DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 480 989 UD 035 877

AUTHOR Miron, Gary; Horn, Jerry

TITLE Evaluation of Connecticut Charter Schools and the Charter School Initiative. Final Report.

INSTITUTION Western Michigan Univ., Kalamazoo. Evaluation Center.

PUB DATE 2003-09-00

NOTE 233p.

AVAILABLE FROM Evaluation Center, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5178. Tel: 616-387-5898; Fax: 616-387-5923; e-mail: eval-center@wmich.edu; Web site: http://www.wmich.edu/evalctr/ .

PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative (142)

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF01/PC10 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS *Academic Achievement; *Accountability; *Charter Schools; *Educational Quality; Educational Technology; Elementary Secondary Education; Governance; Mission Statements; Parent Participation; *Program Effectiveness; Public Schools; School Districts; School Safety; Special Needs Students; Standardized Tests; Student Attitudes; Student Characteristics; Teaching Conditions

IDENTIFIERS *Connecticut

ABSTRACT

In 1997, the Connecticut State Department of Education awarded a grant Western Michigan University to evaluate Connecticut's charter schools and charter school initiative from 1997-2002. The study used existing databases, site visits, focus groups, and surveys to gather data regarding the movement's effectiveness, progress, and impact, examining the extent to which all students were being serviced and specific goals and objectives were being met; shortcomings and barriers to meeting student needs; successes and shortcomings in the development of school governance procedures and policies; and long-term positive and negative effects on students and parents associated with charter school attendance. Only 13 of the 18 charter schools remained in operation at the end of the study. Those that remained open were strong and successful, targeting students with needs not well met in traditional public schools. Because of the selective admission process and closure of struggling schools, those that remained open were highly accountable and provided unique programs that differed from surrounding public schools. The small size of the reform made it possible for the state to provide effective assistance and oversight. There was a correlation between perceived positive impact and positive relationships between charter and host district schools. Includes 90 tables/figures. The appendices include survey results for parents, teachers/staff, and students. (Contains 19 references.) (SM)

EVALUATION OF CONNECTICUT CHARTER SCHOOLS AND THE CHARTER SCHOOL INITIATIVE

FINAL REPORT

Gary Miron and Jerry Horn

The Evaluation Center
Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5178
Phone: (616) 387-5898
Fax: (616) 387-5923
www.wmich.edu/evalctr/

September 2002

Executive Summary

In June 1997, The Evaluation Center (EC) at Western Michigan University was awarded a contract by the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) to evaluate the charter schools and the charter school initiative in Connecticut over the period October 1, 1997, to September 30, 2002. In conducting this study, the EC was expected to use existing databases; develop, adapt, and administer surveys; and conduct site visits and focus groups to gather data regarding the effectiveness of the charter school initiative in Connecticut.

The major objective of the evaluative study is to determine the effectiveness, progress, and impact of the charter schools in Connecticut. Further, it is intended to provide objective, unbiased feedback to the schools, the Connecticut State Department of Education, and other stakeholders about the operations and effectiveness of the schools and the initiative.

The following questions are central to the evaluation within the context, mission, and goals of each charter school and under the overriding goals of the study.

- To what extent are all students being served?
- To what extent are the stated specific goals and objectives of the schools being met?
- What unique and common shortcomings and barriers to meeting student needs can be identified?
- What successes and shortcomings in the development of the school governance procedures and policies exist or have been developed?
- What are the long-term (positive and negative) effects on students and parents that are associated with attending or sending children to a charter school?

Several supplemental questions are related to those above:

- What innovative and creative practices that lead to greater effectiveness or efficiency in meeting the needs of students and the operations of the school have been developed by the charter schools?
- What is the form and extent of parental involvement in the schools?
- What is the impact of the charter schools on the local school district(s), and what is the perception of the worth and merit of the charter school within the context of the broader community?
- What professional opportunities, benefits, and/or problems have educators encountered in their work in the charter schools?
- What major problems and barriers were commonly observed in the development of the charter schools during the evaluation period?

In addition to the evaluation activities, The Evaluation Center has also provided technical assistance to the charter schools related to the accountability plans and use of evaluation.

Methodology and Data Collection

Over the course of this five year project, we have used mixed methods of data collection, including surveys, interviews, document reviews, focus group meetings, results of existing tests, direct observations, review of work samples and, as appropriate, school portfolio reviews and case studies.

