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ABSTRACT

This study plan outlines the evaluation protocol to be carried out in Ohio's community schools (charter schools). The plan was generated by the state's Legislative Office of Education Oversight, which is required by law to evaluate start-up and conversion community schools in the state. The plan is guided by the following questions: (1) What are the core reasons for starting a community school? (2) What do community schools look like? (3) What are the processes and dynamics of community schools? (4) What is the process for becoming a community school? (5) What is the financial status of Ohio's community schools? (6) What effects do community schools have on academic achievement? (7) How satisfied are students, parents, and teachers with their community school? (8) How do community schools gauge and assess their performance? (9) What are some of the possible effects that community schools have on public schools? (10) What impact do planning and start-up funds have on the success or failure of community schools? and (11) Under what conditions should the General Assembly support community schools after 2003? The report outlines the study methods, the plan of action, and the team tasks and annual reports to be generated over the 5 years of the study project. Six appendices contain data elements to be collected, study questions, and other information. (RJM)

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The Community SCHOOLS Study Plan

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The Community Schools Study Plan

I. Background on Community Schools

Around the Nation

In 1997, Ohio joined the ranks of a growing number of states that allow for the creation of charter schools – **state-funded public schools** that operate independently of locally elected school boards. Charter schools are called "community schools" in Ohio. One central idea underlying charter school formation is that public schools, due to cumbersome rules and regulations, have failed to implement reforms that are necessary for advancing student learning. Proponents of charter schools believe that by eliminating these burdensome rules, charter schools can create innovative learning environments that will better serve students and teachers.

Typically, charter schools see themselves as having advantages over traditional public schools in their enhanced capacity to:

- Meet students' special needs (from drop-outs to autistic children).
- Tailor teaching and learning techniques to the individual abilities of each child (from mentoring to very low staff:student ratios).
- Offer educational options best-suited to certain student populations (from specialized technologies, to "back to basics", to creative expression).
- Apply different pedagogical approaches (from targeted for multiple intelligence to ungraded, multi-aged classrooms).

Nationally, there are over 700 charter schools operating in 29 states. Collectively, charter schools are operating in urban, rural, and suburban school settings – but all are independent of the public school districts in which they are located. Any number of individuals or groups including teachers, parents, or educational entrepreneurs can create charter schools. However, Ohio requires that its charter schools be governed by nonprofit boards.

Each charter school holds a **contract** with its **sponsoring** entity (i.e., local or state school board) for a specified number of years. Each contract describes in detail the charter school's legal, fiscal, and educational responsibilities. Furthermore, specific standards or goals to which the charter school is to be held accountable are outlined in the contract. Ultimately, charter schools are accountable to the public. If the school fails to meet the standards outlined in the contract, its sponsor could terminate it. Also, if the school fails to meet parents' expectations, the students eventually will move to other schools (taking their state per-pupil funding with them) and the sponsoring entity will be forced to close the school.

In Ohio

Charter schools are called **"community schools"** in Ohio, so that there is no confusion with the private schools that operate under charters issued by the State Board of Education. There are two types of community schools in Ohio: "start-up" schools are newly created; "conversion" schools are either a classroom, a wing of a building, or an entire public school that has been transformed into a community school.

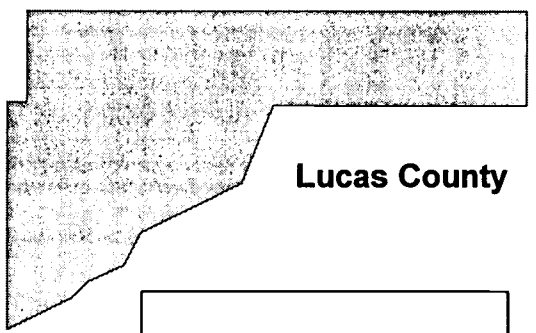
Ohio's 122nd General Assembly authorized the creation of community schools under the following three acts:

- Am. Sub. H.B. 215 (the budget bill authorized community schools in the Lucas County Pilot Project and conversion schools statewide);
- Am. Sub. S.B. 55 (the bill on school standards authorized community schools in the remaining Big 8 school districts – Akron, Canton, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Columbus, Dayton, and Youngstown. Toledo is included under the Lucas County Pilot Project);
- Am. Sub. H.B. 770 (the budget correction bill made several changes to existing community school laws).

Based upon these three laws, Ohio's first community schools opened during this 1998-1999 school year. Exhibit 1 displays the schools opening in the 1998-1999 school year (including their grades and projected enrollment).

Exhibit 1

Lucas County Pilot Community Schools



Numerical Limitations:

20 schools

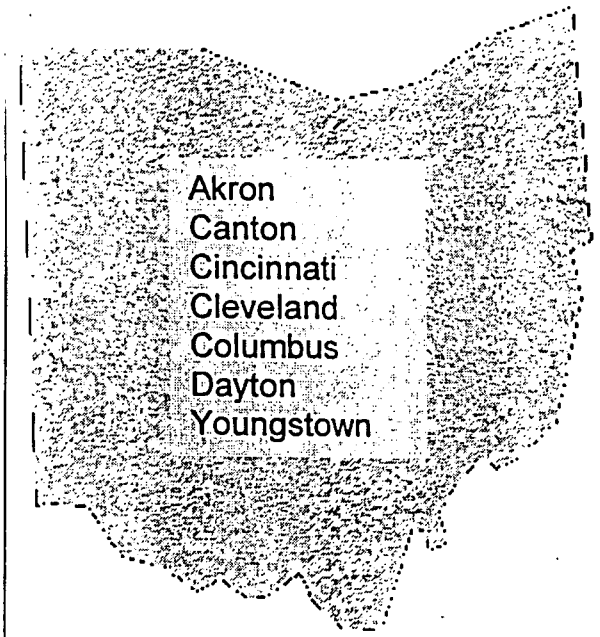
Start-up Funding Available:

Yes

1998-1999 School Year

- *Aurora Academy*
- *JADES Academy*
- *Meadows CHOICE*
- *M.O.D.E.L. Academy*
- *Toledo Village Shule*

"Big 8" Community Schools (Start-ups)



Numerical Limitations: None

Start-up Funding Available: No

1998-1999 School Year

Akron

- *HOPE Academy Brown Street*
- *HOPE Academy University Campus*

Cincinnati

- *Harmony Community School*
- *Oak Tree Montessori School*

Cleveland

- *HOPE Academy Cathedral Campus*
- *HOPE Academy Chapelside Campus*
- *Old Brooklyn Montessori* School

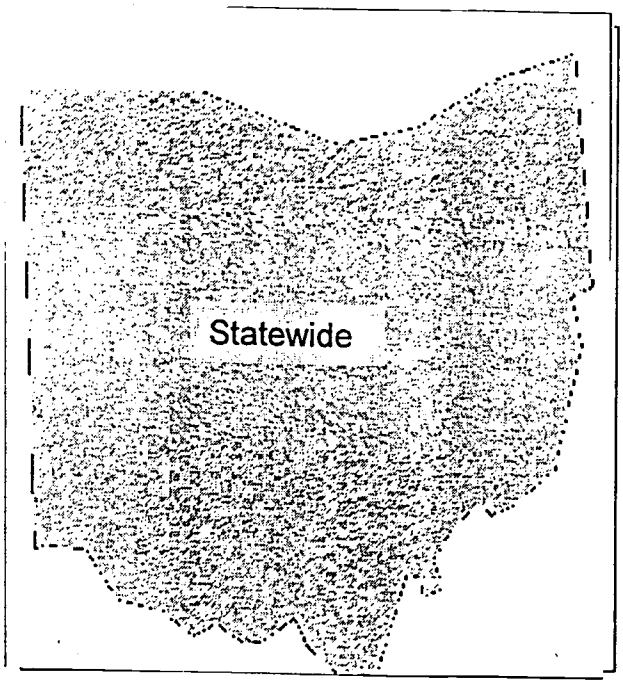
Dayton

- *City Day Community School*

Youngstown

- *Eagle Heights Academy*
- *Youngstown Community School*

Conversion Community Schools



1998-1999 School Year

- None

Numerical Limitations: None

Start-up Funding Available: No

Grades & Enrollment: 1998-99 Community Schools

Lucas County

School	Grades / Student Population	Enrollment
Aurora Academy	Multi-grade elementary	200
JADES Academy	Adjudicated & at-risk 6-12 graders	64
Meadows CHOICE	Multi-handicapped 11-14 year olds	25
M.O.D.E.L. Academy	Autistic	30
Toledo Village Shule	K-6	75

Big Eight

School	Grade / Student Population	Enrollment
City Day Community Schools	1-4	56
Eagle Heights Academy	K-8	620
HOPE Academy Brown Street	K-8	229
HOPE Academy Cathedral Campus	K-8	335
HOPE Academy Chapelside Campus	K-8	303
HOPE Academy University Campus	K-8	138
Harmony Community School	6-11	175
Oak Tree Montessori	K-3	73
Old Brooklyn Montessori	1-6	27
Youngstown Community School	K-4	36

The General Assembly authorized the creation of community schools in the hopes that Ohio's public schools will raise student achievement and provide parents with additional educational options for their children. In addition, the General Assembly hopes that community schools will spur reform of Ohio's public schools by fostering a healthy competition, and by developing innovative teaching and management techniques that might be transferable to the traditional public school setting.

