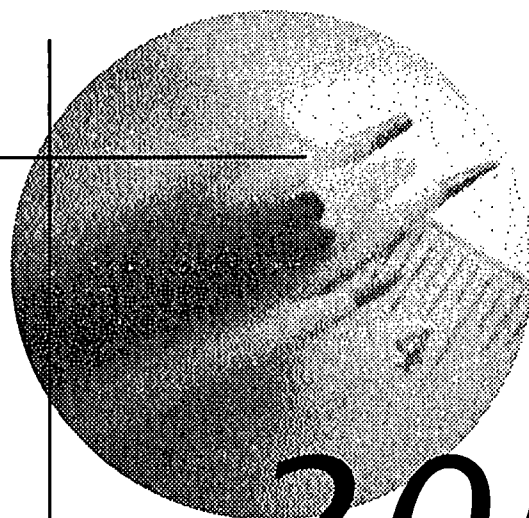


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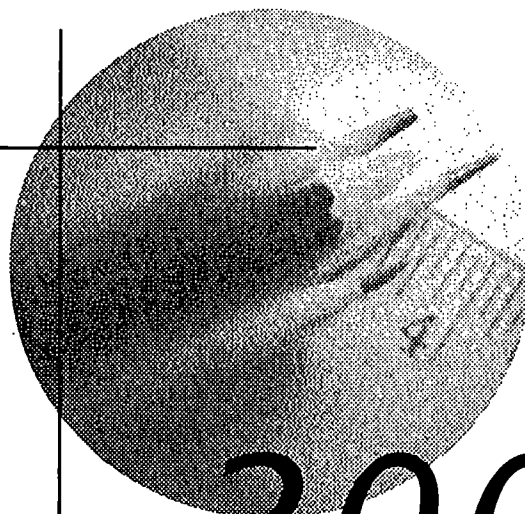
2000

NATIONAL
STUDY OF
CHARTER
SCHOOLS

FOURTH - YEAR REPORT

OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND IMPROVEMENT
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The
State
of
CHARTER
Schools



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.

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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.

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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.

³ 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.

A. STATES AND CHARTER SCHOOLS

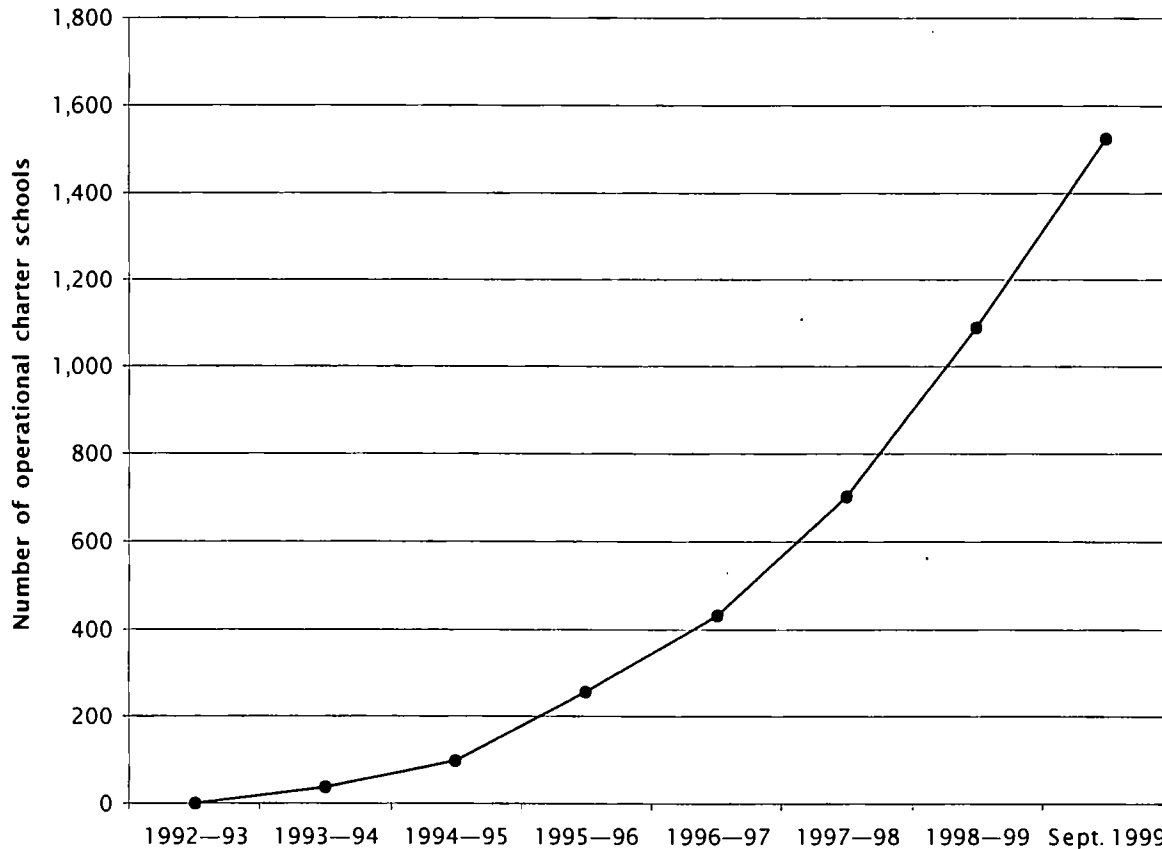
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THE EXPANDING CHARTER SCHOOL MOVEMENT

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



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.

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.

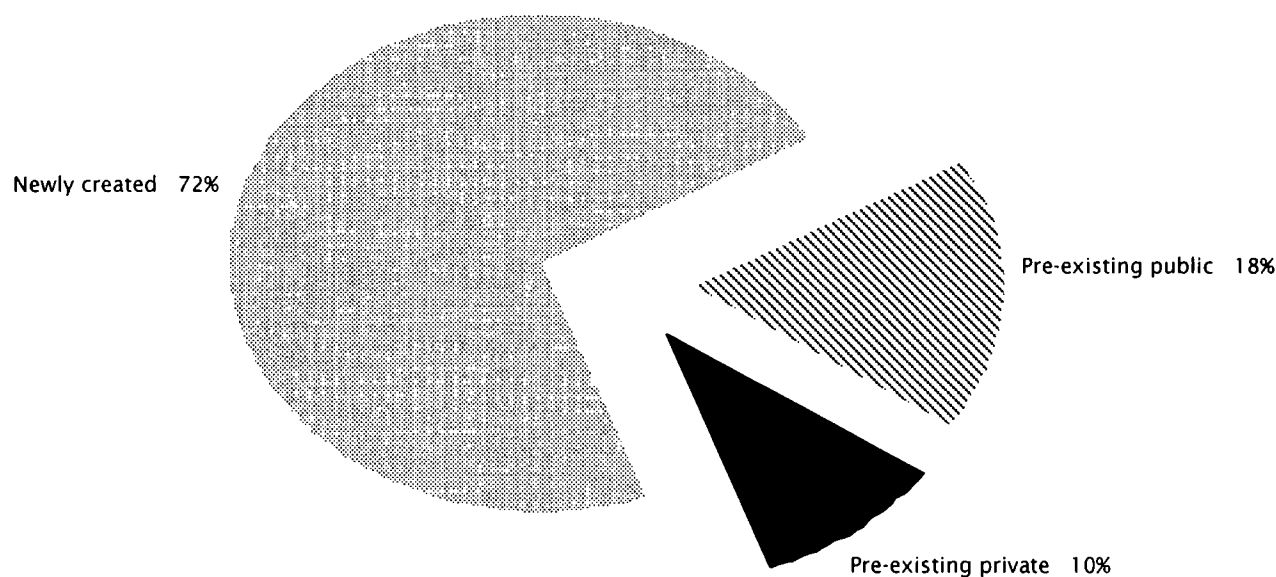
¹⁴ Wisconsin's legislation allows the conversion of private schools only in Milwaukee.

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



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.

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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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.

