools were more likely than pre-existing public schools to face difficulties from lack of start up funds, health and safety regulations, and teacher burnout.
- Charter schools that converted from public status were similar to newly created charter schools in that they were more likely than pre-existing private schools to find state or local board opposition, district resistance or regulations, and hiring staff to be difficult barriers.
- Similar to last year, pre-existing private schools that converted to charter status were more likely than newly created or pre-existing public schools to report difficulties with state department of education resistance and teacher certification requirements.

Estimated Percentage of Charter Schools Reporting Difficulties in Implementing Their Charter¹

	Total (%)	Newly created (%)	Pre-existing public (%)	Pre-existing private (%)
Lack of start up funds	48.5	53.7	26.5	49.4
Inadequate operating funds	37.4	40.4	27.0	33.3
Lack of planning time	34.5	37.4	28.0	23.9
Inadequate facilities	32.0	35.4	21.5	24.4
State or local board opposition	20.0	20.4	21.0	14.1
District resistance or regulations	18.2	19.0	19.3	9.8
State dept. of education resistance	12.3	11.3	13.9	17.4
Internal processes or conflicts	11.9	13.1	8.6	8.7
School administration and management	10.7	12.4	6.3	5.5
Health and safety regulations	10.5	11.9	3.0	13.0
Hiring staff	10.3	10.6	10.9	6.5
Teacher burnout	9.4	10.6	3.8	9.1
Accountability requirements	8.2	8.2	7.4	9.8
Lack of parental support	8.2	8.4	7.6	7.3
Union or bargaining unit opposition	7.8	7.5	9.7	6.6
Teacher certification requirements	6.2	6.0	4.8	9.8
Teacher turnover	5.7	6.6	3.8	1.9
Collective bargaining agreements	5.4	4.2	12.9	1.1
Community opposition	4.6	5.9	1.8	0.0
Communication with parents	4.5	5.3	2.5	1.8
Federal regulations	4.4	4.5	4.9	3.3

NOTE: These data are drawn from questions asked only in the new school surveys and are based on responses from a range of 927 to 955 open charter schools that provided information on these questions. Five questions—on administration and school management, teacher burnout, teacher turnover, lack of parental support, and communication with parents—were asked only on the 1997 and 1999 new schools surveys, resulting in fewer responses to these questions overall (511 to 514 schools).

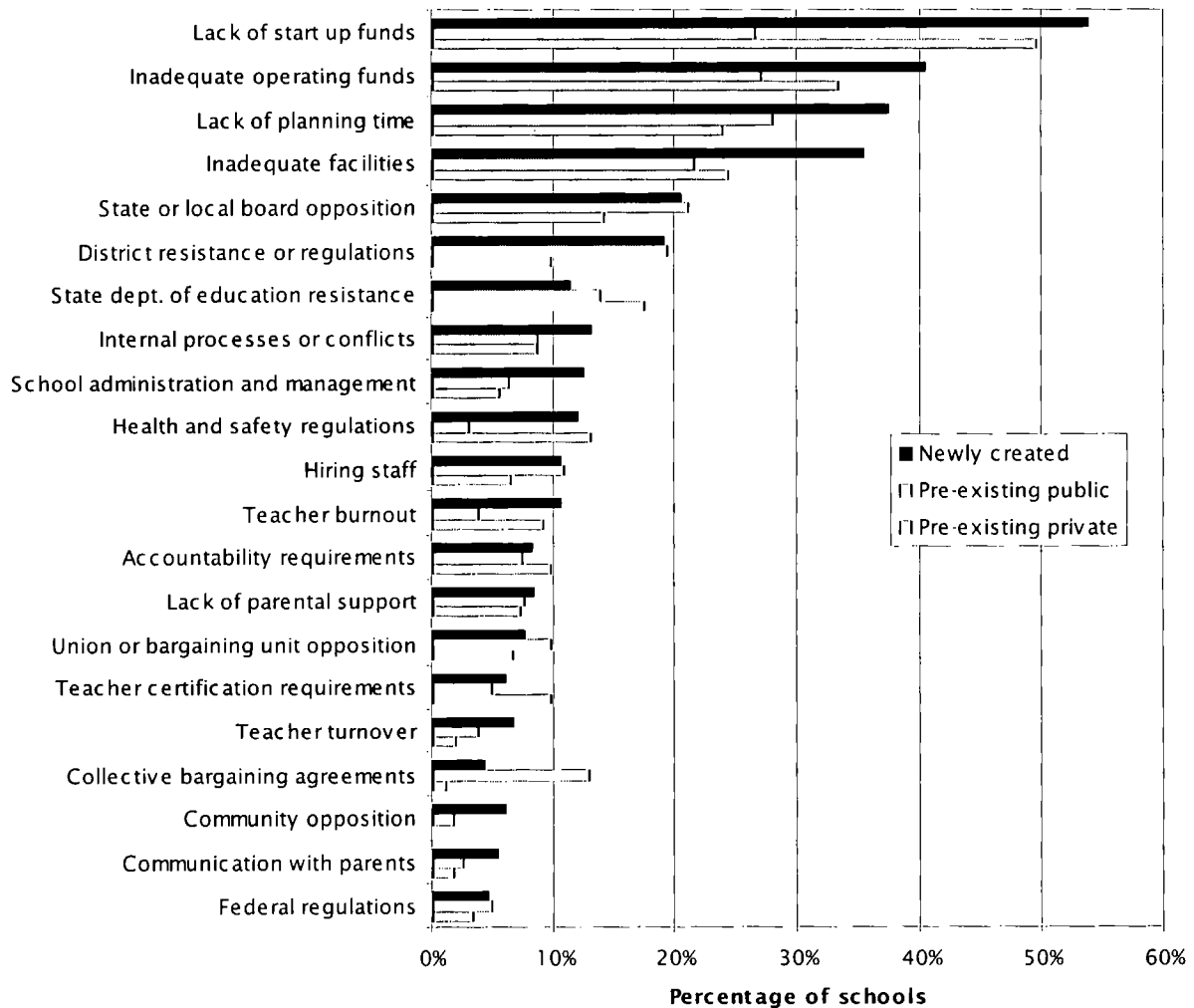
¹ We asked schools to rate the difficulty of each barrier on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being not at all difficult and 5 being very difficult. The percentages in these tables and the figure on the facing page represent the percentages of schools that rated each barrier difficult or very difficult.