Sponsorship

The Lucas County Educational Service Center (LCESC) is responsible for administering the community school programs in Lucas County. Anyone interested in starting a community school can seek sponsorship from one of the local school boards in Lucas County (including JVS school districts), the LCESC, or the University of Toledo. If a local board or the University of Toledo denies an application, potential applicants can appeal to the LCESC. As appropriated by the Ohio General Assembly, only the Lucas County Pilot Project offers planning funds ($50,000) and start-up funds ($100,000) for up to 20 start-up or conversion community schools.

Community schools in the Big 8 school districts (other than Toledo) may seek sponsorship from the board of the Big 8 district, a JVS district (within the same county), the board of another school district in the same county, or the State Board of Education. The General Assembly did not appropriate planning or start-up funds for the community schools in the Big 8 school districts (other than Toledo).

School districts *statewide* may convert either a classroom, a wing of a building, or an entire public school building into a community school. Thus the community school's sponsor would be the public school district in which the community school is located. Once established, the community school would operate independently of the public school district, under the conditions stated in the community school contract.

Exhibit 2, developed by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE), helps to explain the sponsorship of start-up and conversion community schools.

Exhibit 2

Eligible Community School Sponsors

	Lucas County	Big 8 Urban Districts	All Other Districts
Conversion Community Schools	• District-of-location board of education • Lucas County Educational Service Center • University of Toledo	• District-of-location board of education	• District-of-location board of education
Start-Up Community Schools	• District-of-location board of education • Lucas County Educational Service Center • Univeristy of Toledo	• District-of-location board of education • Board of education of a city, local, exempted village or JVS district in the same county as the Big 8 district • State Board of Education	• Not permitted

Accountability

As part of the accountability, each community school in Ohio is required to submit an annual report to its sponsor, to the parents of all students enrolled in its school, and to LOEO. This annual report must include the school's activities, financial status, and progress toward meeting the goals and standards outlined in its contract. For example, how many of the school's students are passing the ninth grade proficiency test? If the school states in its contract that 75% of its students will pass the ninth grade proficiency test, then progress on meeting this goal must also be stated in the annual report.

II. Study Scope & Questions

LOEO's Authority to Evaluate

LOEO is required by law (Am. Sub. H.B. 215 and Am. Sub. H.B. 770) to evaluate start-up and conversion community schools in the Lucas County Pilot Project and the Big 8 school districts, and any conversion schools located statewide.

In the beginning, Am. Sub. H.B. 215 required LOEO to produce a study plan for the Lucas County Pilot Project within 90 days of the bill's enactment. The study plan was to be drafted in consultation with the Superintendent of LCESC, a classroom teacher from the Ohio Education Association, a classroom teacher from the Ohio Federation of Teachers, and a classroom teacher from neither of these organizations. The legislation specified that LOEO and its consultants,

> "develop a study design for the **evaluation of the pilot project schools and the overall effects of the community school pilot project**. The study design shall include the criteria that the Office will use to **determine the positive and negative effects of the project overall, and the success or failure of individual community schools**. The design shall include a description of the data that must be collected by the Superintendent and by each community school and sponsor and a timeline for the collection of data. ....**Data shall be collected at regular intervals, but no evaluation of the results of data collected shall be made by the Office prior to June 2001**."

Furthermore, Am. Sub. H.B. 215 required LOEO to issue a **preliminary report**, together with recommendations to improve community schools by **June 30, 2001**; to complete "an evaluation of the assets and liabilities to the state's system of educational options that result from the establishment of community schools under this act," by **December 31, 2002**; and, to produce a **final report**, with recommendations as to the future of community schools in Ohio by **June 1, 2003**.

Even more specifically, Section 50.39 of Am. Sub. H.B. 215 required LOEO's 2002 evaluation on "assets and liabilities to the state's system of educational options... (to) at least include an assessment of any advantages to providing a greater number of educational choices to Ohio parents, any detrimental impacts on the state educational system or an individual school districts, and the effects of attending community schools on the academic achievement of students." LOEO expects to address these issues through:

- Study question number 6 (What effect do community schools have on the academic achievement of their students? How does this compare with the effect that other public schools have on the achievement of their students?)
- Study question number 11 (What are some of the possible effects that community schools have on public schools?)

With the passage of Am. Sub. H.B. 55, Ohio's community schools law changed significantly. No longer were start-up community schools limited to a pilot project, they were allowed to expand beyond the confines of Lucas County to Ohio's large metropolitan counties (home to the state's "Big 8" urban school districts). Yet, despite this expansion, LOEO's scope of study remained confined to the Lucas County Pilot Program and conversion schools. This remained the case until corrective language was passed in Am. Sub. H.B. 770, which required LOEO to examine and report on the "positive and negative effects" of all community schools - be they Lucas County Pilot, "Big 8" schools, or statewide conversions.

Am. Sub. H.B. 770 brought with it an additional mandate for LOEO. In addition to reporting on community schools in its 2001 and 2003 reports, LOEO was charged with producing annual "composite" reports (from community schools' own annual reports) for the General Assembly and the Governor. LOEO's annual composite report is primarily descriptive in nature - number or schools in operation, their size and characteristics of enrollment, financial status and "other pertinent information." However, as part of its annual report, LOEO is required to report on the academic performance of community schools beginning in 1999, a provision that conflicts with the legislative directive of Am. Sub. H.B. 215 that requires LOEO not to report on data collected prior to June 2001.

In reconciling LOEO's conflicting mandates, the community schools team has decided that it cannot simply report, unfiltered, the academic claims made by charter schools in their annual reports. Rather, LOEO must comment on the credibility of these claims even if such comments occur prior to 2001.

Unless otherwise noted in the study plan, "community schools" refers to start-up and conversion schools in the Lucas County Pilot and the Big 8 school districts, and conversion schools statewide.

Descriptive Study Questions

1. What are the core reasons for starting a community school?

a. Who creates community schools?
b. What promises are made to parents, students, and teachers by community schools?
c. What are the perceived shortcomings of public schools that community schools hope to improve upon? (from the perspective of community school founders and legislators)

2. **What do community schools look like? How are community schools similar to or different from other public schools, in terms of:**
   a. Students (See Appendix A)
      - Provide the following descriptive data for both community and regular public schools: age/grade, SES (disadvantagement code), educational backgrounds, retention, discipline, etc.
      - What are the main similarities and differences between community schools and their public school counterparts in terms of the above-mentioned variables?
      - How much student mobility do these schools experience? Why? (This includes students that return to public school districts and private schools.)
   b. Staffing
      - Provide the following descriptive data for both community and regular public schools: ethnicity, certification, student/teacher ratios, level of experience, compensation, turnover, etc.
   c. Educational Goals
      - Describe philosophies and core values, etc.
      - Do the goals differ between founders, administrators, teachers, and parents? If so, how?
   d. Educational Approaches
      - Describe the methods of instruction, pedagogy, teaching styles, and teachers' assumptions about learning, etc.
      - To what degree are the educational pedagogies "fully" implemented?
   e. Management
      - How many community schools are operated by for-profit and non-profit entities?
      - Do the characteristics of community school students and staff or the educational goals and approaches employed differ between charter schools operated by for-profit companies and those operated by non-profit companies?
   f. Conversion/Start-up
      - How many community schools are conversions? How many are start-ups?
      - What are their similarities and differences?

3. **What are the processes and dynamics of community schools? What are the forces that facilitate or impede continuing progress and operation of community schools?**
   a. What are the routine operations in a community school? How do these compare to public schools?
   b. What are the nature and composition of community school governance boards?
   c. What are the relationships among board members, administrators, teaching staff, and parents?
   d. Do any of Ohio's laws impede community schools' operations?
   e. What forces within the control of community schools impact their success or failure? To what extent are community schools controlling these forces?

f. What forces outside of the community schools' control impact their success or failure? (E.g., the relationship of the community school's staff to the school board of the local public school district, etc.)
g. What are ODE, the Lucas County ESC, and sponsors doing to facilitate or impede community schools' operations?
h. What are the role of other organizations in the "education community" (e.g., OSBA, OFT, OEA, OAESA, etc.) in helping or hurting the community schools' implementation?