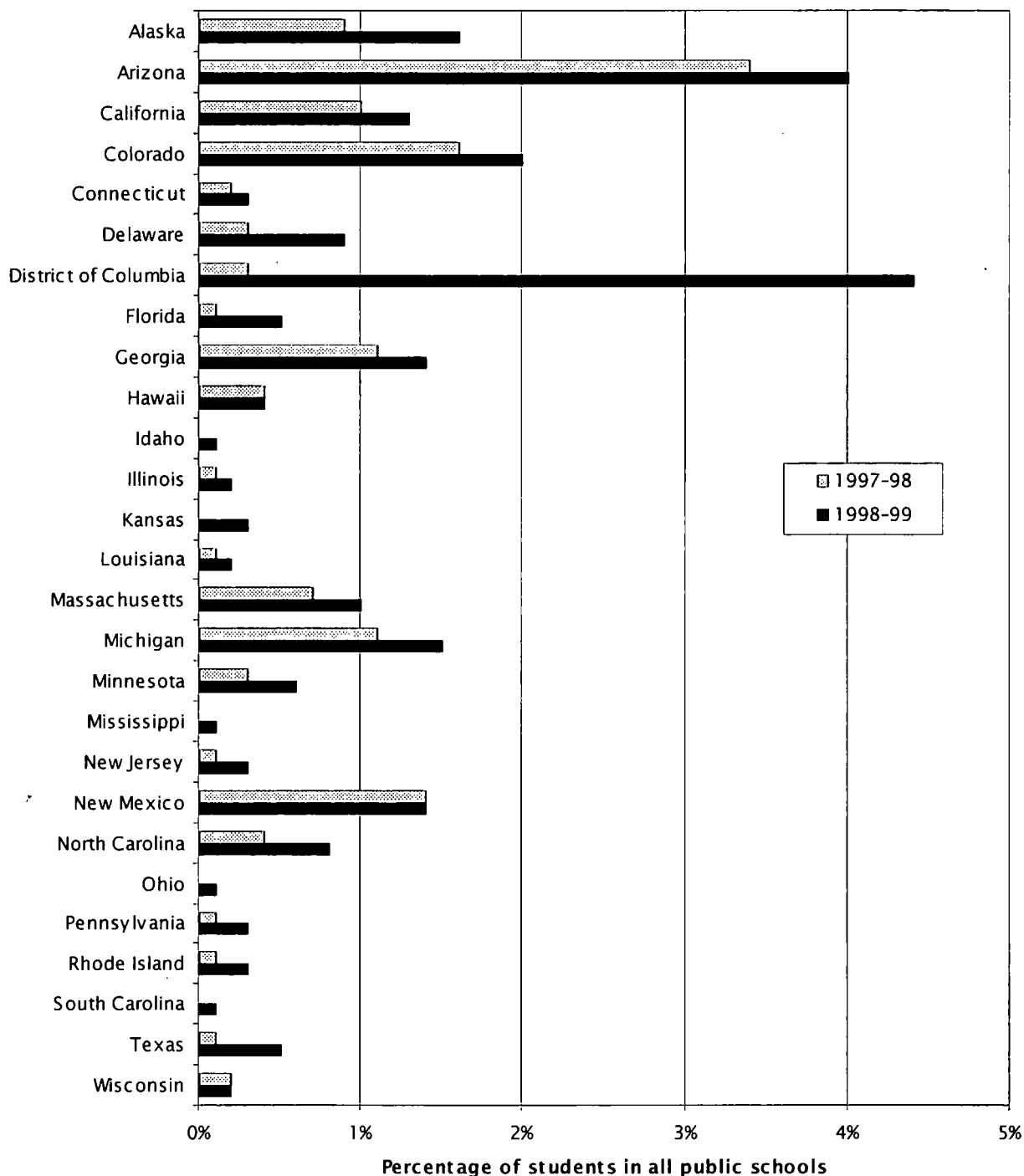
Estimated Enrollment in Charter Schools and All Public Schools in the 27 Charter States

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.

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.

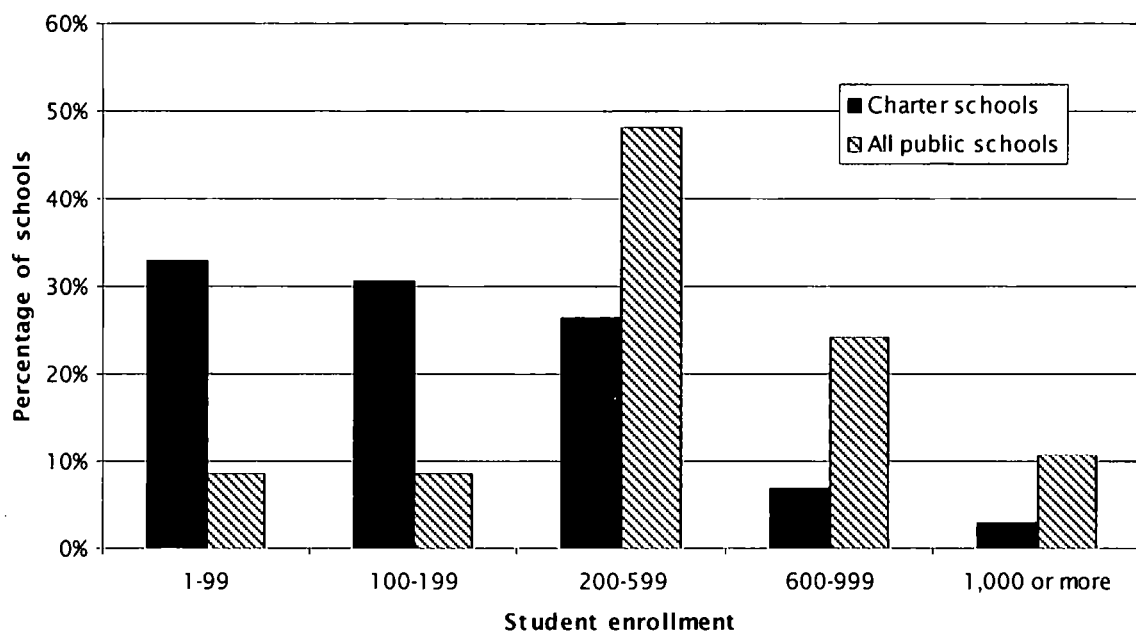
Estimated School Size for Charter Schools and All Public Schools in the 27 Charter States

	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

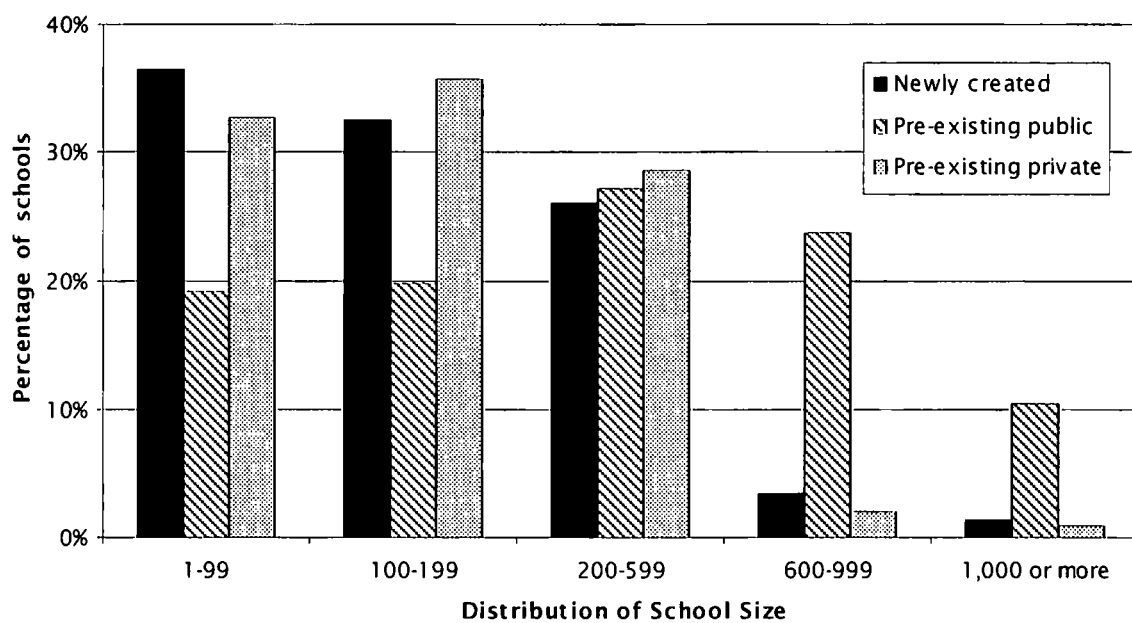
NOTE: The third column called "Charter school sites" includes data for 1,046 charter schools and is based on 2 sources of data: (1) responses from 1,010 open charter schools and individual branches that responded to the survey and (2) enrollment data for 36 charter schools from state-level sources. The 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



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

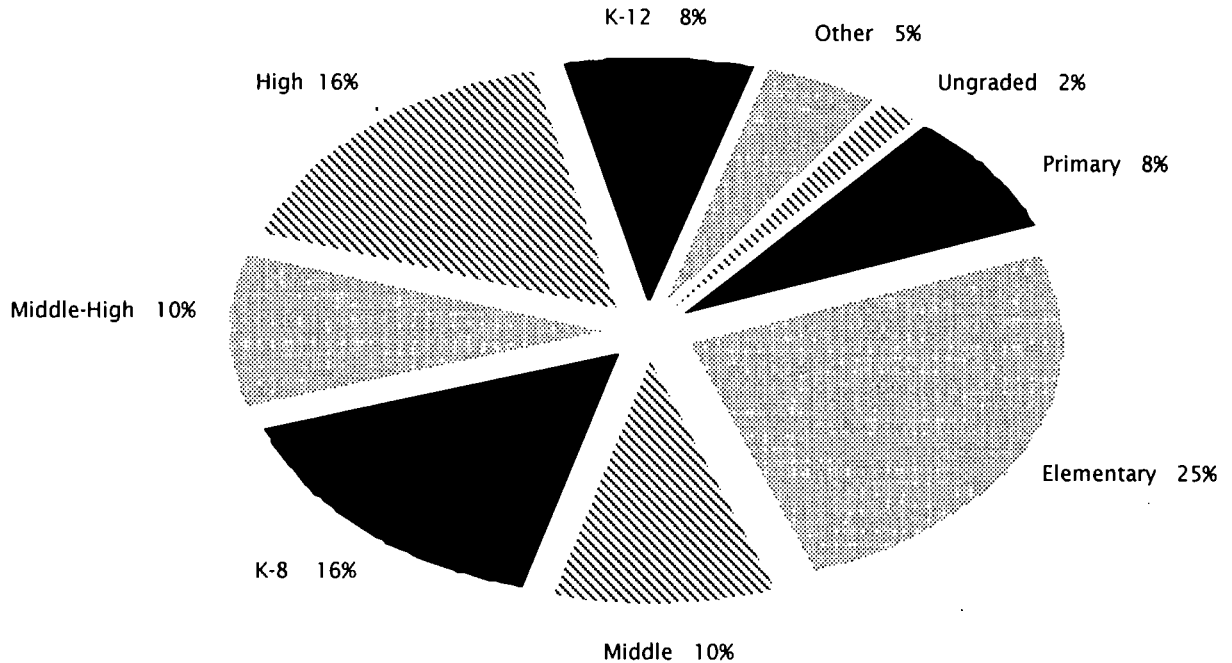
Number of schools	All public schools 56,640	Charter schools 975	Charter School Creation Status		
			Newly created	Pre-existing public	Pre-existing private
			704	173	98
% of schools					
Primary	6.0	8.0	8.2	4.6	12.2
Elementary	46.9	25.2	23.2	35.8	21.4
Middle	15.2	9.7	11.5	8.1	0.0
K-8	5.6	15.7	15.8	9.8	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.