15. Implementation Challenges

Estimated Percentage of Charter Schools Reporting Selected Difficulties in Implementing Their Charters, by Year of Charter Survey

	Total	1996 New Schools Survey ²	1997 New Schools Survey	1998 New Schools Survey	1999 New Schools Survey
Percentage of schools (%)					
Lack of start up funds	48.5	58.8	54.9	51.0	39.1
Inadequate operating funds	37.4	36.3	47.1	42.0	31.7
Lack of planning time	34.5	40.0	33.6	36.9	30.2
Inadequate facilities	32.0	34.8	43.4	32.6	26.2
State or local board opposition	20.0	23.6	19.2	17.3	19.9
District resistance or regulations	18.2	17.3	16.8	22.2	16.6
State dept. of education resistance	12.3	19.3	7.5	11.9	10.7
Internal processes or conflicts	11.9	18.9	17.1	8.5	8.2
Health and safety regulations	10.5	9.4	12.2	13.1	8.7
Hiring staff	10.3	10.0	5.4	9.2	13.1

Estimated Percentage of Charter Schools Reporting Difficulties In Implementing Their Charter, by Creation Status



² These data are drawn from the first charter school survey. In some cases, we were unable to identify and survey charter schools in their first year of operation, but were able to later identify them and administer a "new school" survey. In these few cases, survey responses would not represent the first year of school operation, during which implementation difficulties may be greatest.

D. STARTING, IMPLEMENTING, AND BEING ACCOUNTABLE

AUTONOMY AND CONTROL

The increased level of autonomy called for by the charter concept enables educators, parents, or community members to create schools that are alternatives to-and for-the current public system. Charter schools are afforded flexibility to make independent decisions and set policy about both educational and management issues, though some school decisions may be constrained either by provisions of the state's charter legislation or by decisions and practices implemented by their charter granting agency. Most charter schools felt they had considerable autonomy over decisions and policy affecting most areas of education and management, except over student admissions policies. More newly created than pre-existing public or private schools felt they had primary control over decisions about educational and management issues-pre-existing public schools felt they had the least autonomy.

- In 1998-99, most charter schools had primary control or authority over their administrative operations including: the budget (73 percent), purchase of supplies and equipment (88 percent), and hiring of teaching staff (88 percent). In addition, most charter schools had primary control over the operation of their education program, including: the daily and yearly schedule (95 percent), curriculum (83 percent), discipline (87 percent), calendar (77 percent), and student assessment policies (72 percent). A lower percentage of schools reported that they had primary control over their student admissions policies (59 percent).
- In cases where charter schools did not have control, primary authority rested with either the district, the charter-granting agency, or with another source.
- Charter schools that converted from private status had a pattern of autonomy similar to newly created schools in the areas of hiring teaching staff, establishing curriculum, and determining the calendar. Pre-existing public schools had less control than both newly created and pre-existing private schools in all areas of decision making and policy setting, including curriculum, assessment, discipline, calendar, admissions, budget, and daily schedule.

Estimated Percentage of Charter Schools by Source of Primary Control for Various School Decisions and Operations

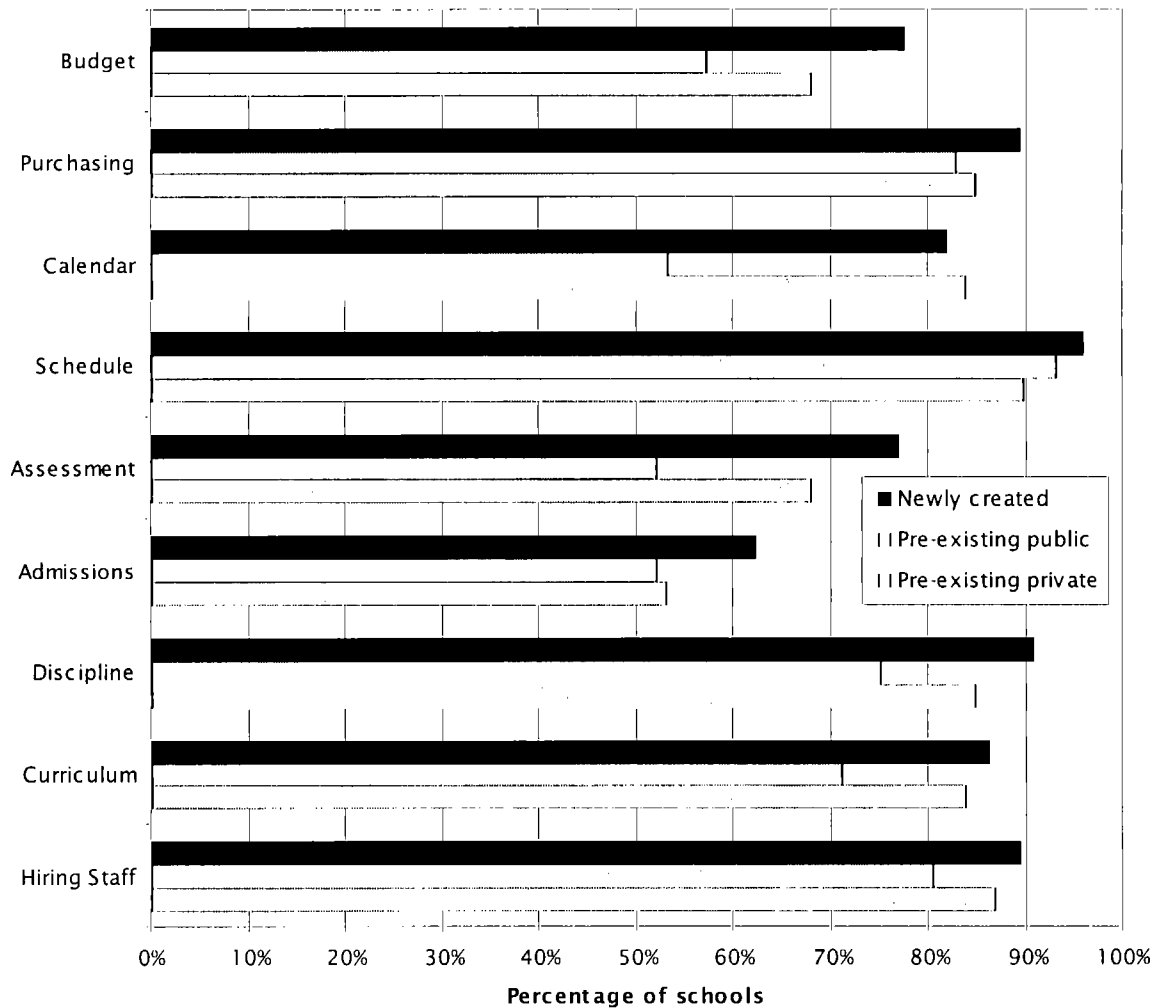
Area of control	Source of primary control			
	School	District/charter granting agency	Both	Other
	Percentage of schools (%)			
Budget	72.9	19.4	0.3	7.4
Purchase of supplies/equipment	87.7	7.6	0.2	4.5
School calendar	76.8	19.6	0.1	3.5
Daily schedule	94.8	2.9	0.2	2.2
Student assessment policies	71.5	19.7	0.6	8.2
Student admissions policies	59.4	27.8	0.7	12.0
Student discipline	87.3	9.0	0.1	3.6
Establishment of curriculum	83.2	11.3	0.2	5.3
Hiring of teaching staff	87.5	7.4	0.3	4.8