In the data collection plan, an explanation of the sampling procedures was provided. The purpose of our sampling was to build an accurate composite picture of the target population of staff, students, and parents across all charter schools in the state. Our strategy was to achieve a high response rate among students, teachers, and staff. It is usually difficult to obtain a high response rate from parents. Thus, we identified appropriate samples of parents and, with procedures to assure anonymity, elicited the assistance and cooperation of the local school for follow-up of nonrespondents to the initial mailed administration of each survey.

Listed below are surveys that were administered:

- ❑ Teachers/staff charter school survey (1997-98 and 1999-00)
- ❑ Student charter school survey (1997-98 and 1999-00)
- ❑ Parent/guardian charter school survey (1997-98 and 1999-00)
- ❑ School Climate Survey for teachers/staff, students, and parents/guardians (1998-99 and 2000-01)

The charter school surveys were administered during years 1 and 3, while the School Climate Survey was administered during years 2 and 4. The response rate on the teacher and student surveys exceeded 90 percent, and the parent survey yielded a response rate of 64.2 percent in 1997-98 and 54.1 percent in 1999-00. The school climate survey response rates were 87 percent or higher for teachers and students (5th grade and higher), and 51 percent for parents in 1999 and 40 percent in 2000. The schools were given the opportunity to administer optional surveys in the off years or in year 5 when no surveys were scheduled. While many schools took advantage of this, we have not aggregated or analyzed the results from these optional surveys in this report.

Additional data collection methods were employed during the initial three years of this study:

- ❑ Interviews and site visits
- ❑ Document review
- ❑ Analysis of the Connecticut Master Test (CMT) and Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT)
- ❑ Analysis of other centrally collected data on charter schools

The quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analyzed according to professionally acceptable standards of practice. The survey results were scanned by machine in order to enter the quantitative responses to closed-item questions. After processing and scanning the surveys, the data were disaggregated and sorted by school. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data (i.e., largely frequencies, means, standard deviations). Templates were developed for reporting the results

back to each school. After compiling profiles from the surveys, the results were formatted and printed. All the results were shared with the schools and with CSDE.

Development and Overview of Connecticut Charter Schools

Recognizing the need for improvement in public schools, Connecticut responded to the ever growing interest in public school choice and charter schools by adopting charter school legislation. This legislation was adopted based partly on the premise that this type of school reform would have a positive impact in the following areas:

- ❑ restructuring of traditional schools
- ❑ creation of innovative instructional practices
- ❑ diversification of learning environments
- ❑ reduction of racial isolation

These focus areas were considered in the development and implementation of an application and review process used to approve new charter schools. Applications for these schools came from a variety of stakeholders including teachers, parents, students, community activists, civic and business leaders, attorneys, and scholars. The first 12 schools were approved and became operational in 1997, with 4 additional schools opened in 1998, 2 in 1999, and 1 in 2002. Four of the original 12 schools have since closed, one closed in 1998 because it did not technically qualify as a separate charter school and another closed in 1999 because of issues related to the operation, governance, and performance of the school. Two other schools closed after operating for 4 years. In the summer of 2002, the two charter schools that were initially chartered by the Hartford School District were converted to magnet schools. As of the 2002-03 school year, only 13 charter schools are still in operation.

The physical location of charter schools ranges from downtown urban areas to the fringe of environmentally protected natural areas. A wide range of facilities are used for these schools, from rented facilities that test the teachers' mettle to create minimally productive learning environments to nicely remodeled spaces with seemingly effective learning environments. Probably the most notable differences in these school facilities and what one would expect to find in a public school are the lack of spacious and well-equipped playgrounds, gymnasiums and sports facilities, auditoriums and other specialized rooms/laboratories, convenient and adequate parking, and automobile access roads.

School Mission

The charter schools have a wide variety of mission statements that reflect each school's unique goals and objectives. The mission statement illustrates the vision for the school, describes what it hopes to accomplish and, through its development, provides an opportunity for stakeholders to build consensus and common goals. Below are listed some of the key elements found in mission statements:

- ❑ rigorous academic programs
- ❑ development of responsible citizenship
- ❑ alternative educational experience for at-risk students

- ❑ development of leadership
- ❑ global studies/world view
- ❑ early intervention/parental involvement
- ❑ multicultural learning environments
- ❑ safe and orderly school community

Parents who choose to send their children to charter schools do so for a variety of reasons, one being the school's overall mission. Parents' survey responses in 1999-00 indicated that 91 percent of parents were aware of their school's mission, and slightly more than 80 percent thought their school followed the mission well or very well, similar to previous years' findings. Students, on the other hand, were not as familiar with their school's mission, with only about half of students surveyed indicating they were aware of their school's mission.