4. What is the process for becoming a community school in Ohio?

a. Describe Ohio's laws and regulations – including laws from which community schools are exempt.
b. How does Ohio's law compare with other states? (brief table)
   - LOEO expects to fold other states' experiences into LOEO's recommendations. For example, if LOEO recommends that ODE's oversight and technical assistance roles be separated and another state has segregated these two functions, then LOEO will mention that other state's experience.
c. Do any of Ohio's laws impede community schools' start-up?
d. What are the necessary requisites for starting up a community school? What is needed in the school's early operations?
e. Are the oversight and technical assistance provided by Lucas County ESC and ODE effective and efficient?

5. What is the financial status of Ohio's community schools?

a. From whom do community schools receive their funding? (e.g., federal, state, private, etc.)
b. How is the money obtained and disbursed?
c. What underwriting (e.g., loans from private companies, etc.) do these schools have?
d. Are there any "strings" attached to the dollars received?

Impact Study Questions

6. What effect do community schools have on the academic achievement of their students? How does this compare with the effect that other public schools have on the achievement of their students?

a. Indicators of academic achievement include proficiency test scores, student attendance rates, suspension/expulsions, graduation rate, etc. Since the new academic standards for public schools include these indicators, it makes sense for LOEO to use them when comparing public and community schools.
b. This question assumes a "general" population of students – NOT groups of students that are different (e.g., an entire school of autistic students). There are conditions under which students should not be given the proficiency test or compared against the general population of students.

c. LOEO will NOT empirically explain the variables that predict "why" charter schools cause a gain or loss in student achievement, since such calculations would be too difficult to determine given the multiple treatments across the community schools and the hundreds of influencing variables that impact the gain or loss.

d. However, because of the in-depth understanding we will gain over five years of research, **there may be certain conditions under which LOEO could offer informed speculations on the effects of community schools**. The following are examples of some influencing variables that impact community schools – the list is not meant to be exhaustive:
   - Compare specific academic philosophies and their impact on students in community schools. (e.g., teacher centered versus learner centered approaches)
   - Examine if specific teaching techniques or school conditions (e.g., smaller class sizes, heightened parental involvement, rigorous curriculums, etc.) have various levels of impact on student achievement.
   - To what extent can these teaching techniques or school conditions be linked to the exemptions from public school rules and regulations?

e. Examine the differences in impact between community schools operated by non-profit and for-profit entities. There may be other, more refined analyses that account for the differences among community schools (e.g., subsidized versus non-subsidized community schools). LOEO will do such analyses when appropriate.

f. Comparison of the academic achievement of conversion to start-up community schools and to other public schools.

7. How satisfied are students with the community school they attend? What are their likes and dislikes?

a. How does student satisfaction in community schools compare with student satisfaction in the public school system? How does the level of student satisfaction compare between conversion and start-up schools?

8. How satisfied are parents with specific features of the community school their child attends?

a. Possible features of parent satisfaction: educational philosophy, opportunities for participation, class size, individual attention by teachers, academic standards and expectations, quality of teaching, etc.

b. How does parent satisfaction in community schools compare with parent satisfaction in the public school system? How does the level of parent satisfaction compare between conversion and start-up schools?

c. How many of the perceived shortcomings of public schools have the community schools addressed? What are these shortcomings and solutions?

d. Why do parents withdraw their children from community schools, and where do their children end up (public, private, another community school)?

9. **How satisfied are teachers with specific features of the community school where they teach?**
   a. Possible features of teacher satisfaction: educational philosophy, school size, students, academic standards and expectations, parental involvement, relations with the community, relations with fellow teachers, staff development, teacher autonomy, etc.
   b. In what ways do teachers feel community schools support or hinder their teaching?
   c. How does teacher satisfaction in community schools compare with teacher satisfaction in the public school system? How does the level of teacher satisfaction compare between conversion and start-up schools?
   d. Why do teachers cease instructing at community schools and where do they end up (public schools, private schools, retirement, etc.)?

10. **How do community schools gauge and assess their performance? What are the merits to their claims?**
   a. How do these schools conduct evaluations of satisfaction (parents and students) and student success? How credible are these evaluations? For what purposes are these evaluations conducted? (e.g. compliance with law, community PR, organizational growth, etc.) What do community schools do with the information they collect?
   b. How do community schools define and measure academic achievement? Does the process of defining and measuring academic success vary among schools educating different categories of students? How credible are these measures? How rigorous are the criteria used to measure academic achievement? How realistic are they?
   c. How are the various criteria weighed in assessing the overall impact of charter schools? (e.g., academic success versus parent satisfaction)

11. **What are some of the possible effects that community schools have on public schools?**
   a. How are public schools reacting to the emergence of community schools?
   b. Are there stages of change (e.g., discernable patterns of response that are common among school districts.)? How are these stages tied to community school development?
   c. What, if anything, has changed in public schools delivery of educational services?
   d. What financial impact do community schools have on surrounding public school districts? How are public school districts responding to any financial loss?
   e. How does the transportation of community school students impact public school districts?
   f. What issues about community schools are expressed in the media, especially newspapers?
   g. Is there any evidence of shared learning occurring between community school board members, administrators and teachers and their public school counterparts? What is the nature of the relationships between members of community schools and public

school districts? For example, board members to board members, teachers to teachers, principal to principal. [This also relates to question #3 of the study plan.]

h. Do conversion and start-up schools affect public schools differently? If so, what are the differences and which type of community school seems to have the most overall effect?

i. Because conversion schools rely on the existing infrastructure of public schools (e.g., building, operating costs, etc.), do they have a greater chance for continued operation?

j. How do conversion schools appeal to school districts statewide? Why don't more public schools create conversion schools as a way to avert state mandates? (Especially Lucas County school districts, since they can – in theory – receive state money for students who convert and additional state money to compensate for students who have left the original district.)

12. What impact do planning and start-up funds have on the success or failure of community schools?

13. Under what conditions should the General Assembly support community schools after 2003? By what criteria/standards should the General Assembly judge these schools? Is parent satisfaction enough? Is doing as well as the public school enough? What are the assets and liabilities to the state's system of educational options that result from the establishment of community schools?

III. Study Methods

LOEO expects to contact the founders and administrators of every community school that operates in Ohio over the course of five years. However, that contact may take the form of face-to-face interviews, phone interviews, phone surveys, or classroom observations. There will likely be a sampling of students, parents and teachers of community schools; however, such sampling will not be determined until further into the study.

LOEO expects to use non-personally identifiable individual student data (e.g., demographics, proficiency test, etc.) in the community schools study. However, individual student data will not be easy to obtain. The team envisions the following two steps for negotiation:

1. Obtain an Attorney General's opinion that would endorse LOEO's compliance with federal FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) provisions in obtaining non-personally identifiable student data.
2. Negotiate with individual community and public schools for non-personally identifiable data that would not require parental consent.

Project Database

LOEO will construct a database, which contains quantitative and qualitative data about every community school in Ohio. For example, the database will include such descriptive data as the average daily membership (ADM) of each community school, the grade levels offered by each community school, whether the community school is start-up or conversion, the educational focus of the community school, etc. LOEO expects to include data collected via interviews, classroom observations and surveys. Furthermore, the individual student data collected via EMIS will be stored in the database. If possible, the database will include team assessments of literature and studies reviewed by team members; such information will aid in the future creation of a bibliography. From this database, LOEO will be able to generate profiles for each community school and summarize and analyze data on all community schools.

Comparative Analysis of Proficiency Test Data

The two most central questions being answered by LOEO's study are 1) "What effect do community schools have on the academic achievement of their students? 2) How does this compare with the effect that other public schools have on the achievement of their students?" LOEO will evaluate the performance of community schools by comparing them to comparable public schools on different indicators of academic performance. The main indicators are proficiency test results. Like all schools in Ohio, community schools are required to test students using the Ohio proficiency tests in grades 4, 6, 9 and 12. At each grade level, these criterion-referenced tests are given in the areas of math, science, reading, writing and citizenship. Secondary indicators of academic performance include attendance, dropout rates, graduation rates, and grade-level retention

rates. All public schools are required to report these secondary indicators of academic progress to the state's Educational Management Information System (EMIS).

The academic achievement of all "regular" students will be measured in the fourth, six, ninth, and twelfth grades through proficiency test scores. In all other grades, academic achievement will be evaluated via meta-evaluation. We will evaluate community schools that cater to students with special needs (i.e., autism) by critiquing the school's own evaluations and assessing whether or not students are meeting the objectives outlined in the school's contract. Furthermore, we will over-sample parents of students with special needs (as part of the satisfaction survey), based on the assumption that parents of special-needs students are more sensitive to the schooling their child receives and the progress their child makes.