NOTE: These data are based on responses from between 972 and 975 of the 975 open charter schools that responded to the survey. Schools were asked to rate each of these items separately, resulting in the range of responses. Up to three schools answered "don't know" for certain items. Most responses in the "other" category include the management company, the state legislature, and parents. The data presented in columns 3 through 5 of the table on the facing page represent the percentage of the total number of each type of school and includes responses from 173 open pre-existing public schools, 98 open pre-existing private schools, and between 702 and 704 open newly created schools (some newly created schools responded "don't know").

Estimated Percentage of Charter Schools with Primary Control by Creation Status

Area of control	Percentage of schools with primary control (%)	Charter school creation status		
		Newly created (%)	Pre-existing public (%)	Pre-existing private (%)
Budget	72.9	77.4	57.2	68.0
Purchase of supplies/equipment	87.7	89.3	82.7	84.7
School calendar	76.8	81.6	53.2	83.7
Daily schedule	94.8	95.9	93.1	89.8
Student assessment policies	71.5	76.8	52.0	68.0
Student admissions policies	59.4	62.2	52.0	53.1
Student discipline	87.3	90.6	75.1	84.7
Establishment of curriculum	83.2	86.1	71.1	83.7
Hiring of teaching staff	87.5	89.3	80.3	86.7

Estimated Percentage of Newly Created and Pre-existing Charter Schools with Control over Various School Decisions and Operations



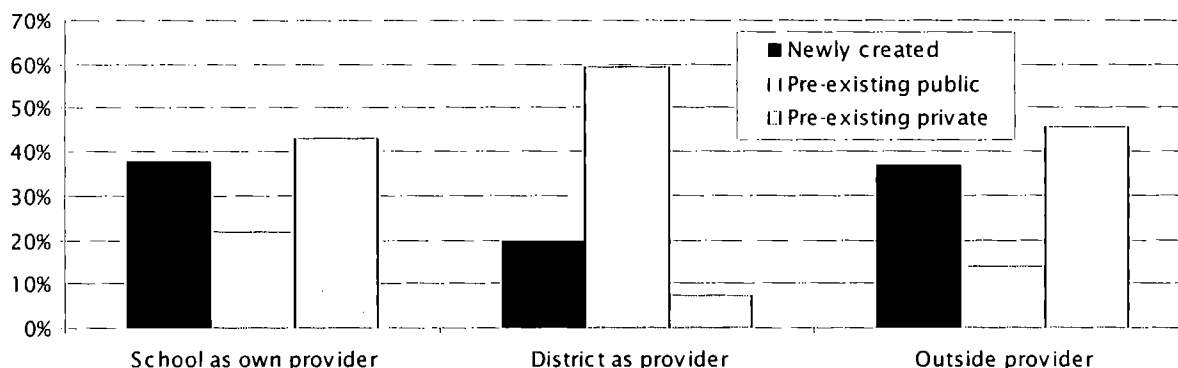
D. STARTING, IMPLEMENTING, AND BEING ACCOUNTABLE

AUTONOMY AND CHOICE OF SERVICE PROVIDERS

The autonomy afforded by charter law allows charter schools not only to choose whether or not they provide certain services but also to choose the service provider. On average, an almost equal number of charter schools provided the services themselves through staff or volunteers, purchased services from the district, or acquired services from an outside provider. Newly created and pre-existing private schools differed from pre-existing public schools in the service providers used. Pre-existing public schools were more likely to use the district whereas newly created and pre-existing private schools were more likely to provide the service themselves or to rely on an outside provider. Fewer schools in 1998-99 than in previous years shared the responsibility of providing services with either the district or another provider.