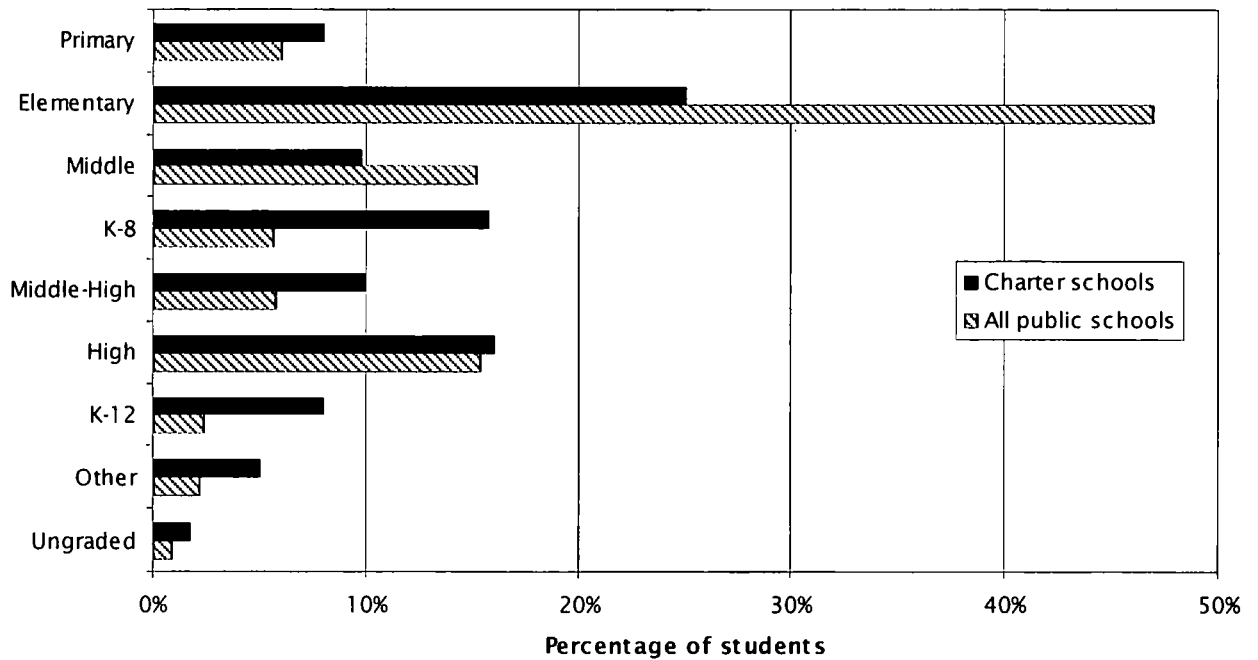
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data Survey, 1997–98.

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.

Estimated Grade Level Distribution for Charter Schools



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



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

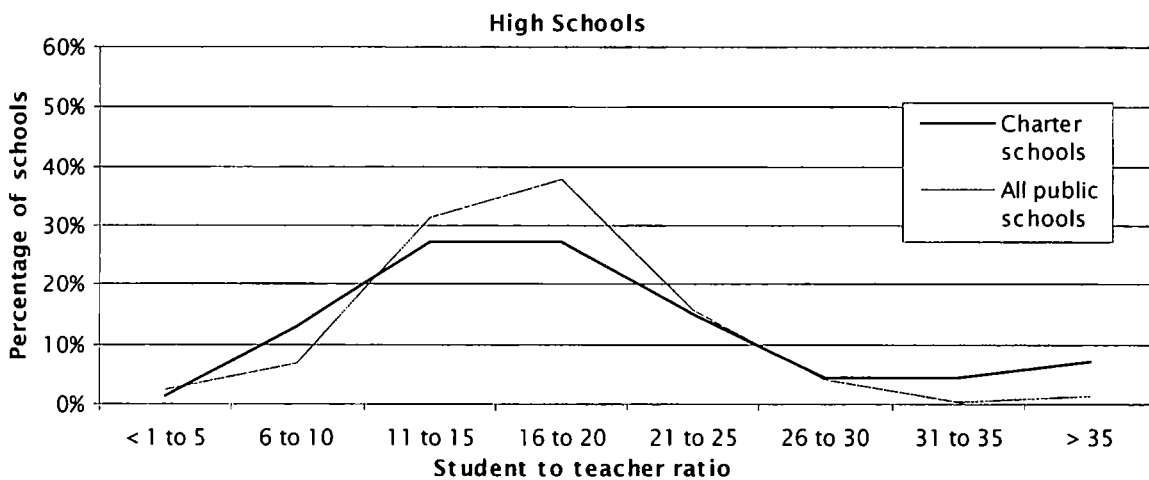
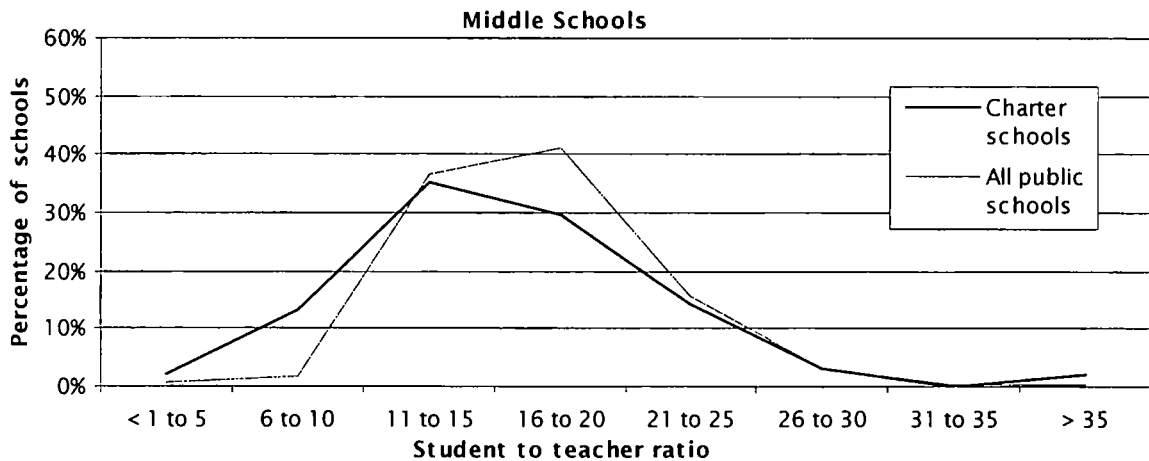
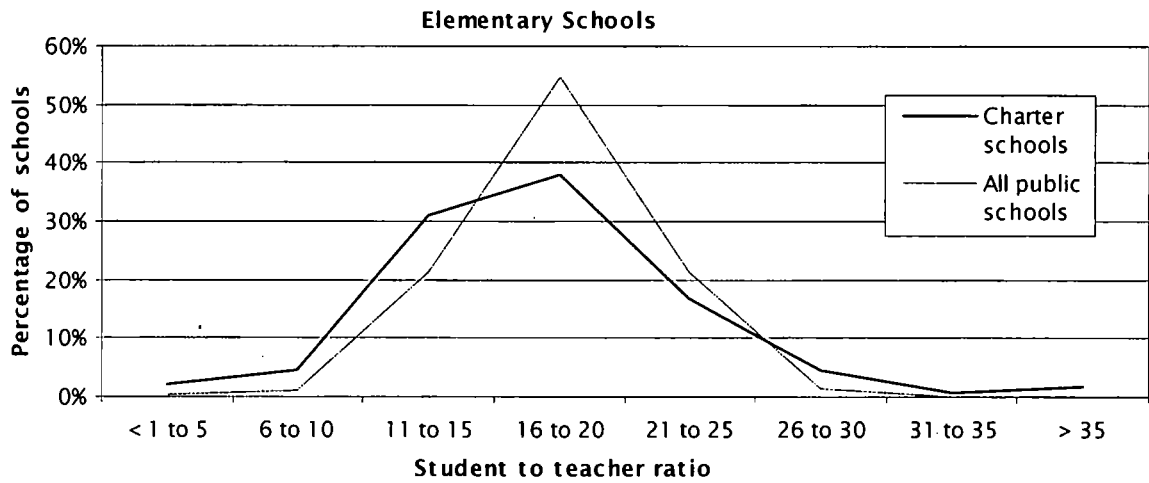
	Charter schools		All public schools	
	Number of schools	Median student-teacher ratio	Number of schools	Median student-teacher ratio
Total	945	16.0	51,505	17.2
Primary	77	15.8	2,880	17.6
Elementary	238	17.1	24,596	17.8
K–8	151	16.3	2,985	17.0
Middle	91	15.4	8,015	16.4
Middle-high	95	15.0	2,532	14.9
High	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