The community schools team will have a completed design for evaluating academic performance by January of 1999. In developing the design, we must obtain answers to several questions about the accuracy (validity) of the measures and comparisons to be used, and the practicality of the procedures to be employed. For example, can comparisons be made at different levels (district, building, grade, classroom and individual student) in ways that control for all major influences on student performance? A more detailed list of questions to be answered during the first three months of the study is located in Appendix B.

Once the design is formalized, LOEO will subject the methodology to a "peer review." The team will contact peer reviewers who are knowledgeable of methodology and statistical issues and are neutral on the topic of charter schools.

Meta-evaluations of community schools' self-evaluations

Besides LOEO's efforts to answer the impact question of "effect," community schools will annually assess their own performance using surveys, standardized achievement tests, portfolios, etc. The team will annually conduct a meta-evaluation of community schools' self evaluations related to student achievement and report the results in its annual composite reports.

The community schools team defines "meta-evaluation" as an independent examination of evaluations conducted by others about the effects of community schools. Using accepted research and evaluation principles, the meta-evaluation will comment on the rigor of the evaluations and the credibility of the claims made about community schools. In addition, when actual and usable data files from several community school evaluations are accessible to the team (e.g., norm-referenced achievement test scores), the community schools team will conduct a "meta-analysis" by reanalyzing the data to determine its statistical significance relative to what is being reported by community schools.

Site-Visits & Interviews

During the first year of the study, we expect to visit and interview every community school in Ohio (15 schools for the 1998-1999 school year). In order to gather descriptive data about each community school, the team expects to interview founders, administrators, teachers, and parents. The initial interviews will be more exploratory in nature and will aid in the development of future site-visits and phone interviews. The number of site-visits and interviews of community schools that open after the 1998-1999 school year will be determined at a later time in the study.

In order to understand why community schools fail to open, the team will annually interview officials from schools that fail to open when expected or have their existence terminated for whatever reasons.

In addition to community schools, LOEO expects to interview legislators (specifically Representative Perz and Representative Bender) for their expectations of community schools, and members of the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) and the Lucas County Education Service Center (LCESC). Staff members of ODE and LCESC will be interviewed on numerous occasions through-out the study in order for LOEO to obtain their perspective on the process of becoming community schools, the forces that facilitate or impede community school progress, and the financial status of community schools. Team members expect to interview organizations in the "education community" such as the Ohio School Boards Association (OSBA), the Ohio Federation of Teachers (OFT), the Ohio Education Association (OEA), the Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators (OAESA), etc.

Finally, LOEO expects to interview school board members, administrators, and teachers of the Big 8, Lucas County public school districts, and statewide conversion school districts in order to determine the possible effects that community schools have on other public school districts. Interviews with public school districts are essential to determining the relationships between members of districts and community schools, and to determine if shared learning between the two is possible.

Surveys

The community schools team's method of determining student, parent, and teacher satisfaction with community schools will be through surveys. Realizing that legislators typically want to know the impact of community schools relative to their counterparts (public school districts), the team will compare stakeholder satisfaction between public schools and community schools. To date, the community schools team has determined three means of comparison, each depending on the type of data available.

1. **Self-reflective comparison** – ask community school students, parents, and teachers to reflect on their community school experience relative to their public school experience.
2. **National norm comparison** – use a national survey instrument (one that has been administered to public school districts) on community school students, parents, and

teachers so that national data (on public school districts) are available to compare against the community school responses.

3. **Survey community school *and* public school district** students, parents, and teachers.

Because community schools need time to "work the bugs out" of their operations, and because the community schools team needs a better understanding of community schools before it can ask the "right" questions, the team will wait until the 2000-2001 school year to survey a sampling of students, parents, and teachers in the first 15 community schools (those who opened during the 1998-1999 school year). We will survey a sampling of students, parents, and teachers in all community schools who have been in operation for at least two full school years during the 2000-2003 school year. Furthermore, LOEO will spend the first year determining what survey instruments are best suited to answer the study's research questions and which groups to sample (traditional public schools, community schools, or both).

As previously stated, the team will over-sample parents of students with special needs (as part of the satisfaction survey), based on the assumption that parents of special-needs students are more sensitive to the schooling their child receives and the progress their child makes. The parent satisfaction survey will be one of the main instruments for determining the academic progress of special education students.

LOEO's survey of students, parents, and teachers will not be longitudinal. The community schools team will not follow a cohort of students, parents, or teachers; however, the team may compare the overall satisfaction between the 2001 and 2003 reports. Furthermore, should the number of community schools in the 2002-2003 school year be too large for the team to survey all schools, LOEO will select a sample of such schools.

Classroom Observations

What do community schools look like? What are the methods of instruction, pedagogy, teaching styles, and teachers' assumptions about learning in a community school? How do these compare to teaching in the traditional public schools? In order to answer these questions and provide informed speculations as to the academic impact of community schools, the team will conduct classroom observations in a sample of community schools and a comparative sample of public school classrooms during the first, third and fifth years of the study. The sample of classrooms will span across a variety of grade levels.

Review of Secondary Sources

Numerous secondary resources will be used by LOEO to answer many of the study's descriptive questions. One of the most critical components of a community school is its contract with the sponsoring agency. Each contract describes in detail the community school's legal, fiscal and educational responsibilities and specific standards and goals to which the charter school is to be held accountable. Therefore, *community school*

applications and contracts will be thoroughly reviewed to determine why community schools are created, what community schools are expected to look like, and how community schools gauge and access their performance.

EMIS and report card data (generated via EMIS) are essential for describing community schools and determining their academic impact. LOEO expects to negotiate and gather individual student data from community schools and the Big 8 public school districts. A complete list of the EMIS data elements to be collected by LOEO is attached. (See Appendix A.)

By law, community schools are required to produce an *annual report* for their sponsors, parents, and LOEO. This annual report, along with *annual financial reports* and *fiscal audits* by the State Auditor's office, will be reviewed by LOEO to determine the financial status of community schools. Financial data from EMIS will be used in the *Expenditure Flow Model* to further view the resources and spending categories of community schools relative to traditional public school districts.

Media clips and press releases will be closely monitored by the team in order to track the possible effects that community schools are having on public school districts, to better understand why they were created, and to determine how they gauge and assess their performance. Not only will media clips specific to community schools be collected, so too will information pertaining to the activities of the Big 8 and Lucas County public school districts. These media clips will be used in conjunction with interviews of public school board members, administrators and teachers.

A thorough *literature review* has already been conducted to inform the design of this study and will continue to be updated as the study unfolds. Included in the literature review are ERIC, Ohio agency and other states' web-sites, ORC/OAC, national studies on charter schools, etc.

IV. Plan of Work

Number of Team Members

Five members of the community schools team will be working on various aspects of the community schools study. Only the project manager will be working exclusively on this study, the remaining four members will have responsibilities to other LOEO studies. Still, these team members will make the community schools' project a priority over all other studies.

Number of Reports

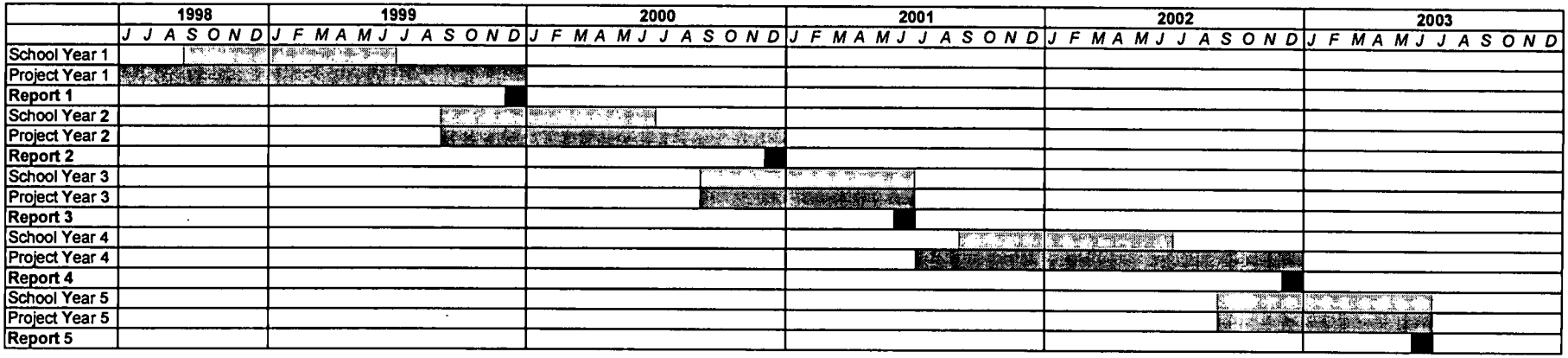
As required by law, LOEO will be producing a total of five reports. The community schools team would like to release annual reports during the December month of each year. Currently, the law requires LOEO to release its preliminary and final reports during June of 2001 and 2003. The team would like to negotiate with the General Assembly to extend the 2001 and 2003 deadlines to December, so that spring 2001 and 2003 proficiency test data might be used in the studies. (If the June dates are not extended to December, there is the possibility that fewer data collection points will be available for the study and some of the methods outlined in this study plan will need to be curtailed.) Such negotiation will not take place until further into the study.