Teachers/staff are generally satisfied with their school's mission and think that it is being followed; however, the level of satisfaction has declined slightly between year 1 and year 3 of the evaluation. After several years of operation, one would expect to find a positive trend in teacher/staff belief in their school's ability to fulfill its mission; however, we did not find this trend in the data.

Financial Conditions of Charter Schools

Start-up costs, limited time between approval and opening, and the inexperience of many school directors and boards resulted in problems in obtaining needed funding for some of the schools. However, as personnel in local and state funding agencies and schools have gained knowledge and experience in this area, the problems have lessened.

From a financial standpoint, there is little difference between the per-student expenditures for the state charter schools ($8,997 in 1999-00) and the districts in which they are located ($9,141, note that this figure is for 1998-99). For the two schools that were chartered by the local district, the difference is greater, with a per-student expenditure of $10,625 for the district and $9,227 for the charter school. When considering the expenditures by function, a somewhat higher amount is used for administration in the charter schools (14.8 percent) in comparison with the districts (9.5 percent) in which they are located. This difference can likely be explained by the relatively small size of charter schools in terms of enrollment as compared with the typical public school.

Funding for charter schools comes from a variety of sources including state enrollment-based grant, state and federal competitive grants, federal start-up grant, local district(s) in-kind support, and private sources. In 1999-00 charter schools received 74.6 percent of their revenues from state sources, while federal sources accounted for 12 percent of the revenues and private sources provided 10.6 percent of the total revenues. Revenues from local sources accounted for the remaining revenues.

The two local charter schools (both in Hartford) received funding from the district in which they are located. The total per-pupil amount these two schools received is substantially higher than what the state-sponsored charter schools received. In-kind services provide the largest difference in revenues

between the local and state charter schools, since Hartford school district has covered the building costs for its two local charter schools.

While there have been noticeable increases in revenues for charter schools, many charter school administrators/leaders are still concerned that there is insufficient funding for charter schools, particularly for facilities.

Teachers and Staff at Connecticut Charter Schools

There are noticeable variations in teachers' qualifications and years of experience among the Connecticut charter schools. In 1997-98 and 1999-00, we administered the Charter School Survey to teachers and staff in all schools. This survey focused on satisfaction with various aspects of the school, background characteristics of staff, reasons for choosing to work at the charter school, and a comparison of initial expectations with current experience.

The full evaluation report includes summaries of detailed analyses and comparisons of the teaching staff in the 12 schools that opened in 1997-98 with the 16 schools that were operational at the beginning of 1999-00. This comparison provides an opportunity to examine change in the schools over time, since 2 of the original schools closed and 6 new schools were opened Therefore, when we examined change over time, we used both a trend analysis and a cohort analysis. In order to exclude any teachers/staff that were not included in the 1997-98 sample, this cohort comparison includes only teachers and staff who reported working for 2 or more years in the 10 cohort schools in 1999-00. This essentially allowed us to compare the same group of charter school staff at 2 points in time. Changes in survey results were, therefore, likely to be due to change in the school rather than a change in the persons completing the surveys.

A summary of some of the key findings from the teacher/staff survey are presented below (this included 285 teachers and staff from 16 charter schools):

- School staffs in 1999-00 were comprised of 53 percent teachers, 14.7 percent teaching assistants, 6.3 percent specialists, 7 percent school administrators, and nearly 18 percent in a variety of other positions.
- 86 percent of surveyed teachers in 1999-00 reported that they are certified to teach in Connecticut. The proportion of certified teachers is actually much higher since this self-reported data does not include teachers with temporary certificates.
- 40.3 percent of teachers are in their 20s, 24.2 percent in their 30s, 22.1 percent in their 40s, and 13.4 percent are 50 or older.
- Teachers and staff members are 66.8 percent white, 19.8 percent black, 12.7 percent Hispanic, and just under 1 percent Asian or Pacific Islanders (none were Native American/American Indians).
- 71 percent of teachers/staff are female and 29 percent are male.