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

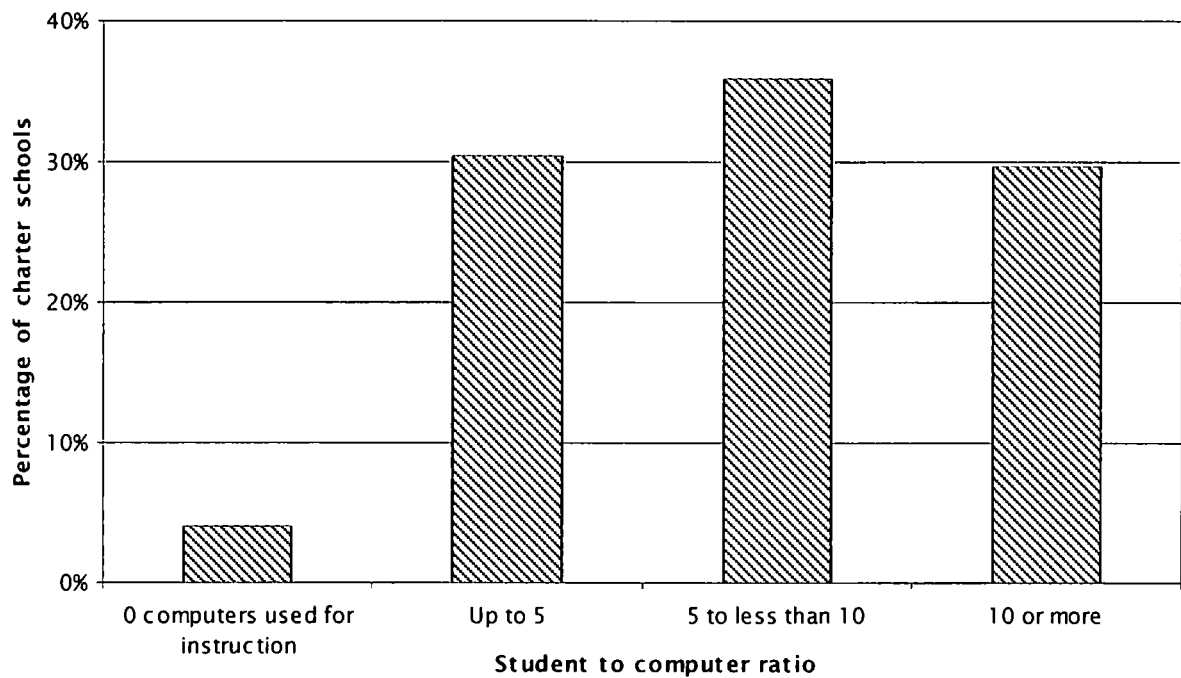
	Charter schools that have the following proportion of			
	Classrooms with computers used for instruction		Computers with multimedia capacity ¹	
Total in sample	# of schools	% of schools	# of schools	% of schools
	882		876	
None	116	13.2	49	5.6
Up to one-quarter	77	8.7	80	9.1
One-quarter to one-half	66	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.

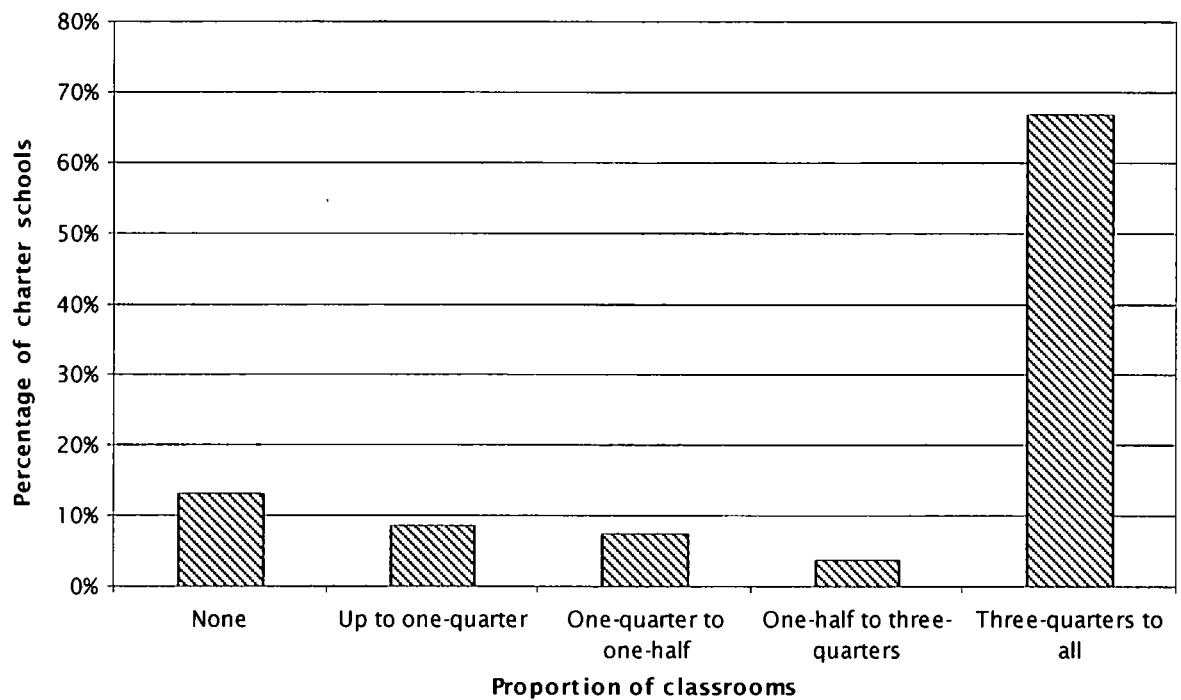
¹ Computers and Classrooms: The Status of Technology in U.S. High Schools. May 1997, Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service, Policy Information Center. This average represents all 50 states.

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
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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

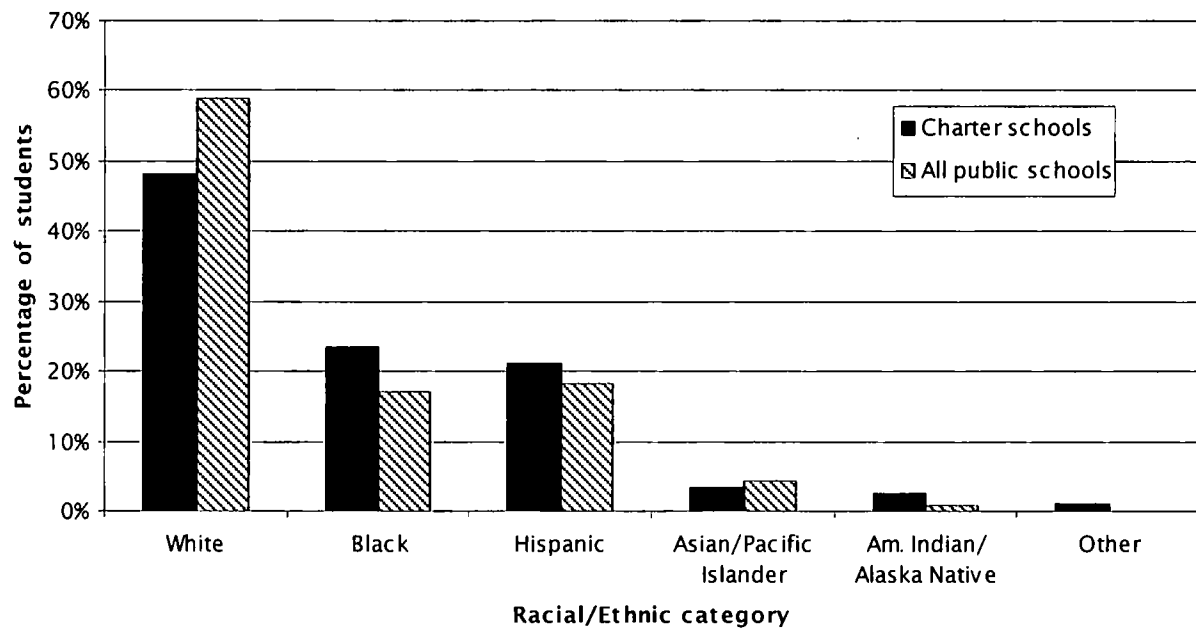
Racial/ethnic categories	Students				Schools	
	# of students in category		% of students in category		Average of school % of students in racial category	
	Charter schools	All public schools	Charter schools	All public schools	Charter schools	All public schools
Total Number	230,299	30,689,016			927	54,749
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.