School Years and Project Years

When describing the timeline for this study, the team must acknowledge the five school years during which data may be collected on community and public school districts. These school years must also be considered in conjunction with the project years and the June and December reporting dates. The writing of each report takes approximately 3 months away from data collection. The community schools team assumes that at least 2 members of the team will write each report, while the other 3 team members continue data collection during the following school year. It is important to acknowledge that the 3 members continuing data collection are likely to have responsibilities on other LOEO studies; therefore, the amount of data collection will depend on various workloads. Exhibit 3 outlines the school years available for data collection, the community schools' project years, and the estimated report deadlines for the community schools project.

Exhibit 3

Overview of Calendar, School, and Project Years



The months during overlapping project years assume that 2 team members will be writing on the previous report while 3 other team members move forward to collect data for the next report.

Content of the Five Reports

As previously stated in this study plan, LOEO's annual reports on community schools must, by law, include the number of schools in operation, the size and characteristics of enrollment, the academic performance, and the financial status of the schools. Furthermore, the study question #10 "how do community schools gauge and assess their performance?" is included in each annual report. Exhibit 4 outlines the five reports LOEO will be producing, along with the research questions we expect to answer.

Exhibit 4
Content of Each Report

Year	Content
December 1999	Annual report: number of schools, size and characteristics of enrollment, academic performance (based on community schools' data), financial status and other pertinent information. Q1. What are the core reasons for starting a community school? Q2. What do community schools look like? How are they similar to or different from other public schools? Q4. What is the process for becoming a community school in Ohio? Q5. What is the financial status of Ohio's community schools? Q10. How do community schools gauge and assess their performance?
December 2000	Annual report: number of schools, size and characteristics of school enrollment, academic performance of schools (based on community schools' data), financial status of schools and other pertinent information. Q10. How do community schools gauge and assess their performance?
June 2001	Annual report combined with preliminary impact findings and recommendations for improvement. Annual report: number of schools, size and characteristics of school enrollment, academic performance of schools (based on community schools' data), financial status of schools and other pertinent information. Q3. What are the forces that facilitate or impede continuing progress and operation of community schools? Q6. What effect do community schools have on the academic achievement of their students (based on LOEO data)? Q7. How satisfied are students with the community school they attend? Q8. How satisfied are parents with the specific features of the community school their child attends? Q9. How satisfied are teachers with the specific features of the community school where they teach? Q10. How do community schools gauge and assess their performance? Q12. What impact do planning and start-up funds have on the success or failure of community schools?

Year	Content
December 2002	Annual report: number of schools, size and characteristics of school enrollment, academic performance of schools (based on community schools' data), financial status of schools and other pertinent information. Q10. How do community schools gauge and assess their performance? Q11. What are some of the possible effects that community schools have on public school districts? • assets and liabilities to the state's system of educational options, • an assessment of any advantages to providing a greater number of educational choices to Ohio parents, • any detrimental impacts on the state educational system or an individual school districts, • and the effects of attending community schools on the academic achievement of students. Summary of 2001 findings to Q6 - What effect do community schools have on the academic achievement of their students (based on LOEO data)?
June 2003	Annual report combined with final report on impact and recommendations for the future. Annual report: number of schools, size and characteristics of school enrollment, academic performance of schools (based on community schools' data), financial status of schools and other pertinent information. Q6. What effect do community schools have on the academic achievement of their students (based on LOEO data)? Q7. How satisfied are students with the community school they attend? Q8. How satisfied are parents with the specific features of the community school their child attends? Q9. How satisfied are teachers with the specific features of the community school where they teach? Q10. How do community schools gauge and assess their performance? Q11. What are some of the possible effects that community schools have on public school districts? Q13. Under what conditions should the General Assembly support community schools after 2003?

Keeping in the mind the team's resources, LOEO's requirement to produce five reports over five years, and the limited school year for data collection - the following is an outline of tasks for each project year of the study. (See Appendices C & D for greater detail.)

Project Year 1
(October 1998-December 1999)

Team Tasks:

- Finalize the study plan.
- Develop the project's database.
- Determine the study design for using proficiency test data (first three months).
- Download or acquire EMIS data (e.g., proficiency test scores, attendance rates, student demographics) for all community schools and other comparative public school districts.
- Conduct a meta-evaluation of community schools' self-evaluations related to student achievement.
- Interview legislators for their expectations of community schools.
- Interview members of ODE and LCESC to understand the process of becoming a community school, the forces that facilitate or impede progress, and the financial status of community schools.
- Collect and review community school applications and contracts.
- Conduct site-visits to community schools. Interview founders, administrators, teachers and parents.
- Analyze site-visit data from community schools.
- Interview community schools that fail to open when expected or fail to open at all.
- Conduct a sample of classroom observations in both community schools and public school districts.
- Determine survey instruments for student, parent and teacher satisfaction of community and/or public school districts.
- Collect and analyze community schools' annual financial reports and biannual audit reports.
- Analyze community schools' financial data (EMIS) using the Expenditure Flow Model.
- Collect and analyze school board minutes, media clips, and press releases for the Big 8 public districts and public districts statewide with conversion community schools.
- Write, edit, and release 1999 annual report.

Annual Report
Includes:

- Number of community schools
- Size and characteristics of community school enrollments
- Academic performance of community schools (based on community schools' data)
- Financial status of community schools

Question 1. What are the core reasons for starting a community school?
Question 2. What do community schools look like? How are they similar to or different from other public schools?

Question 4. What is the process for becoming a community school in Ohio?
Question 5. What is the financial status of Ohio's community schools?
Question 10. How do community schools gauge and assess their performance?

Project Year 2
(September 1999 – December 2000)

Team Tasks:

- Maintain the project's database.
- Download or acquire EMIS data (e.g., proficiency test scores, attendance rates, student demographics) for all community schools and other comparative public school districts.
- Conduct a meta-evaluation of community schools' self-evaluations related to student achievement.
- Periodically interview members of ODE and LCESC.
- Collect and review community school applications and contracts.
- Conduct site-visits to community schools. Interview founders, administrators, teachers and parents.
- Interview community schools that fail to open when expected or fail to open at all.
- Analyze site-visit data from community schools.
- Conduct site-visits or phone interviews with public school districts where community schools are located. Interview school board members, administrators, and teachers.
- Collect and analyze community schools' annual financial reports and biannual audit reports.
- Analyze community schools' financial data (EMIS) using the Expenditure Flow Model.
- Collect and analyze school board minutes, media clips, and press releases for the Big 8 public districts and public districts statewide with conversion community schools.
- Write, edit, and release 2000 annual report.

Annual Report
Includes:

- Number of community schools
- Size and characteristics of community school enrollments
- Academic performance of community schools (based on community schools' data)
- Financial status of community schools

Question 10. How do community schools gauge and assess their performance?

Project Year 3
(September 2000 – June 2001)

Team Tasks:

- Maintain the project's database.
- Download or acquire EMIS data (e.g., proficiency test scores, attendance rates, student demographics) for all community schools and other comparative public school districts.
- Analyze proficiency test data to determine the academic impact of community schools.
- Conduct a meta-evaluation of community schools' self-evaluations related to student achievement.
- Periodically interview members of ODE and LCESC.
- Collect and review community school applications and contracts.
- Conduct site-visits to community schools. Interview founders, administrators, teachers and parents.
- Interview community schools that fail to open when expected or fail to open at all.
- Analyze site-visit data from community schools.
- Conduct site-visits or phone interviews with public school districts in which community schools are located. Interview school board members, administrators, and teachers.
- Collect and analyze school board minutes, media clips, and press releases for the Big 8 public school districts and public school districts statewide with conversion community schools.
- Analyze site-visit and interview data from public school districts.
- Conduct a sample of classroom observations in both community schools and public school districts.
- Administer survey instruments to students, parents, and teachers in community and/or public school districts.
- Analyze survey data on student, parent, and teacher satisfaction.
- Collect and analyze community schools' annual financial reports and biannual audit reports.
- Analyze community schools' financial data (EMIS) using the Expenditure Flow Model.
- Write, edit, and release 2001 report.