- Averaging across all service areas in 1998-99, more than one-third of charter schools provided services themselves (36 percent), about one-third of charter schools used only an outside provider (34 percent), and slightly more than one-quarter of schools used the district as the sole service provider (26 percent). Newly created and pre-existing private schools were much more likely to provide services themselves or to secure services from an outside provider whereas pre-existing public schools were most likely to retain the district as the service provider.
- In 1998-99, nearly every charter school offered special education testing (97 percent) and special education services (95 percent). In addition, the majority of charter schools offered one or more noneducational services to their students—more than four-fifths of the schools had social and/or health services (82 percent each), nearly three-quarters had before and after school care (72 percent) and/or food services (71 percent), two-thirds offered transportation (66 percent), and over one-half had athletic programs (54 percent).
- Charter school staff most often provided such noneducational services as before- and after-school care (65 percent), athletic programs (63 percent), and special education services (39 percent). Charter schools most often acquired transportation (42 percent) and food programs (39 percent) from districts and purchased special education testing (36 percent) and social services (42 percent) from an outside provider. When charter schools provided health services, a nearly equal percentage of the services were provided by the school (35 percent), the district (29 percent), or an outside provider (33 percent).
- Charter schools most often provided such administrative services as purchasing (57 percent) and custodial (45 percent) services. Charter schools most often purchased payroll (46 percent), accounting (38 percent), insurance (53 percent), and legal services (54 percent) from an outside provider. The most frequent provider of building maintenance was split between an outside provider (39 percent) and the school (36 percent).

Average Percentage of Schools Selecting a Given Service Provider by Creation Status



NOTE: These data are based on responses from 974 of the 975 open charter schools that responded to the survey for most items. These questions were asked only in the first year of administration of the new school survey. The question about building maintenance was not asked in the first year of our survey, therefore, the data for that category is based on 756 out of 757 open charter schools. The questions about athletic programs, special education testing, and special education services were included only in the 1999 new survey upon the request of the U.S. Department of Education departmental reviewers, therefore, data for these questions rely on 369 open charter schools that responded in 1999 to the new survey. This exhibit represents unweighted averages across all service areas. Unweighted averages are used so as to not inflate the average for services that are more commonly provided. The numbers in each of the "Total" rows do not add to 100% across the columns because respondents were also offered "Both" as a response option.

17. Autonomy and Choice of Service Providers

Percentage of Charter Schools that Offer Services by Provider and Creation Status

Services provided in charter schools (percentage of schools with services)	Charter creation status Average of all services	Percentage of schools (%) with services provided solely by			
		School as provider 35.5	District as provider 25.6	Outside provider 33.7	
	Newly created	37.9	19.7	37.0	
	Pre-existing public	21.8	59.3	13.9	
	Pre-existing private	43.3	7.5	45.9	
Payroll (100.0%)	Total % across all types	21.3	29.9	45.6	
	Newly created	22.6	22.9	50.9	
	Pre-existing public	8.1	71.7	18.5	
	Pre-existing private	34.7	6.1	55.1	
Accounting (100.0%)	Total % across all types	31.8	22.4	37.7	
	Newly created	34.8	16.4	41.7	
	Pre-existing public	19.7	58.4	11.6	
	Pre-existing private	32.7	3.1	56.1	
Insurance (99.7%)	Total % across all types	18.0	26.6	52.8	
	Newly created	18.7	20.0	58.6	
	Pre-existing public	11.0	67.4	18.6	
	Pre-existing private	25.5	2.0	71.4	
Purchasing (99.9%)	Total % across all types	56.7	21.2	15.7	
	Newly created	61.7	15.5	17.1	
	Pre-existing public	26.6	54.3	8.1	
	Pre-existing private	74.2	3.1	19.6	
Custodial (97.8)	Total % across all types	44.8	19.2	33.4	
	Newly created	46.3	13.1	37.7	
	Pre-existing public	33.7	52.3	12.2	
	Pre-existing private	54.2	3.1	40.6	
Building maintenance (96.8%)	Total % across all types	36.3	19.4	38.7	
	Newly created	38.2	12.8	43.2	
	Pre-existing public	21.7	63.2	11.3	
	Pre-existing private	43.7	5.6	45.1	
Legal services (95.0%)	Total % across all types	18.1	24.0	54.1	
	Newly created	18.7	18.1	59.0	
	Pre-existing public	11.3	59.5	24.4	
	Pre-existing private	25.8	1.1	73.0	
Health services (81.7%)	Total % across all types	35.6	29.4	32.7	
	Newly created	39.2	22.8	35.3	
	Pre-existing public	19.5	63.6	14.9	
	Pre-existing private	41.1	8.2	49.3	
Social services (82.2%)	Total % across all types	26.2	24.3	42.0	
	Newly created	26.9	19.9	45.8	
	Pre-existing public	20.3	49.7	22.9	
	Pre-existing private	34.2	6.6	53.9	
Before/after school care (72.3%)	Total % across all types	65.1	9.9	19.2	
	Newly created	69.7	5.1	19.9	
	Pre-existing public	48.2	30.7	10.2	
	Pre-existing private	64.6	3.8	30.4	
Food programs (70.7%)	Total % across all types	23.4	38.9	32.4	
	Newly created	23.2	33.4	38.0	
	Pre-existing public	12.8	67.6	14.9	
	Pre-existing private	51.6	14.5	32.3	
Transportation (65.5%)	Total % across all types	27.3	41.5	26.7	
	Newly created	31.1	34.2	29.3	
	Pre-existing public	14.2	75.2	10.6	
	Pre-existing private	32.7	16.4	49.1	
Athletic programs (53.9%)	Total % across all types	63.3	16.6	16.6	
	Newly created	67.4	11.3	18.4	
	Pre-existing public	44.1	44.1	5.9	
	Pre-existing private	66.7	8.3	20.8	
Special education testing (96.7%)	Total % across all types	25.5	31.9	35.9	
	Newly created	28.3	26.5	38.2	
	Pre-existing public	12.7	67.3	14.5	
	Pre-existing private	23.3	16.7	53.3	
Special education services (94.6%)	Total % across all types	39.0	28.7	21.8	
	Newly created	41.7	22.9	22.6	
	Pre-existing public	22.2	64.8	9.3	
	Pre-existing private	44.8	13.8	37.9	