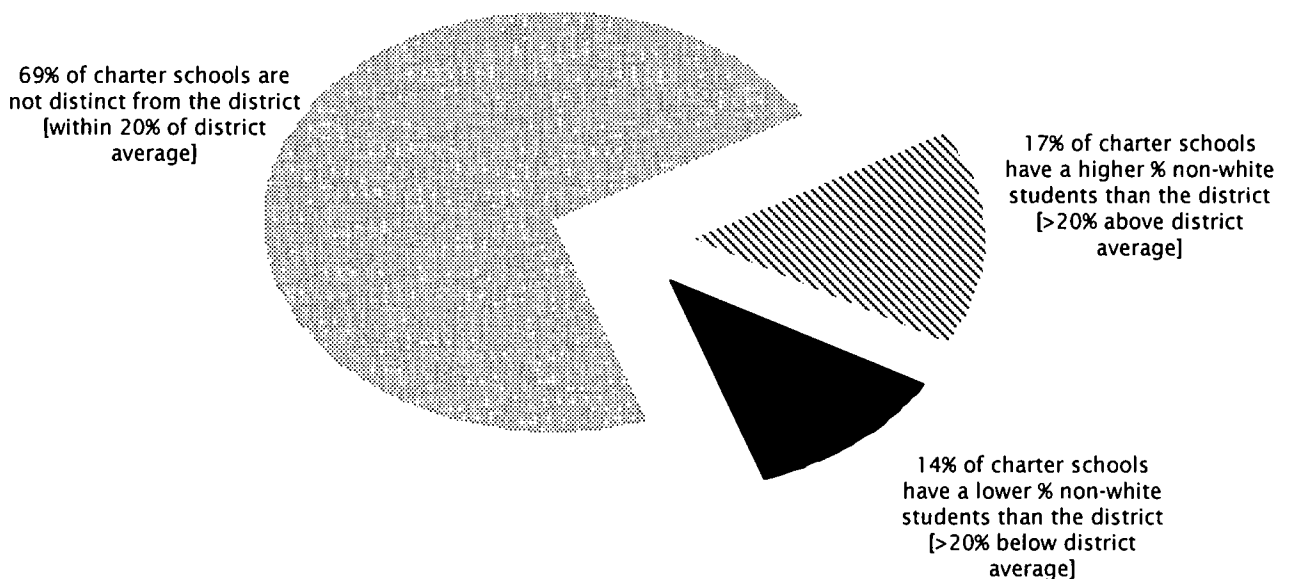
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data Survey, 1997–98.

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



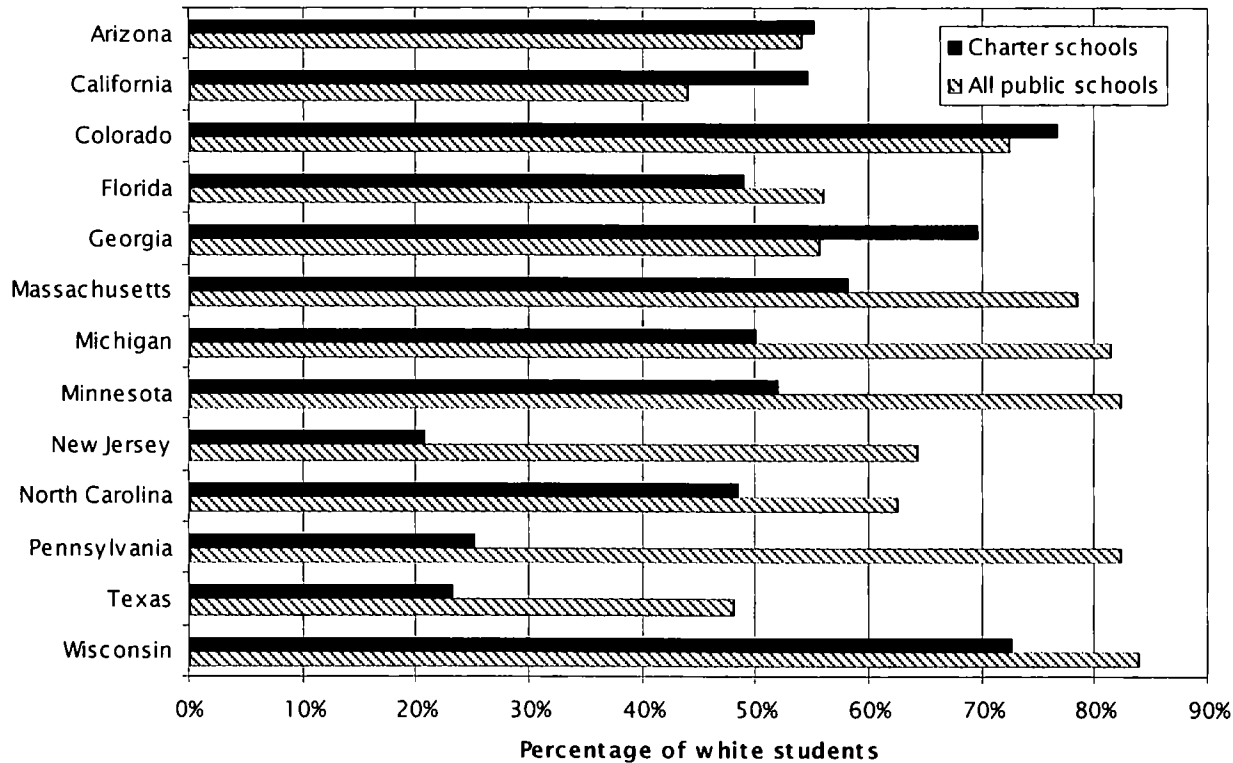
² In general, we relied on schools to report their surrounding district when they responded to the survey. In a few cases where schools did not report district information, we were able to match charter schools and districts by zip code using the 1997–98 Common Core of Data Survey.

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



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.

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.

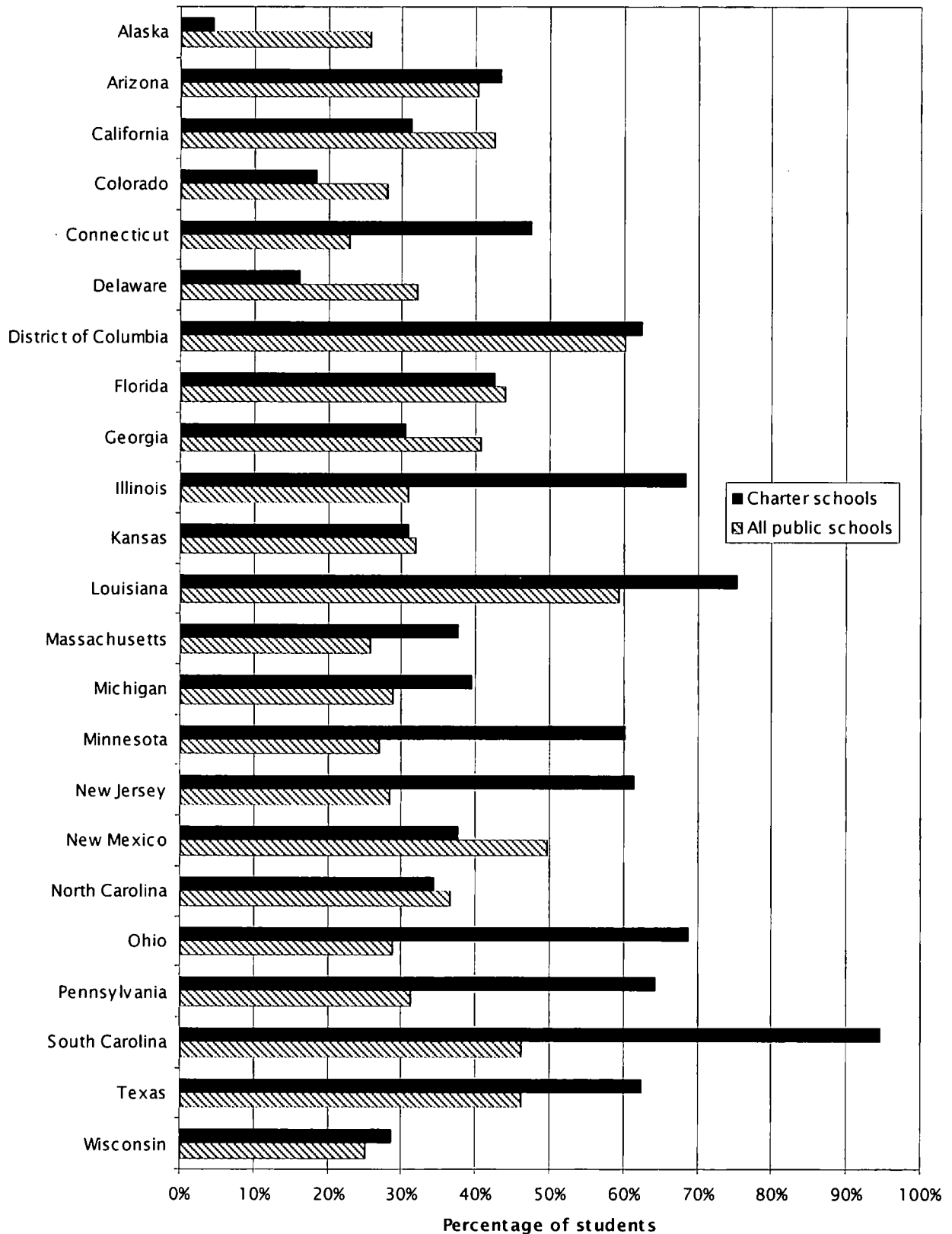
Estimated Number of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Lunch in the 27 Charter States

	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.

Percentage of Students Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch in Charter Schools and All Public 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.