Annual report combined with preliminary impact findings and recommendations for improvement.

Includes:

- Number of community schools
- Size and characteristics of community school enrollments
- Academic performance of community schools (based on community schools' data)
- Financial status of community schools

Question 3.	What are the forces that facilitate or impede continuing progress and operation of community schools?
Question 6.	What effect do community schools have on the academic achievement of their students (based on LOEO data)?
Question 7.	How satisfied are students with the community school they attend?
Question 8.	How satisfied are parents with the specific features of the community school their child attends?
Question 9.	How satisfied are teachers with the specific features of the community school where they teach?
Question 10.	How do community schools gauge and assess their performance?
Question 12.	What impact do planning and start-up funds have on the success or failure of community schools?

Project Year 4
(July 2001 – December 2002)

Team Tasks:

- Maintain the project's database.
- Download or acquire EMIS data (e.g., proficiency test scores, attendance rates, student demographics) for all community schools and other comparative public school districts.
- Conduct a meta-evaluation of community schools' self-evaluations related to student achievement.
- Periodically interview members of ODE and LCESC.
- Collect and review community school applications and contracts.
- Conduct site-visits to community schools. Interview founders, administrators, teachers and parents.
- Analyze site-visit data from community schools.
- Conduct site-visits or phone interviews with public school districts in which community schools are located. Interview school board members, administrators, and teachers.
- Collect and analyze school board minutes, media clips, and press releases for the Big 8 public districts and public districts statewide with conversion community schools.
- Analyze site-visit and interview data from public school districts.
- Collect and analyze community schools' annual financial reports and biannual audit reports.
- Analyze community schools' financial data (EMIS) using the Expenditure Flow Model.
- Write, edit, and release 2002 annual report.

Annual Report
Includes:

- Number of community schools
- Size and characteristics of community school enrollments
- Academic performance of community schools (based on community schools' data)
- Financial status of community schools
- Summary of LOEO data on achievement from the 2001 report

Question 10. How do community schools gauge and assess their performance?
Question 11. What are some of the possible effects that community schools have on public school districts?

Project Year 5
(September 2002 – June 2003)

Team Tasks:

- Maintain the project's database.
- Download or acquire EMIS data (e.g., proficiency test scores, attendance rates, student demographics) for all community schools and other comparative public school districts.
- Analyze proficiency test data to determine the academic impact of community schools.
- Conduct a meta-evaluation of community schools' self-evaluations related to student achievement.
- Periodically interview members of ODE and LCESC.
- Collect and review community school applications and contracts.
- Conduct site-visits to community schools. Interview founders, administrators, teachers and parents.
- Analyze site-visit data from community schools.
- Conduct site-visits or phone interviews with public school districts in which community schools are located. Interview school board members, administrators, and teachers.
- Collect and analyze school board minutes, media clips, and press releases for the Big 8 public districts and public districts statewide with conversion community schools.
- Analyze site-visit and interview data from public school districts.
- Conduct a sample of classroom observations in both community schools and public school districts.
- Administer survey instruments to students, parents, and teachers in community and/or public school districts.
- Analyze survey data on student, parent, and teacher satisfaction.
- Collect and analyze community schools' annual financial reports and biannual audit reports.
- Analyze community schools' financial data (EMIS) using the Expenditure Flow Model.
- Write, edit, and release 2003 report.

Annual report combined with final report on impact and recommendations for the future.

Includes:

- Number of community schools
- Size and characteristics of community school enrollments
- Academic performance of community schools (based on community schools' data)
- Financial status of community schools

Question 6. What effect do community schools have on the academic achievement of their students (based on LOEO data)?

Question 7. How satisfied are students with the community school they attend?
Question 8. How satisfied are parents with the specific features of the community school their child attends?
Question 9. How satisfied are teachers with the specific features of the community school where they teach?
Question 10. How do community schools gauge and assess their performance?
Question 11. What are some of the possible effects that community schools have on public school districts?
Question 13. Under what conditions should the General Assembly support community schools after 2003?

Other Factors Influencing LOEO's Timeframe

The timely **release of EMIS data** is critical to LOEO's timeframe. As Exhibit 5 points out, even though district are required to report EMIS data on a particular day, this does not mean that their data are immediately available to LOEO. The EMIS process of aggregating, reconciling, and verifying data typically requires several months after the submission deadlines. LOEO must consider the availability of EMIS data as it negotiates with the General Assembly for additional time. (See Appendix E for more detail on the timely release of proficiency test data.)

Exhibit 5
EMIS Data Reporting & Posting Calendar

Data File	District Reporting Deadline Date	Date Data are Available from ODE
Student	October 15	January 30
	December 20	January 30
	June 30	**October 1- December 30**
Staff	October 15	January 30
	June 30	**October 1**
Financial	October 30	November 30
	January 30	February 30
	April 30	May 30
	July 30	**November 1**

Note: End of the year data reporting and availability dates are bolded. Data may be available earlier from data acquisition sites.

LOEO Expenses

- *Site visit travel*: use of DAS car, possible overnight stays depending on the distance of districts.

- *Telephone Interviews*: long distance phone calls.

- *Surveys*: possible purchase of a survey instrument, printing of brochures and surveys, and mailings to community school parents, teachers, and administrators.

- *Peer Review Group*: possible expenses associated with conducting a peer review of LOEO's proficiency test analysis.

- *Intern*: It is possible that LOEO might hire a graduate or doctoral student intern, who might work on a section of the study. This intern could assist the team with data collection and analysis, while also potentially incorporating their work into a policy paper or dissertation. Some possible schools to consider include Ohio State's schools of Public Policy and Management, Education, or Department of Human and Community Development; University of Cincinnati; Franklin University; Capital University; etc.

- *Miscellaneous:* possible cost of school board minutes and media clipping searches.

There are several "pitfalls" that are likely to be encountered by LOEO during this study:

- *National Attention*: The LOEO study will be under national scrutiny because of advocates who will always be "in the wings" ready to offer counter-points to anything LOEO might say that could be construed as negative about charter schools.

- *Need to Compare*: LOEO must provide some form of comparison for academic achievement. LOEO must compare the academic progress of students in community schools to the academic progress of similar students in the public school districts.

- *The Variety of Students*: Not all students can be evaluated using the same test/measure. For example, some students (i.e., autistic) should not be tested using any form of conventional norm-referenced or criterion referenced tests. Some students may need to be excluded from the study all together (i.e., depending on grade levels). Furthermore, multiple forms of testing/measures may be used – depending on the type of students in the charter schools.

- *Use of the Proficiency Tests*: Even though Ohio has clearly established proficiency tests as the primary indicator of academic progress for its schools, there will be community schools that will offer compelling arguments about why the proficiency tests are ill suited to their philosophies and goals. No matter how sound LOEO's study design is and how cooperative the schools are in providing LOEO with data, the comparisons of community school students to traditional public school students will always be subject to legitimate "apple to apple" criticisms.

- *"Why" Varying Impact?* An important "given" in the team's study plan is that we will not be able to empirically explain or predict the reasons for different levels of student achievement (and other outcomes) from community schools. Given the multiple treatments across the community schools and the hundreds of influencing variables that impact academic gain or loss, it would be too difficult for the team to empirically explain community schools' success or failure with students. Yet, there will be many pressures on us to provide the reasons for the successes and failures of community schools. The best that the community schools team can do is to "speculate."

- *Length of Project:* Given the five-year timeframe for this study and the political nature of charter schools, it is certain that community schools will evolve in Ohio. The caution for LOEO is to always expect such changes and develop the will and the mechanisms to adapt the study plan accordingly.

- *Allocation of Resources:* It seems clear years 1, 3, 4 and 5 are much "busier" than year 2 of the study. The challenge for LOEO will be to allocate staff in a way that provides continuity, yet is adaptable to wide fluctuations in the levels of effort needed to conduct the study.

Other

See Appendix F for a schematic representation of LOEO's analysis of impact.