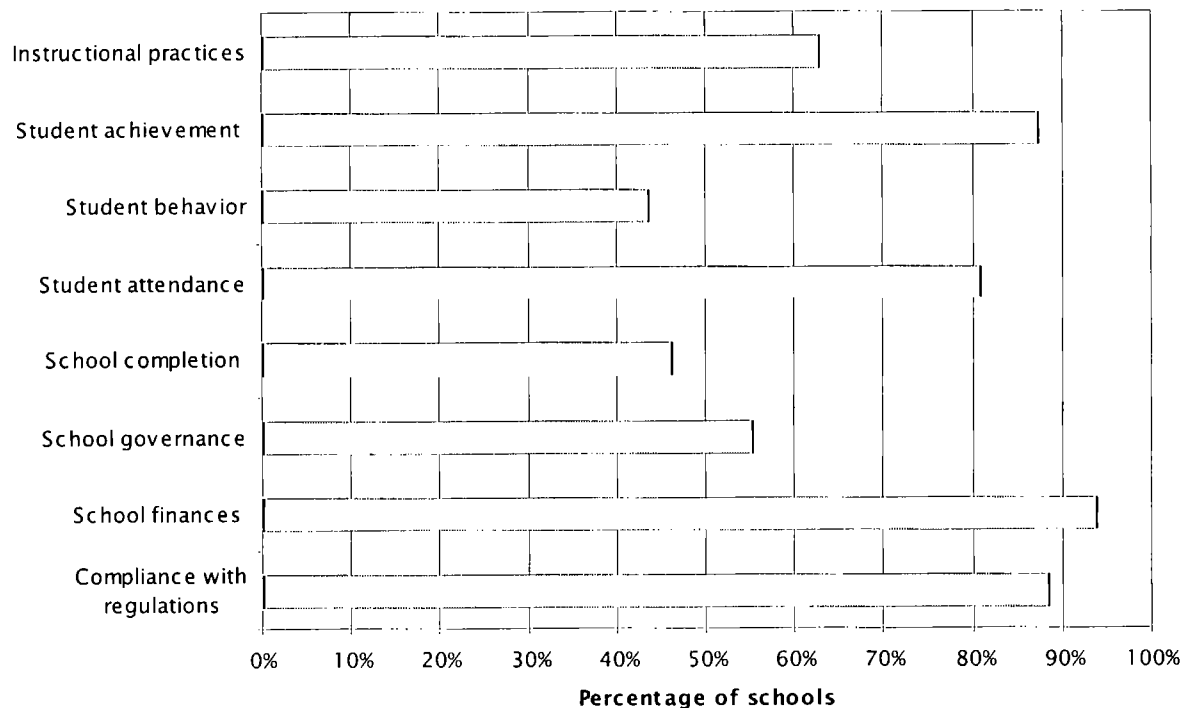
D. STARTING, IMPLEMENTING, AND BEING ACCOUNTABLE

EXTERNAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND MONITORING

In exchange for freedom from state regulations (except those related to health, safety, and nondiscrimination) charter schools are to be held accountable for school and student outcomes. In order to determine whether and how schools are held accountable, the Study asked schools about the external monitoring they underwent during the past school year. State legislation and regulatory practices differ greatly across states, and charter schools reported varying amounts of external monitoring as well as variation in which areas were monitored.

- In 1998–99, charter schools in a selected sample most frequently reported monitoring in the areas of school finances (94 percent), compliance with state or federal regulations (88 percent), student achievement (87 percent), and student attendance (81 percent), and student attendance (81 percent).
- Across states, there was greater variance for some areas of monitoring than for others. While a large proportion of schools in most states reported monitoring on student achievement and school finances, there was far greater variance among the states in other areas, such as student behavior and school governance.
- In those categories in which there was greater variance, patterns emerged among states. While more than 80 percent of charter schools in Louisiana reported monitoring of instructional practices, student behavior, or school governance, the proportion of schools reporting monitoring was below 55 percent in each of those areas in Florida, Minnesota, North Carolina, and Wisconsin.
- In the five states in which there was only one charter-granting agency, a pattern also emerged. Connecticut, Georgia, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and New Mexico all had high proportions (above 75 percent) of schools reporting monitoring of instructional practices and moderate to high proportions (greater than 50 percent) of schools reporting monitoring in the area of school governance.

Estimated Percentage of Charter Schools that are Externally Monitored on Accountability Measures



18. External Accountability and Monitoring

Percentage of a Selected Sample of Charter Schools Who Reported External Monitoring¹

	Number of schools in sample	Instructional practices	Student achievement	Student behavior	Student attendance
Percentage of schools (%)					
Total	531	62.7	87.2	43.6	80.8
Alaska	11	72.7	80.0	45.5	54.5
Arizona	105	58.1	85.7	36.5	81.0
California	98	60.2	85.7	43.9	83.7
Colorado	44	63.6	97.7	61.4	81.8
Connecticut	7	85.7	75.0	37.5	75.0
Florida	28	39.3	92.9	53.6	85.7
Georgia	16	81.3	100.0	68.8	81.3
Illinois	5	80.0	100.0	40.0	100.0
Louisiana	6	100.0	100.0	83.3	83.3
Massachusetts	21	85.7	81.0	23.8	76.2
Michigan	82	70.7	81.5	35.0	74.1
Minnesota	22	45.5	77.3	31.8	77.3
New Jersey	5	100.0	80.0	20.0	60.0
New Mexico	4	75.0	100.0	75.0	100.0
North Carolina	23	47.8	87.0	26.1	87.0
Pennsylvania	4	75.0	50.0	0.0	75.0
Texas	27	66.7	96.3	66.7	92.6
Wisconsin	14	42.9	93.3	40.0	80.0