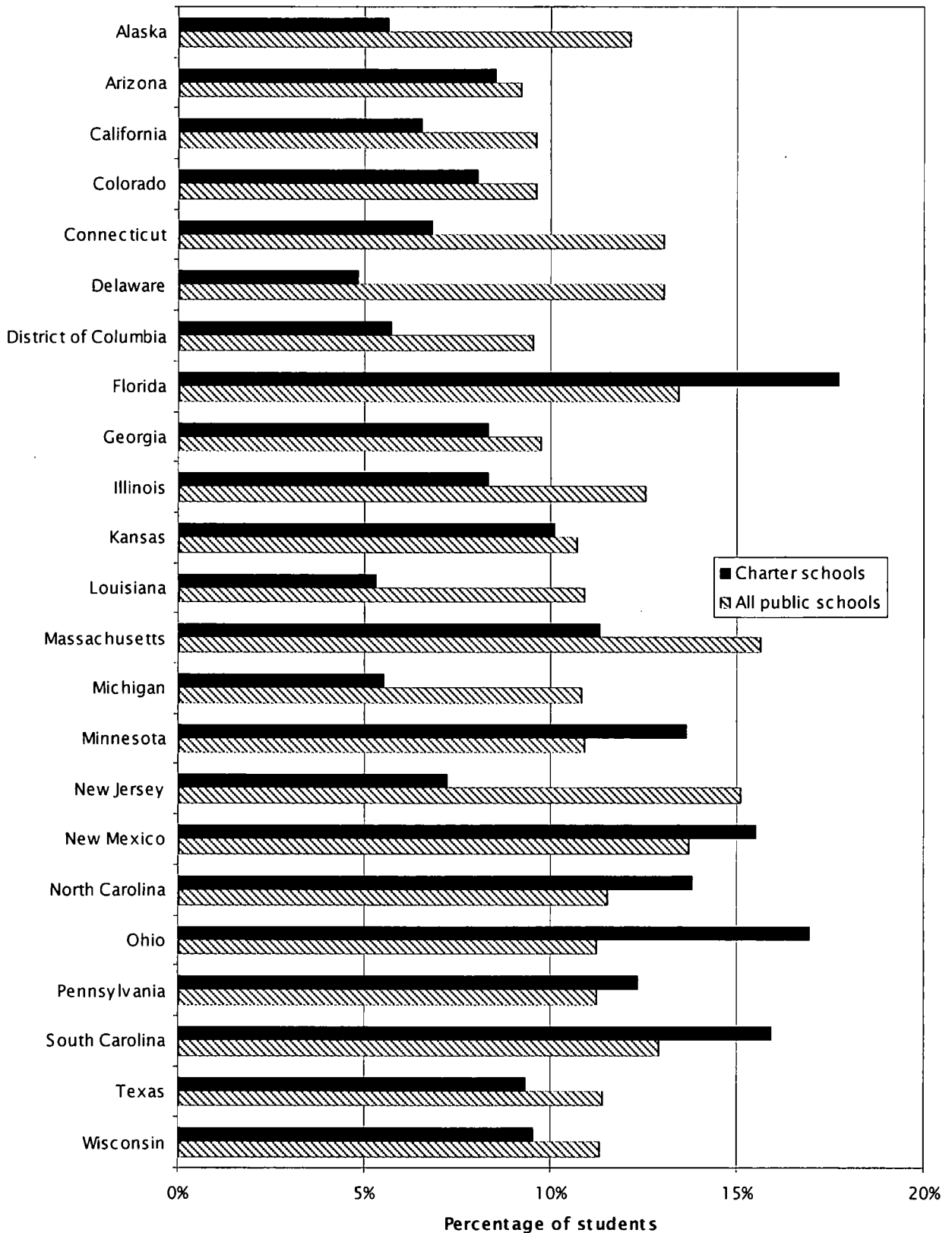
Estimated Number and Percentage of Students with Disabilities in the 27 Charter States

	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



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

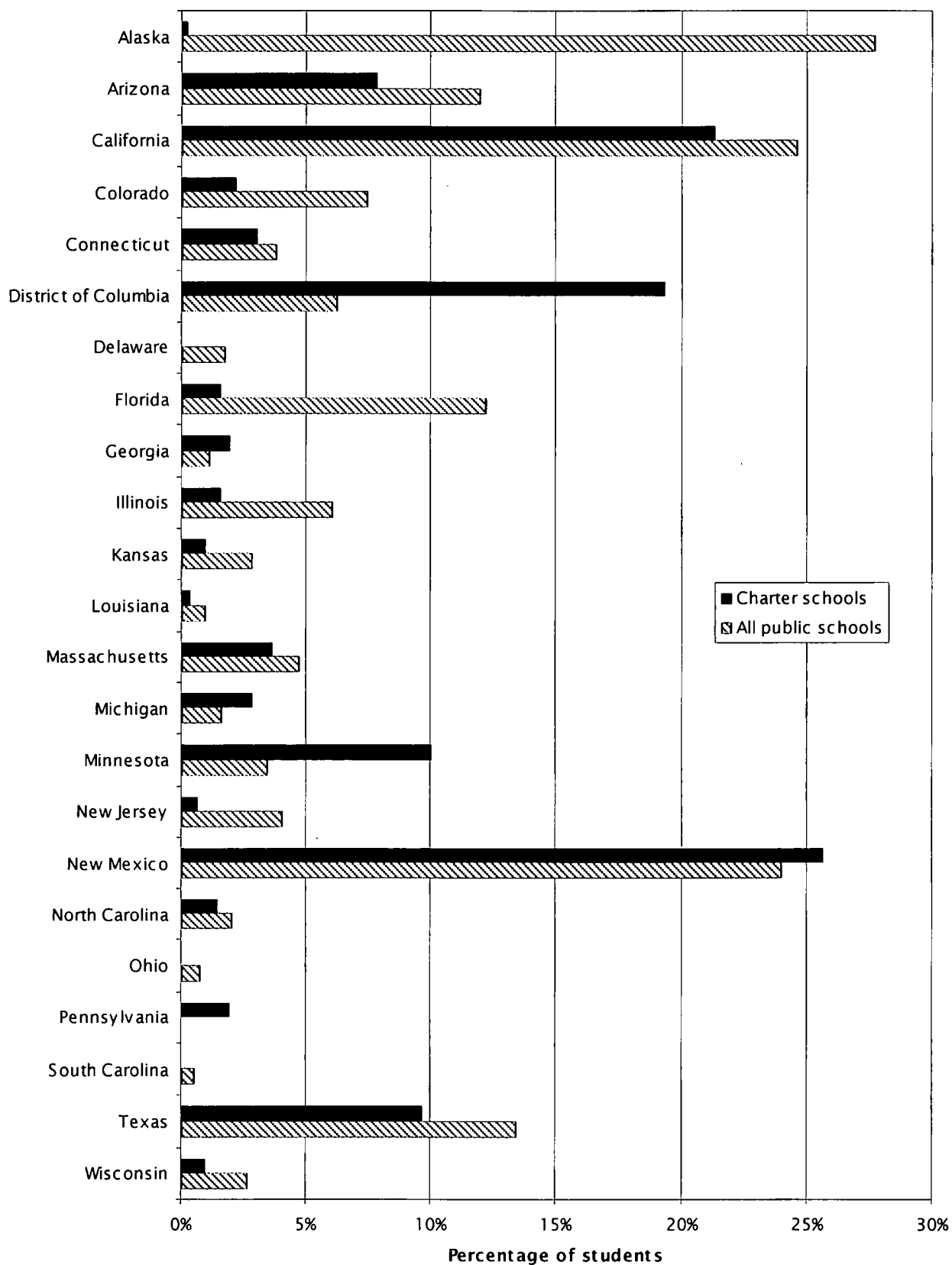
State	Estimated LEP students			
	Charter schools (1998–99)		All public schools (1996–97) ¹	
	# of students	% of students	# of students	% of students
Total	24,248	9.9	2,841,177	9.8
Alaska	4	0.2	34,942	27.7
Arizona	2,511	7.8	93,528	11.9
California	15,563	21.3	1,381,393	24.6
Colorado	298	2.1	24,675	7.4
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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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."

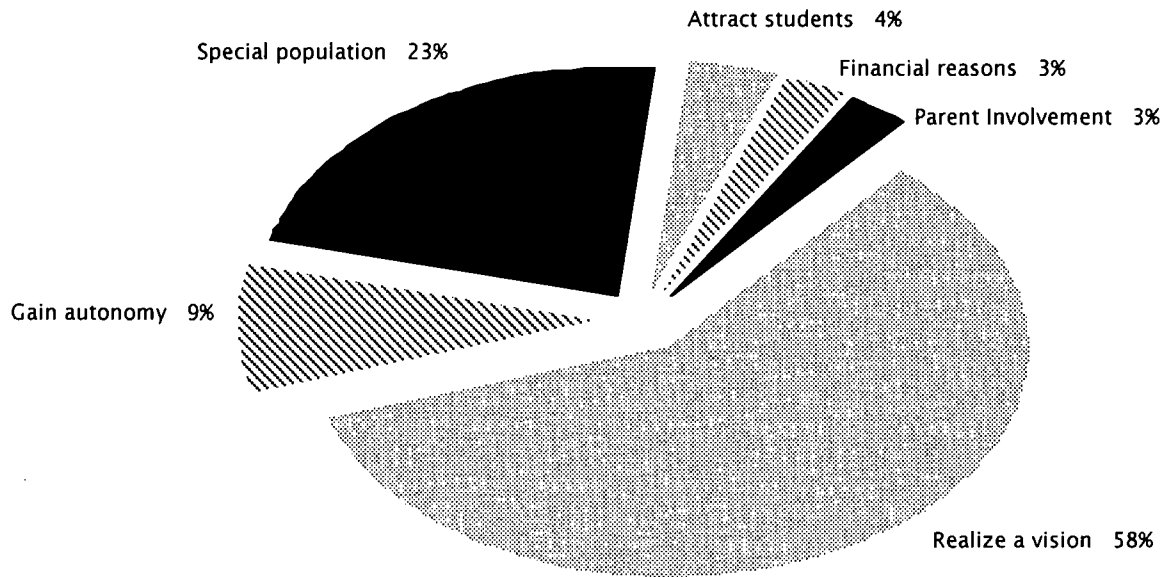
- Realizing an alternative vision for schooling was the most important reason for founding charter schools—three-quarters (75 percent) of charter schools cited vision among other reasons for founding and 59 percent of charter schools were founded primarily to realize an alternative vision for schooling.
- 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