The teachers/staff who responded to the survey in 1999-00 also indicated

- They had average experience of 4.9 years in the public schools, 0.43 years in private schools, 0.16 years in parochial schools, and 0.49 years in other forms of teaching.
- They had an average combined total of 7.29 years of experience in education
- 42 percent of teachers had a BA as their highest college degree, 50 percent had an MA, 6.7 percent had a 5-6 year certificate, and 0.7 percent had a Ph.D.

Attitudes and perceptions of working conditions were also reported from the 1999-00 surveys:

- 38.7 percent of teachers/staff were satisfied or very satisfied with the school buildings and facilities, and 34.9 percent agreed or strongly agreed that physical facilities were good.
- 43.7 percent of teachers/staff were satisfied with their salary (this is higher than what we have found in other states).
- 37.8 percent perceived a secure future at their school, 36.2 percent perceived an insecure future at their school, and the rest were neutral (a significantly negative change from 1997-98 when 52.5 percent perceived a secure future at their school).
- 44.7 percent indicated they have many noninstructional duties in addition to their teaching load.

In addition, the survey data provided information regarding teachers'/staffs' initial expectations when first hired and what they had actually experienced working in a charter school. The findings indicated that teachers had much higher expectations when first hired compared with their actual experience. In 1997-98, teachers'/staffs' expectations in terms of student performance, quality of instruction, and operation of the school were significantly higher than what they experienced. In 1999-00, teachers'/staffs' expectations in terms of student performance, parental involvement and communication, and leadership were still higher than what they were currently experiencing. For example, in 1997-98 teachers indicated large differences between expectations and experience in areas related to products such as support services and technology and communication with parents; in 1999-00 teachers had much higher expectations for teachers and parents to influence the schools' direction and for effective leadership than they experienced.

A greater number and quality of professional opportunities were among the promises of the charter school initiative across the country and something that the 1997-98 teachers expected. In 1999-00, 68.6 percent thought this would be true as compared with 74 percent in 1997-98. A slightly lower percentage of teachers (53.3 percent) perceived that this was actually happening in 1999-00. In reviewing documents and interviewing school personnel, it is clear that a broad spectrum of professional development opportunities is offered by the schools or made available to teaching personnel, including a focus on educational technology for instruction, methods of teaching in the field, student assessment, curriculum, developing a multicultural curriculum, and cooperative learning.

Students and Parents in Connecticut Charter Schools

A total of 741 charter school students from 16 schools were sampled in 1999-00, compared with 288 students from 11 schools in 1997-98. Rather than conduct a random sample of all enrolled students in grade 5 and above, we attempted to sample 2 or more classes in each school or 1 class at each grade level. More students from the lower grades were included in the survey, with 63.2 percent representing grades 5 to 7 and 36.7 percent from grades 8 to 12.

The following items summarize our findings with regard to recruitment and selection of students, school attended prior to charter school, and gender and ethnicity of students.

- Recruitment most often involves advertisements and flyers; however, open houses and booths at fairs were also used to recruit families.
- Charter school students come primarily from traditional public schools (89 percent), with 4 percent coming from parochial schools and 1.9 percent from private schools.
- The distribution of students by gender was fairly even, with 50.6 percent boys and 49.4 percent girls.
- Minorities were highly represented in the charter schools in 1999-00 with 41 percent black, 26 percent Hispanic, 1.1 percent Asian or Pacific Islander, and 4 percent Native American Indians.
- The proportion of white students has significantly declined as the number of charter schools has increased: from 41.1 percent of the total charter school enrollment in 1997-98 to 27.5 percent in 1999-00.

The following items summarize some of our relevant findings regarding parents and families, such as household income and education, amount of parent volunteering, and distance to charter school.

- Overall, the trend among charter school parents has been toward lower household income, increased single parent households, and decreased education levels. This shift over time is largely due to the addition of new schools rather than shifting enrollments in existing schools.
- The majority of parents reported that they did not volunteer at all or had limited volunteering involvement at their school.
- The average distance to the charter school was 4.78 miles, while the average distance to the nearest applicable traditional public school was 2.18 miles.

On several survey items parents indicated some changes from their initial expectations and what their perceived actual experience and the time they were surveyed. In 1999-00, the largest disparities in terms of high initial expectations and lower perceived actual experiences were in the areas of school leadership/administration and the availability of individualized attention for students. While the differences were significant for these two items in 1999-00, they represented a slight improvement from 1997-98 when there were even larger differences between initial expectations and current experience.