	Number of schools in sample	Compliance with regulations	School governance	School finances	School completion ²
Percentage of schools (%)					
Total	531	88.3	55.1	93.8	46.1
Alaska	11	100.0	50.0	100.0	(3) 100.0
Arizona	105	85.7	51.9	94.3	(79) 58.2
California	98	85.7	51.5	88.7	(68) 39.7
Colorado	44	83.3	40.9	93.2	(30) 36.7
Connecticut	7	100.0	87.5	100.0	(2) 50.0
Florida	28	96.4	35.7	100.0	(3) 66.7
Georgia	16	81.3	75.0	93.8	(5) 40.0
Illinois	5	80.0	60.0	100.0	(2) 50.0
Louisiana	6	100.0	83.3	100.0	(2) 100.0
Massachusetts	21	90.5	85.7	100.0	(13) 15.4
Michigan	82	90.1	70.4	97.5	(44) 29.5
Minnesota	22	81.8	22.7	90.9	(15) 26.7
New Jersey	5	100.0	60.0	100.0	NA ³
New Mexico	4	100.0	50.0	100.0	(4) 50.0
North Carolina	23	87.0	50.0	100.0	(3) 66.7
Pennsylvania	4	100.0	25.0	100.0	(3) 100.0
Texas	27	96.3	63.0	81.5	(16) 62.5
Wisconsin	14	86.7	53.3	86.7	(11) 63.6

NOTE: We asked this question only on the 1998 and 1999 follow-up surveys administered to schools not in their first year of operation, resulting in responses from 531 charter schools, referred to as a selected sample in the text. The percentages in the table show the number of schools that reported monitoring during the year in each area divided by the total number of schools in each state. Of the 531 schools, 9 schools in 6 states (Delaware, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Kansas, Rhode Island, and South Carolina) are not displayed in the table because each state has 3 or fewer schools which provided information on this question and the percentages are not meaningful. The "Total" row includes data from all 27 of the charter states.

¹ The number of schools responding varied across the individual areas of monitoring. The number of schools reported in column 2 represents the largest number of schools responding to any one area.

² Responses on school completion are based on 308 responses because the question was only posed to middle and high schools. The number of responses for each state is displayed in parentheses before the proportion of schools reporting monitoring.

³ New Jersey did not have any middle or high schools answering the 1998 or 1999 follow-up survey.

D. STARTING, IMPLEMENTING, AND BEING ACCOUNTABLE

EXTERNAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND REPORTING

Charter laws afford charter schools increased autonomy and require accountability measures. Charter schools report about the school's progress toward its goals to a variety of key constituent groups. Reporting requirements differ by state and by individual charter school. Nearly every charter school in a selected sample reported or planned to report on the school's progress toward its goals to its charter granting agency, school governing board, and parents in the 1998-99 school year.

- In 1998-99, the majority of charter schools open for at least 1 year at the time of our survey said they made or were planning to make a report on the school's progress toward its goals to key constituent groups: the school's governing board (96 percent), their chartering agency (92 percent), and parents (89 percent).
- Nearly all charter schools (99 percent) made or were planning to make a report to at least one of the key constituency groups and 81 percent of charter schools made or were planning to make a report to all three key constituent groups.
- The pattern of reporting progress toward goals to other key constituents varied across states. For example, in New Jersey, no charter schools made or planned to make a report to the community or general public, while in Louisiana, all the charter schools made or planned to make a report to this group. The range for states with charter schools that reported or planned to report to private funders was between 7 and 60 percent.
- State Departments of Education represent a key reporting agency in some states' charter laws. In every state except California, at least two-thirds of schools had made a report or planned to make a report to the State Department of Education. Every charter school in Florida, Illinois, Louisiana, New Jersey, New Mexico, and Pennsylvania made a report or planned to make a report to the State Department of Education. At least 80 percent of schools in Connecticut, Georgia, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, North Carolina, and Texas made or planned to make a report to their State Department of Education.
- More than 40 percent of charter schools made or were planning to make a report to all five key constituent groups (chartering agency, parents, community/general public, school governing board, and State Department of Education), not including private funders. At least three-quarters of schools in Connecticut, Georgia, Illinois, and Louisiana made a report or planned to make a report to the five key constituent groups. At least one-half of charter schools in Alaska, Florida, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin made or were planning to make a report to these five key groups.

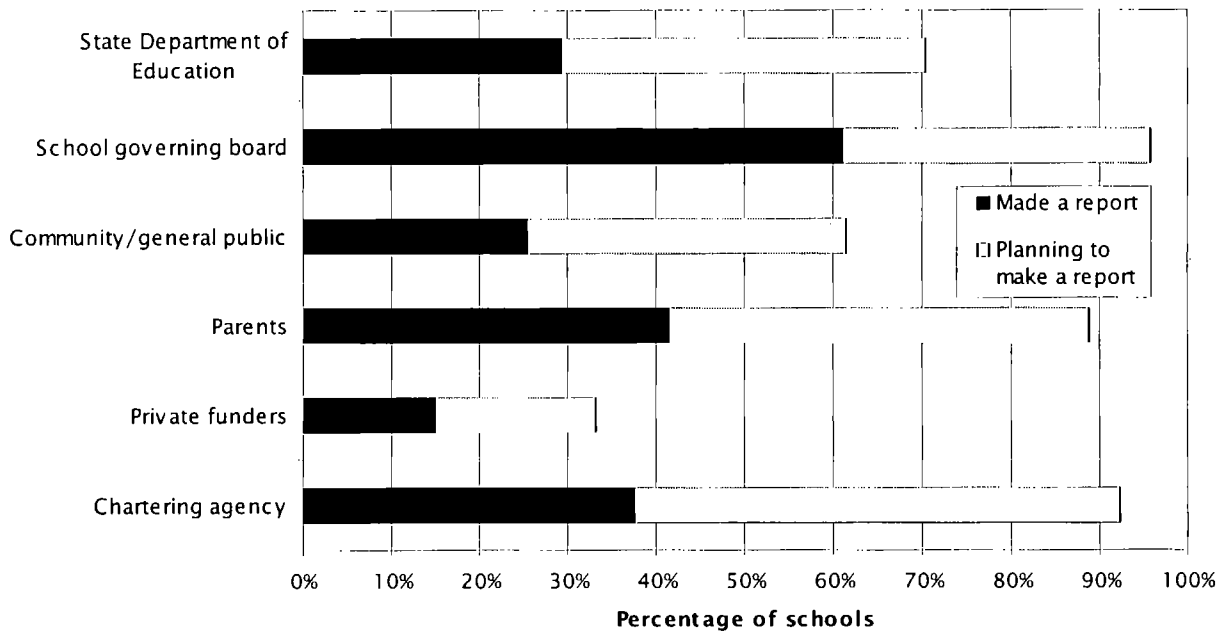
Estimated Percentage of a Selected Sample of Schools Reporting Progress Toward Goals to Their Reporting Agencies