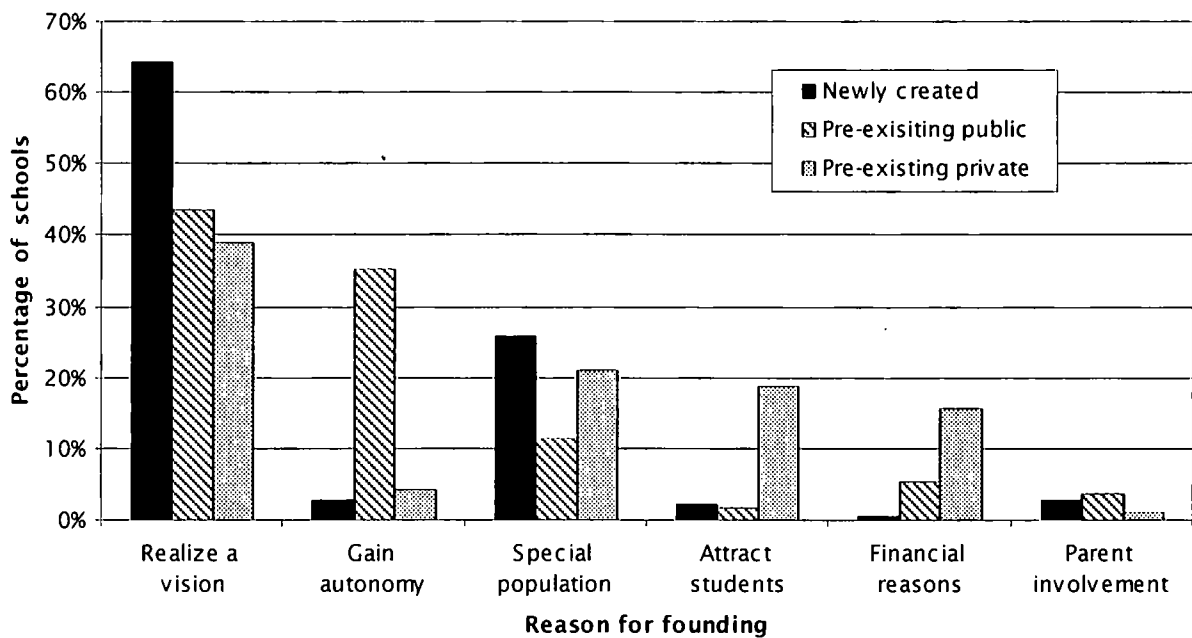
Reason for founding charter school	Percentage that cited each reason	Percentage that cited <i>most</i> important reason by charter school creation status			
	Total	Total	Newly created	Pre-existing public	Pre-existing private
Number of schools	971	946	688	168	90
	Percentage of schools (%)				
Realize 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.

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



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

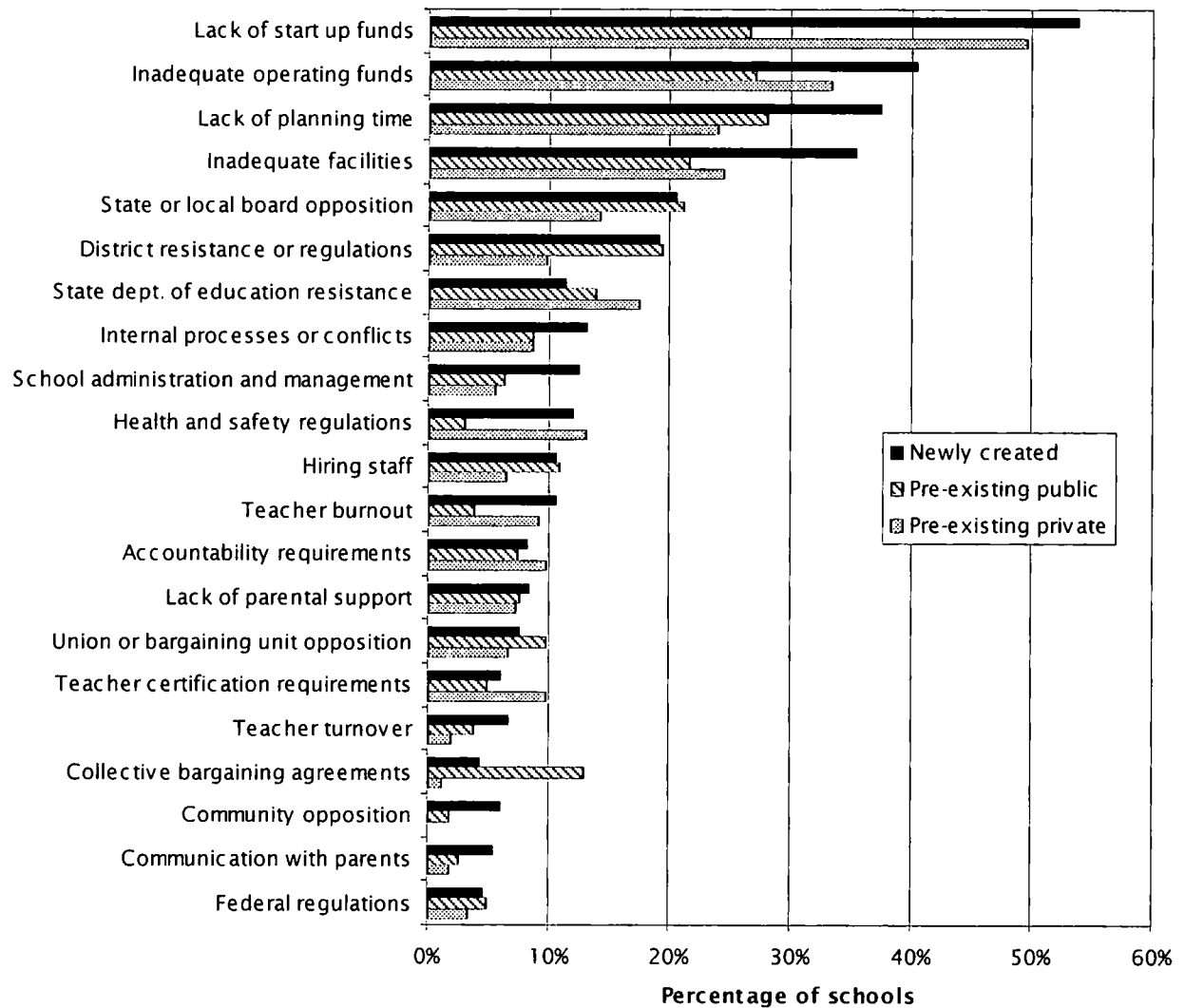
NOTE: These data are drawn from questions asked only in the new school surveys and are based on responses from a range of 927 to 955 open charter schools that provided information on these questions. Five questions—on administration and school management, teacher burnout, teacher turnover, lack of parental 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.

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.

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

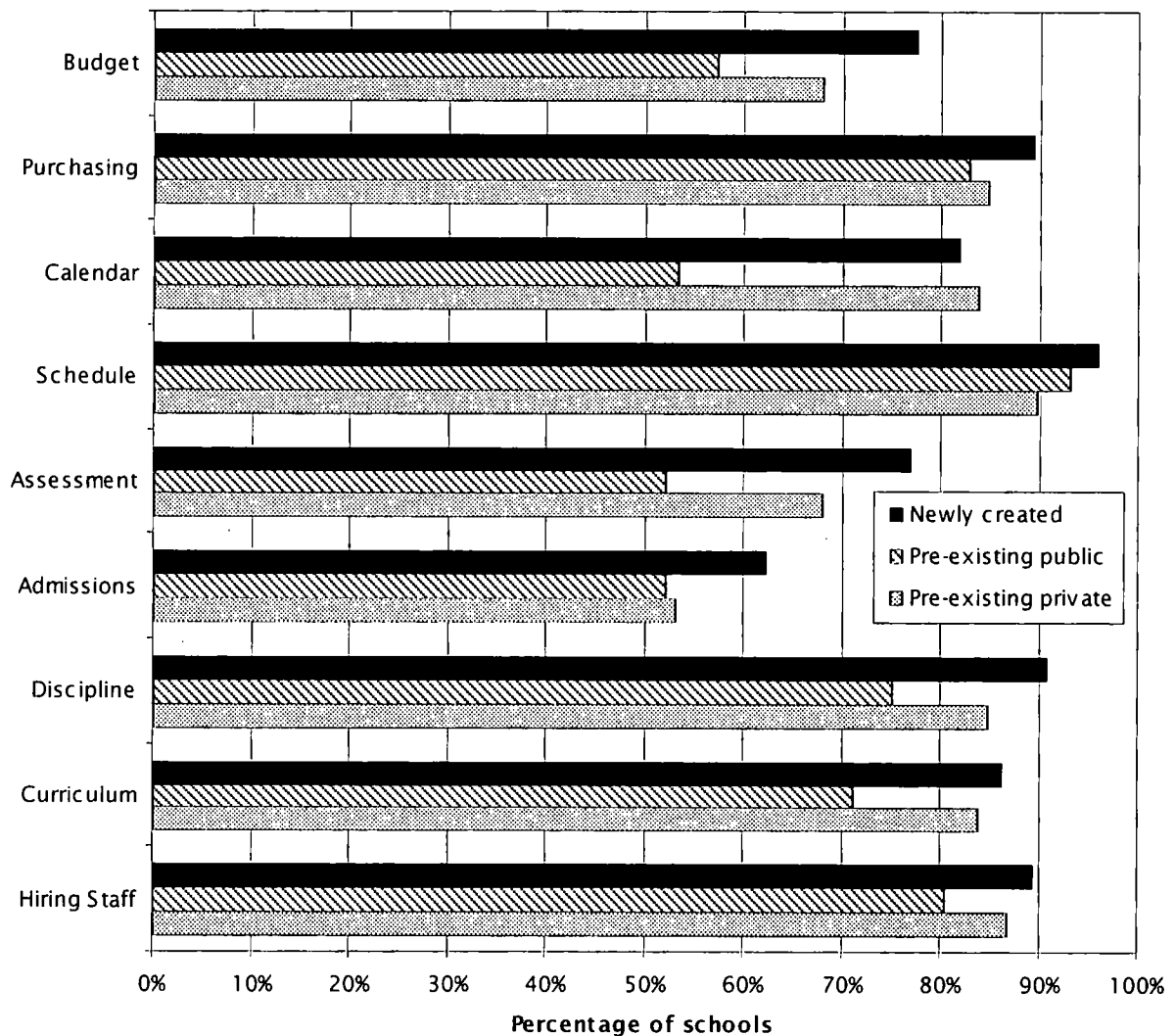
Area of control	Source of primary control			
	School	District/charter granting agency	Both	Other
	Percentage of schools (%)			
Budget	72.9	19.4	0.3	7.4
Purchase of supplies/equipment	87.7	7.6	0.2	4.5
School calendar	76.8	19.6	0.1	3.5
Daily schedule	94.8	2.9	0.2	2.2
Student assessment policies	71.5	19.7	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