Appendix A: Data Elements

EMIS Data Elements to be Collected from Community & Public Schools

EMIS File	Data Elements
Staff (Teachers)	Attendance
	Years of teaching experience
	Date of birth
	Degree type
	Gender
	Racial/ethnic category
	Total experience years
	Grade taught by teacher
Student	Date of birth
	Disability condition
	Disadvantagement
	Gender
	Grade level
	Grade level, next year
	Limited English proficiency
	Racial/ethnic category
	Attendance
	Expulsion
	Suspension
	Proficiency testing results
	Competency-based education results
	Preschool experience (K-4)
	Special education
School	Attendance rate
	Drop-out
	Graduation rate
	DPIA
	Grade retention/promotion
Financial	94 elements

Data Elements to be Collected from Community Schools (And Public School Districts if Possible)

Community School Information	Data Elements Note: The following data elements are in addition to those captured through EMIS.
Family Information	Education of parents
	Number of custodial parents
	Family size
School-Related Information	Educational programming
	Target population (e.g. at-risk students)
	Method of student assessment
	Standards for success or failure of students, teachers, and school
	Teacher turnover (LOEO will define)
	College attendance rate (if applicable)
	Employment rate (if applicable)

Appendix B:
Questions to be Answered Over the Next Three Months

The two most central questions being answered by LOEO's study are 1) "What effect do community schools have on the academic achievement of their students? 2) How does this compare with the effect that other public schools have on the achievement of their students?" LOEO will evaluate the performance of community schools by comparing them to comparable public schools on different indicators of academic performance. The main indicators are proficiency test results. Like all schools in Ohio, community schools are required to test students using the Ohio proficiency tests in grades 4, 6, 9 and 12. At each grade level, these criterion-referenced tests are given in the areas of math, science, reading, writing and citizenship. Secondary indicators of academic performance include attendance, dropout rates, graduation rates, and grade-level retention rates. All public schools are required to report these other indicators of academic progress to the state's Educational Management Information System (EMIS).

LOEO will have a completed design for evaluating academic performance by January of 1999. In developing the design for assessing student performance of community school students, there are essentially four major considerations.

I. Accessibility of Data: Are the data available, obtainable by LOEO, and sufficiently accurate? (This question must be answered for all the proficiency tests, other performance indicators, and control variables used to match students.)

II. Defensible Comparisons: Can comparisons be made at different levels (district, building, grade, classroom and individual) in ways that control for all major influences on student performance? What are the most appropriate and feasible units of analysis? Would estimating performance levels, through regression predictions, serve as an additional comparison? Are waiting lists of community school students feasible for making comparisons?

III. Statistical Analyses: Are regression, ANOVA and ANCOVA models adequate to discern significant differences and control for variables? Will the sampling frames permit generalization? Will the Ns be sufficient? Will the variance within community schools be greater than between them and traditional public schools? Will mobility/attrition rates permit cohort designs?

IV. Logistics and Timing: Will EMIS data, from the previous school year, be made available to LOEO in time for writing our reports by each December? How many traditional public school districts must provide data to LOEO? Does LOEO have the leverage to obtain the needed data in the necessary formats and timeframes?

Additional issues to be discussed during the first 3 months of the study:

- Are data on students' families (income, number of custodial parents, size of family, prior school attended, etc.) available from both community and traditional public schools?

- What other information about individual students is typically available in public school records?

- Can CBE assessments be obtained at the level of NCEs for particular achievement instruments?

- Individual schools (districts or buildings) will be contacted and asked to provide proficiency test and other achievement indicators for each student, using a unique identification code that does not identify the student by name. Will the community schools and the public school counterparts assign these identification codes and provide the student records to LOEO? How can LOEO be assured of accuracy and completeness in the coding? Do schools have the capacity to assign these unique id codes? Will LOEO have to contract for these services?

LOEO must determine availability, accessibility, and accuracy of the following variables:

Proficiency test scores

- Reporting level:
  scale scores, raw scores, advanced-pass-fail
- Grade level:
  fourth, sixth, ninth, twelfth
- Subject area:
  Reading,Writing, Math, Science, Citizenship

Control/matching variables

- At what level of aggregation? (district, school, grade, class, or individual)
- Gender (percent male or female)
- Ethnicity (percent by ethnic/racial group –usually six and "other")
- Age/grade (DOB converted to years and months, grade level in year and months)
- Poverty indices (percent free or reduced lunch, other -?-, possible census overlays; info from school files; parent surveys; ...)
- Urbanicity: Large city, urban, suburban, small city, rural, density rates, or other.
- Prior achievement levels: proficiency scores by test (at what scale level?), other report card or EMIS indicators including attendance, graduation rates, drop out rates, retention, disciplinary actions, ...
- Geography: Areas of Ohio by compass, industrial, or cultural designations.
- Family background: size, parents/guardians in household; education levels; employment, etc.

LOEO's methods for answering these questions during the next 3 months:

Review of proficiency test files

Interviews with EMIS personnel including:

- Data Acquisition Sites (DAS) – EMIS specialists
- ODE –IMS personnel
- Large city EMIS coordinators

Interviews with community school administrators

Interview with Lucas County ESC and ODE personnel

Visits to typical public schools likely to serve as controls

Visits to community schools

Conversations with ODE's scoring contractors

Pilot runs of SAS routines with hypothetical data sets from earlier EMIS files

Appendix C:
Community Schools Methods

Study Questions	EMIS	Analysis of Proficiency Test Data	Meta-Evaluation	Site-Visits & Interviews	Classroom Observations	Surveys	Review Secondary Sources	Data Collection (C) & Reporting (R)
1. What are the core reasons for starting a community schools?				X			X	C: 1999 R: 1999
2. What do community schools look like? How are community schools similar to or different from public schools?	X			X	X		X	C: Annually R: Annually
3. What are the processes and dynamics of community schools? What are the forces that facilitate or impede continuing progress and operation of community schools?				X			X	C: 1999 – 2001 R: 2001
4. What is the process for becoming a community school in Ohio?				X			X	C: 1999 R: 1999
5. What is the financial status of Ohio's community schools?	X			X			X	C: Annually R: Annually
6. What effect do community schools have on the academic achievement of their students? How does this compare with the effect that other public schools have on the achievement of their students?	X	X	X	X	X		X	C: Annually R: 2001 & 2003

Study Questions	EMIS	Analysis of Proficiency Test Data	Meta-Evaluation	Site-Visits & Interviews	Classroom Observations	Surveys	Review Secondary Sources	Data Collection (C) & Reporting (R)
7. How satisfied are students with the community school they attend? What are their likes and dislikes?						X	X	C: 2001 & 2003 R: 2001 & 2003
8. How satisfied are parents with specific features of the community school their child attends?						X	X	C: 2001 & 2003 R: 2001 & 2003
9. How satisfied are teachers with specific features of the community school where they teach?				X		X	X	C: 2001 & 2003 R: 2001 & 2003
10. How do community schools gauge and assess their performance?			X	X			X	C: Annually R: Annually
11. What are some of the possible effects that community schools have on public schools?				X			X	C: Annually R: 2002
12. What impact do planning and start-up funds have on the success or failure of community schools?				X			X	C: 1999-2001 R: 2001
13. Under what conditions should the General Assembly support community schools?								R: 2003

Appendix D:
Community Schools Methods - Detailed

Study Questions	Methods	Details
1. What are the core reasons for starting community schools?	Site-Visits & Interviews	Legislators – ask for expectations of community schools. Community school founders, administrators, teachers, parents, and older students.
	Review Secondary Sources	Applications Contracts Press Releases Media Coverage
2. What do community schools look like? How are community schools similar to or different from traditional public schools?	Site-Visits & Interviews	Community school founders, administrators, and teachers – ask for purpose, expectations, descriptions of educational approaches, and management. Interview parents of students that leave the community schools – ask why?
	EMIS	Descriptive data on students and teachers.
	Classroom Observations	Observe classrooms in a sample of public and community school classrooms in the third and possibly fifth years of the study.
	Review Secondary Sources	Applications Contracts Literature on classroom teaching styles and methods for observing.

Study Questions	Methods	Details
3. What are the processes and dynamics of community schools? What are the forces that facilitate or impede continuing progress and operation of community schools?	Site-Visits & Interviews	Community school founders, administrators, and teachers – ask about dynamics of community schools and any issues that facilitate or impede progress. ODE LCESC Education Community: OSBA, OFT, OEA, OAESA, etc.
	Review Secondary Sources	Applications Contracts Literature
4. What is the process for becoming a community school in Ohio?	Site-Visits & Interviews	Community school founders and administrators – ask about things needed for starting a school, impediments to starting a school, and the technical assistance provided by the State, LCESC or others. ODE LCESC
	Review Secondary Sources	ORC/OAC Literature on other states Studies in other states
5. What is the financial status of Ohio's community schools?	Site-Visits & Interviews	Consult with State Auditor and ODE about the financial status of community schools. Community school administrators – ask if they have fund raising events.
	EMIS	Financial data Use Expenditure Flow Model

Study Questions	Methods	Details
	Review Secondary Sources	Annual budgets Auditor's reports Expenditure Flow Model
6. What effect do community schools have on the academic achievement of their students? How does this compare with the effect that other public schools have on the achievement of their students?	Site-Visits & Interviews	3-6 month feasibility study for using proficiency test data. Peer Review of Methods: Paul Hill (RAND), Hank Levin (Stanford), and Gary Henry (Georgia State).
	EMIS	Student Data – proficiency test & demographics
	Analysis of Proficiency Test Data	Methods to be determined during the first 3 months of the study.
	Classroom Observations	Use information gathered from study question 2, when making informed speculations about differences in academic achievement between public schools and community schools.
	Meta – Evaluation	Annually conduct a meta-evaluation of community schools' self-evaluations – comment on the rigor and credibility of community schools' claims.
	Review Secondary Sources	Report card data for public schools and community schools.
7. How satisfied are students with the community school they attend? What are their likes and dislikes?	Review Secondary Sources	Survey instruments on student satisfaction. Determine the survey instrument and sampling during the first year of the study.
	Survey	Survey community school and public school students. (Depends on what we learn in the first year of the study.)