	Made a report	Planning to make a report	Not made or planning to make a report	Don't know	Not applicable
	Percentage of schools (%)				
Chartering agency	37.3	54.9	6.6	0.4	0.9
Private funders	14.8	18.2	32.8	3.9	30.3
Parents	41.2	47.6	9.2	0.6	1.5
Community/ general public	25.3	36.0	31.5	1.9	5.4
School governing board	60.9	34.8	3.7	0.0	0.6
State dept. of education, not chartering agency	29.2	41.0	22.5	1.9	5.4

NOTE: This question appeared only on the 1998 and 1999 follow up surveys, resulting in responses from 534 open charter schools, referred to in the text and tables as a selected sample. The results reflect the most recent school responses, equaling 488 charter schools that responded to the 1999 follow-up survey and 46 charter schools that responded to the 1998 but not the 1999 follow-up survey. On the facing page, the percentages in the table show the number of schools that reported or plan to report progress in each area divided by the total number of schools in each state that responded to the 1998 or 1999 follow-up survey. The number of schools in the last column reflects the number of schools that responded to the 1998 or 1999 follow-up survey, not necessarily the total number of schools in that state. Of the 534, 9 schools in 6 states (District of Columbia, Delaware, Hawaii, Kansas, Rhode Island, and Pennsylvania) are not displayed in the table because each state has 3 or fewer schools that provided information about external accountability and reporting and the percentages are not meaningful. The "Total" row includes data from all 27 of the charter states.

19. External Accountability and Reporting

Percentage of a Selected Sample of Charter Schools That Made a Report or were Planning to Make a Report by Reporting Agency



Percentage of a Selected Sample of Charter Schools That Have Reported or Plan to Report on School Goals by State

	Reporting Agency							Number of schools
	Chartering agency	Private funders	Parents	Community/General public	School governing board	State DOE	Report to 5 constituents	
	Percentage of schools (%)							
Total	92.1	32.9	88.8	61.2	95.7	70.2	44.0	534
Alaska	72.7	18.2	90.9	72.7	90.9	72.7	63.6	11
Arizona	93.3	29.7	89.4	62.5	96.2	78.6	46.5	105
California	89.7	20.2	90.8	55.2	95.9	26.0	17.9	98
Colorado	95.5	48.8	95.5	68.2	97.7	64.3	45.2	44
Connecticut	100.0	50.0	87.5	85.7	100.0	87.5	85.7	8
Florida	96.4	21.4	85.7	67.9	96.4	100.0	53.6	28
Georgia	100.0	31.3	82.4	82.4	100.0	94.1	82.4	17
Illinois	100.0	60.0	100.0	80.0	100.0	100.0	80.0	5
Louisiana	100.0	33.3	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	6
Massachusetts	100.0	57.1	100.0	76.2	90.5	81.0	61.9	21
Michigan	97.6	42.5	93.8	65.4	100.0	81.3	55.1	82
Minnesota	90.9	42.9	90.9	63.6	95.5	95.5	50.0	22
New Jersey	80.0	40.0	60.0	0.0	80.0	100.0	0.0	5
New Mexico	100.0	25.0	75.0	25.0	100.0	100.0	25.0	4
North Carolina	69.6	30.4	78.3	39.1	91.3	82.6	30.4	23
Pennsylvania	100.0	75.0	25.0	25.0	100.0	100.0	25.0	4
Texas	85.2	48.1	88.9	51.9	96.3	84.6	34.6	27
Wisconsin	93.3	6.7	73.3	80.0	73.3	78.6	50.0	15

D. STARTING, IMPLEMENTING, AND BEING ACCOUNTABLE

ACCOUNTABILITY AND STUDENT ASSESSMENT

Charter schools are held accountable for the achievement of their students. Some charter legislation speaks specifically of improving student achievement as a goal for charter schools; nearly every charter school used standardized assessments to measure student achievement and most used other nonstandardized assessments as well. More than one-third of the charter schools used seven or more different types of assessments to measure student achievement and gauge progress toward school goals.

- Typically, schools use the results of standardized tests for accountability purposes. In 1998–99, nearly every charter school used standardized assessments of student achievement (96 percent), though a higher percentage of charter schools used norm-referenced assessments (86 percent) than criterion-referenced assessments (62 percent).
- The results in 1998–99 are similar to prior years' results showing that assessment methods are generally consistent across newly created and pre-existing schools. The assessment methods with the most variation (about 10 percent)—performance assessments, parent satisfaction surveys, student interviews or surveys, and behavioral indicators—were used by a greater percentage of pre-existing public than newly created or pre-existing private schools.
- The majority of charter schools also used nonstandardized assessments. Charter schools measured student achievement through student demonstrations of their work (89 percent), student portfolios (81 percent), and performance assessments (74 percent). Charter schools used parent surveys (83 percent), behavioral indicators (76 percent), and student surveys (71 percent) to measure progress toward other school goals.
- The use of assessments was generally consistent across states. In every state except Ohio, at least 70 percent of charter schools used five or more methods of assessing student achievement and progress toward school goals. Every school in Kansas used at least five of the seven types of assessments.
- Over one-third (34 percent) of charter schools used all seven types of assessment to measure student achievement and progress toward other school goals. This pattern varied by type of charter school with a higher percentage of pre-existing public schools (45 percent) than newly created (32 percent) or pre-existing private (29 percent) using seven different methods of assessment.