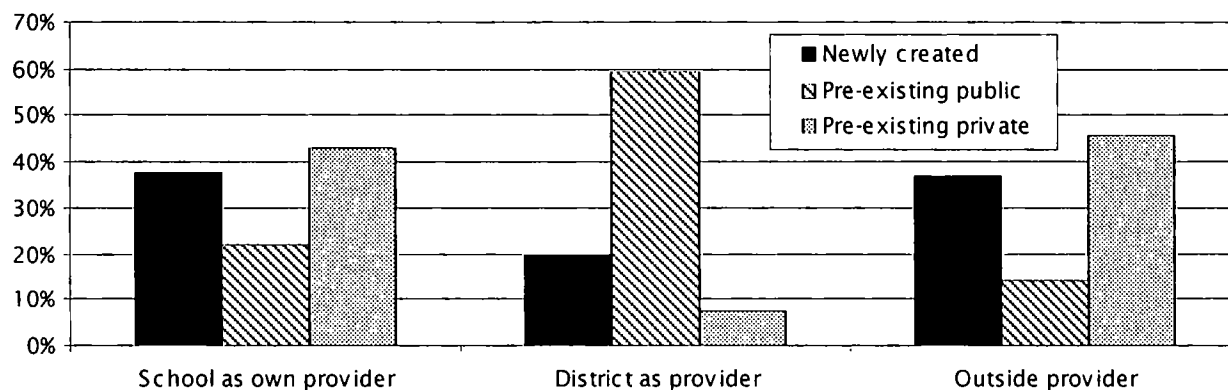


AUTONOMY AND CHOICE OF SERVICE PROVIDERS

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.

Percentage of Charter Schools that Offer Services by Provider and Creation Status

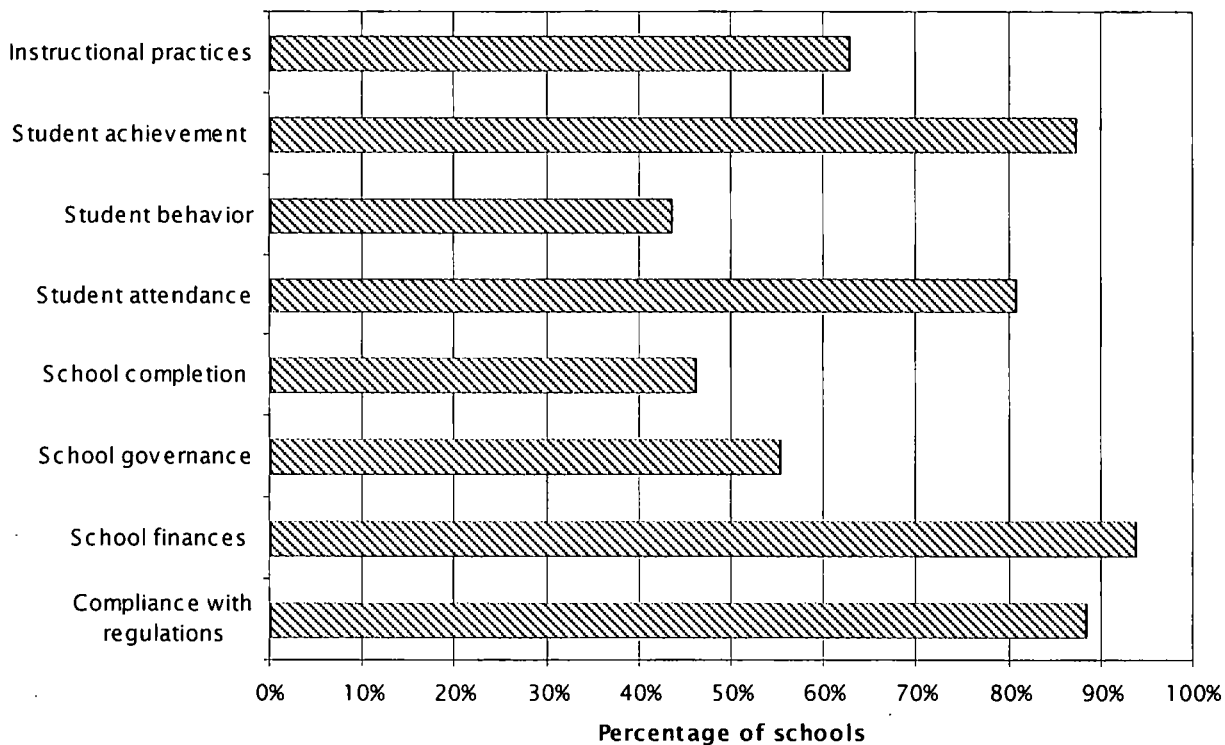
Services provided in charter schools (percentage of schools with services)	Charter creation status Average of all services	Percentage of schools (%) with services provided solely by		
		School as provider 35.5	District as provider 25.6	Outside provider 33.7
	Newly created	37.9	19.7	37.0
	Pre-existing 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

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



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.

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.

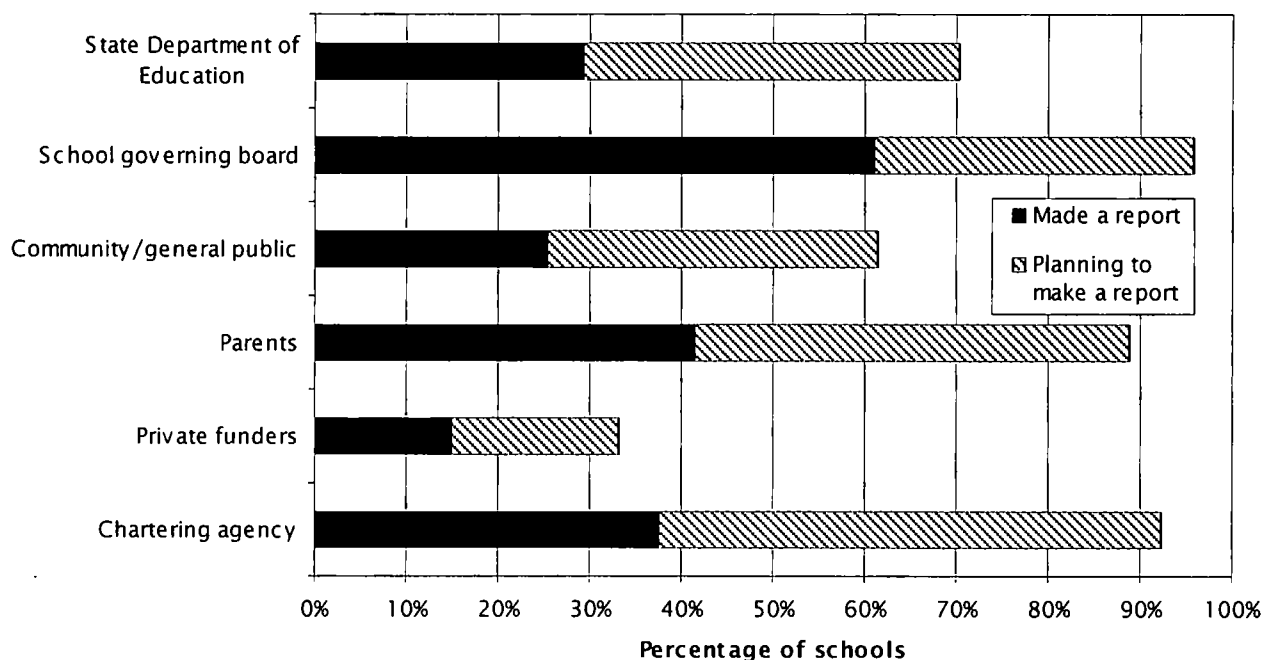
- In 1998-99, the majority of charter schools open for at least 1 year at the time of our survey said they made or were planning to make a report on the school's progress toward its goals to key constituent groups: the school's governing board (96 percent), their chartering agency (92 percent), and parents (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.

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

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.

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