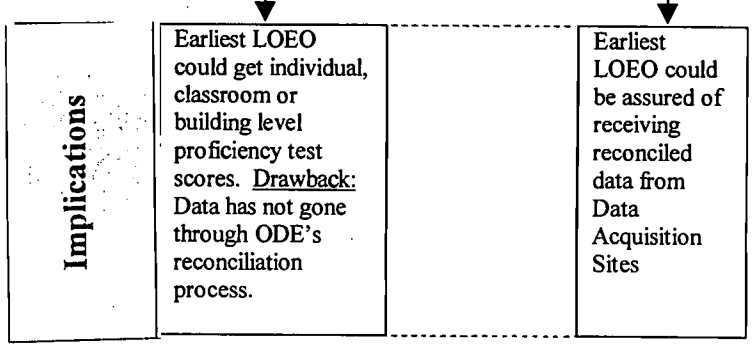
Study Questions	Methods	Details
8. How satisfied are parents with specific features of the community school their child attends?	Review Secondary Sources	Survey instruments on parent satisfaction. Determine the survey instrument and sampling during the first year of the study.
	Survey	Survey community school and public school parents. (Depends on what we learn in the first year of the study.)
9. How satisfied are teachers with specific features of the community school where they teach?	Review Secondary Sources	Survey instruments on teacher satisfaction. Determine the survey instrument and sampling during the first year of the study.
	Survey	Survey community school and public school teachers. (Depends on what we learn in the first year of the study.)
	Site-Visits & Interviews	Community school teachers – ask how their experiences in public schools compare to community school experiences.
10. How do community schools gauge and assess their performance?	Site Visits & Interviews	Community school sponsors and administrators – ask how community schools define and measure academic success; ask for evaluation instruments used by community schools, etc.
	Review Secondary Sources	Applications Contracts Annual reports Survey instruments and methods being used by community schools Media clips

Study Questions	Methods	Details
	Meta – Evaluation	Annually conduct a meta-evaluation of community schools' self-evaluations – comment on the rigor and credibility of community schools' claims.
11. What are some of the possible effects that community schools have on public schools?	Review Secondary Sources	School board minutes from the Big 8 districts Media clips
	Site-Visits & Interviews	Public school district administrators, school board members, and teachers – ask about impact of community schools and their relationship with community schools. Community school founders, administrators, and teachers – ask about their relationship with public school districts. Interview members of OSBA, OEA, OFT, OAESA, AND OASSA.
12. What impact do planning and start-up funds have on the success or failure of community schools?	Site-Visits & Interviews	Community school founders and administrators. Community schools that fail to open when expected or terminate for whatever reasons – why?
	Review Secondary Sources	Financial data from community schools.
13. Under what conditions should the General Assembly support community schools?	All methods	Report in 2003 based on findings over the course of five years.

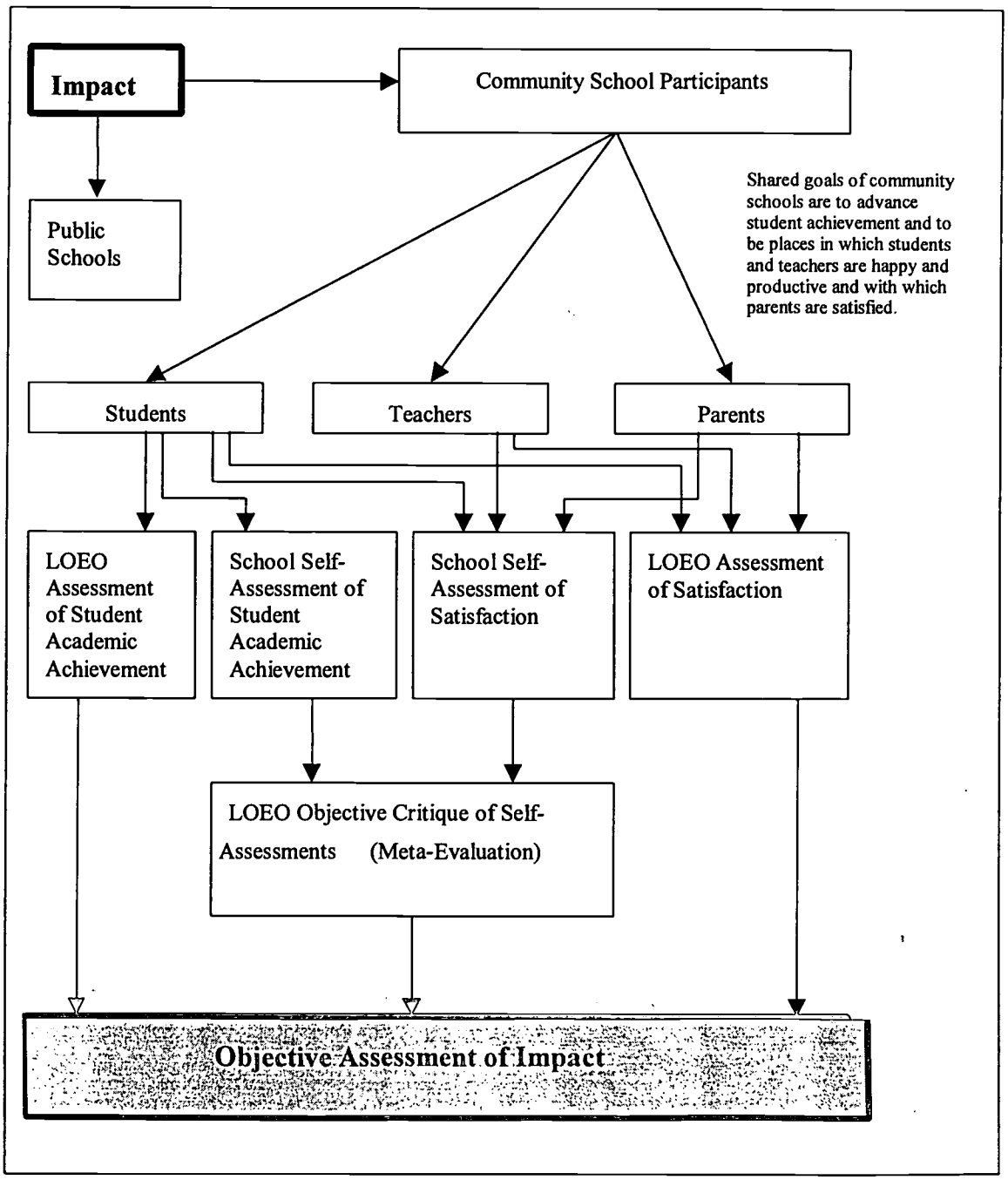
Appendix E: Proficiency Test Timeline

Proficiency Test	Administration	Scores Returned to Districts from Scoring Company	Public Release of Unreconciled Test Data (as tabulated by the scoring company) Note: Data is aggregated to the school district level	Submission of Individual Test Data from Districts to Data Acquisition Sites	Submission of Aggregated Data from Data Acquisition Site to ODE (weekly increments)	Reconciliation and Verification Process	Reconciled Aggregated Data Available from ODE* Note: Data is aggregated to the building level.	Report Card Release*
4th Grade	First Monday after the 15th of March	After the first week of June	End of June	June 30 (target date)	July –Sept	Sept – Nov	Nov-Dec	March
6th Grade	First Monday after the 15th of March	After the first week of June	End of June	June 30 (target date)	July –Sept	Sept – Nov	Nov-Dec	March
9th Grade (1st Admin.)	Fourth Monday in October	Mid-January	End of January	June 30 (target date)	July –Sept	Sept – Nov	Nov-Dec	March
12th Grade	First Monday in February	After first week of April	End of April	June 30 (target date)	July-Sept	Sept – Nov	Nov-Dec	March

* Beginning this school year (1998-99), scaled proficiency test scores will be available at the building level.



Appendix F:
Schematic Representation of Impact Analysis



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