Estimated Percentage of Schools Using Various Assessment Methods

Type of assessment	Percentage of schools (%)	Charter school creation status		
		Newly created (%)	Pre-existing public (%)	Pre-existing private (%)
Standardized assessments	96.4	96.3	97.1	95.9
Criterion-referenced assessments	62.1	61.5	61.8	66.7
Norm-referenced assessments	86.2	84.9	88.8	91.4
Performance assessments	73.5	71.4	82.7	72.4
Student portfolios	81.4	82.0	80.3	79.6
Student demonstrations of their work	89.0	89.9	84.4	90.8
Parent satisfaction surveys	82.5	82.1	86.7	77.6
Student interviews or surveys	71.2	69.0	79.8	71.4
Behavioral indicators	75.6	74.3	83.2	71.4

NOTE: These tables draw on all 975 open charter schools that responded to the survey. These items have been asked on both the new and follow-up surveys and the results reflect the most recent school responses. In 1999, 857 schools answered the new or follow-up survey and 118 schools' responses are drawn from 1998 results. Standardized assessments refer to either norm-referenced or criterion-referenced assessments. The more specific questions about whether the standardized assessments were criterion-referenced or norm-referenced were asked about only in 1999, and data are based on responses from 857 open charter schools.

Across-State Comparison of Estimated Percentage of Schools Using Various Assessments

States with 4 or more schools (Number of schools)	Standardized assessments (%)	Criterion-referenced assessments (%)	Norm-referenced assessments (%)	Performance assessments (%)	Student portfolios (%)	Student demonstrations of their work (%)	Parent satisfaction surveys (%)	Student interviews or surveys (%)	Behavioral indicators (%)	Use at least 5 methods (%)
Total percentage	91.8	62.1	86.2	73.4	81.5	89.1	82.4	71.3	75.7	82.0
Alaska (16)	100.0	46.7	100.0	68.8	81.3	93.8	75.0	75.0	37.5	75.0
Arizona (166)	98.2	73.9	95.5	80.1	85.5	93.4	75.9	63.9	72.3	83.2
California (149)	96.6	62.3	91.0	79.9	91.3	87.2	87.2	77.9	74.5	86.6
Colorado (59)	98.3	73.1	94.2	79.7	72.9	88.1	84.7	57.6	83.1	78.0
Connecticut (16)	93.8	53.8	76.9	50.0	87.5	93.8	81.3	75.0	81.3	81.2
Delaware (4)	100.0	100.0	75.0	100.0	50.0	75.0	100.0	75.0	100.0	75.0
District of Col. (15)	93.3	66.7	93.3	66.7	100.0	86.7	60.0	60.0	86.7	86.6
Florida (65)	96.9	55.6	88.9	73.8	87.7	87.7	75.4	63.1	69.2	80.0
Georgia (25)	100.0	33.3	100.0	80.0	84.0	100.0	96.0	84.0	76.0	92.0
Illinois (12)	100.0	75.0	100.0	83.3	66.7	83.3	75.0	75.0	83.3	83.3
Kansas (15)	100.0	73.3	73.3	93.3	86.7	100.0	86.7	100.0	80.0	100.0
Louisiana (11)	100.0	81.8	81.8	81.8	72.7	81.8	90.9	72.7	90.9	91.9
Massachusetts (34)	100.0	62.1	89.7	70.6	79.4	82.4	91.2	61.8	79.4	85.3
Michigan (124)	95.2	59.2	83.7	66.1	72.6	90.3	82.3	70.2	73.4	79.0
Minnesota (37)	94.6	66.7	84.8	78.4	81.1	89.2	91.9	83.8	78.4	83.8
New Jersey (26)	84.6	40.0	76.0	61.5	76.9	84.6	96.2	80.8	88.5	80.8
New Mexico (5)	100.0	60.0	40.0	80.0	60.0	100.0	60.0	100.0	100.0	80.0
North Carolina (52)	98.1	45.8	64.6	65.4	69.2	82.7	82.7	67.3	67.3	71.2
Ohio (7)	85.7	71.4	71.4	42.9	85.7	85.7	57.1	71.4	71.4	57.2
Pennsylvania (23)	95.7	43.5	73.9	78.3	82.6	95.7	78.3	73.9	73.9	91.4
South Carolina (4)	100.0	25.0	100.0	75.0	50.0	75.0	75.0	75.0	75.0	75.0
Texas (77)	97.4	69.3	82.7	64.9	77.9	88.3	83.1	74.0	80.5	81.8
Wisconsin (26)	80.8	62.5	62.5	57.7	88.5	80.8	88.5	84.6	84.6	73.1

Percentage of Schools Using Multiple Assessment Methods

Number of different assessments used ¹	Percentage of schools (%)	Charter school creation status		
		Newly created (%)	Pre-existing public (%)	Pre-existing private (%)
One to three	5.9	5.8	4.6	9.1
Four to six	60.1	62.2	50.3	62.2
Seven	33.8	32.0	44.5	28.6

¹ The multiple assessment methods in this table and the preceding table refer to the seven different types of assessment common to the new and follow-up surveys including standardized assessments, performance assessments, student portfolios, student demonstrations, parent surveys, student interviews or surveys, and behavioral indicators.

D. STARTING, IMPLEMENTING, AND BEING ACCOUNTABLE**APPENDIX: RESPONSE RATE BY STATE**

Column 2 in the table below shows the total number of survey responses on any one of the seven administered surveys by state. The total number of charter schools in column 3 reflects the number of charter schools open at the time of the 1999 survey administration.

State	Survey Responses	Total Charter Schools	Percent Response (%)
Alaska	16	17	94
Arizona	166	180	92
California	151	154	98
Colorado	59	60	98
Connecticut	16	16	100
Delaware	4	4	100
District of Columbia	15	19	79
Florida	65	72	90
Georgia	25	27	93
Hawaii	2	2	100
Idaho	2	2	100
Illinois	12	13	92
Kansas	15	15	100
Louisiana	11	11	100
Massachusetts	34	34	100
Michigan	124	131	95
Minnesota	37	38	97
Mississippi	1	1	100
North Carolina	52	56	93
New Jersey	26	30	87
New Mexico	5	5	100
Ohio	7	15	47
Pennsylvania	23	31	74
Rhode Island	2	2	100
South Carolina	4	5	80
Texas	78	109	72
Wisconsin	26	29	90