Other items where there were large discrepancies between higher expectations and lower perceived current experiences include "quality of instruction," "influence on the direction of the school," "good communication between school and my household," and "accountability of school personnel."

Innovative Practices in Curriculum, Instructional Practices, Technology, and Organization/Governance

One of many commonly expected outcomes of charter school reforms is the development of innovative practices. However, a number of common factors affecting charter school reforms suggest that it will be difficult for these schools to be innovative. Among these factors, the following are most noteworthy: (i) less per-pupil funding than other public schools and limited funds for capital investments, (ii) relatively young and inexperienced teachers, and (iii) the expectation that these new schools meet already prescribed state standards.

Charter school staff in Connecticut were asked to list three or four innovations at their school in three different areas: (i) curriculum, (ii) instruction, and (iii) organization/governance. Reported innovations related to the integration of technology were also collected and summarized separately. Additionally, we considered data and information from annual reports, interviews with other stakeholders, and surveys. A summary of the key findings are listed below according to specific area.

Innovations in Curriculum and Instruction

- Charter school curricula ranged from original, staff-created programs to prepackaged commercial programs.
- Many schools focus the curriculum on one particular area, such as career-to-work or a global studies-based curriculum, or they focus on meeting the needs of one particular group of students.
- Most charter schools are adopting interdisciplinary curricular and instructional approaches that are in line with the state's curriculum framework.
- Charter schools have implemented instructional and assessment techniques that are different from those used traditional public schools. The incorporation of specific themes, such as community involvement, environmental conservation, or sports and physical fitness, have also provided opportunities to provide new curricula, instructional approaches, and means of assessment.

Innovations in Technology

- Integration of technology across the curriculum is a goal of many of the charter schools. Charter schools have fewer students per computer than is the average for district schools across the state.
- For the most part, however, computers are used as tools for writing, for remedial instruction, and for records maintenance, which is similar to traditional school usage.

Innovations in Organization/Governance

- Teachers are involved in decision making about budgets, professional development, school policies, class assignments, peer evaluation, and other issues that affect the everyday operations of the classrooms and schools.
- Teachers' daily schedules are designed to permit more interaction and dialogue between and among teachers and school administrators.
- Block scheduling and other types of scheduling for instruction are intended to accommodate student learning.
- Parents and more involved stakeholders are included on the board.

Overall, organization and governance are seen as the two most innovative aspects of charter schools. Granted, the differences may be mandated or at least authorized by law or regulation by the state. However, the schools have developed compatible practices and implemented procedures that provide for important decisions to be made at the school level. Charter schools appoint rather than elect school boards. They also have made efforts to encourage and facilitate communication among stakeholders and they have encouraged parental involvement. Finally, charter schools have attempted to create real choice opportunities to parents and students.

We have evaluated charter school reforms in several states and have found that the charter schools in Connecticut have been more successful than charter schools in other states in creating curricular and instructional approaches that are innovative or unique from what might be found in other public schools.

Extent to Which Goals and Objectives are Being Met

To answer the question "Are Connecticut charter schools meeting their own goals?" we examined each school's annual report for the 1999-00 and 2000-01 school years. To maximize the consistency and fairness of the comparisons, we restricted our analysis to the sections of the annual reports that address the four state-mandated areas where the charter schools are expected to elaborate goals and measurable objectives: (i) student progress; (ii) accomplishment of mission, purpose, and specialized focus; (iii) organizational viability: financial status and governance; and (iv) efforts to reduce racial, ethnic, and economic isolation. The following summarizes our analysis of the annual reports.

- Across all four areas, Connecticut charter schools met 50 percent of the measurable objectives identified in their 1999-00 annual reports. The success rate was highest (57 percent) for objectives related to the schools' specific missions and foci, where the schools have the most flexibility in defining goals. The success rate was lowest (39 percent) in objectives related to the educational progress of students. In 2000-01, the schools met 53 percent of their measurable objectives.
- All of the school mission statements we examined contained educationally meaningful goals, with most common themes in mission statements centered around academic and curricular goals.
- All school mission statements contain statements about such issues as academic rigor, emphases in particular academic subjects, communication skills, and so on.

- ❑ Approximately 80 percent of the schools have adequately represented their missions in goals and measurable objectives.
- ❑ There is considerable school-to-school variation in the quality of objectives and accompanying data.
- ❑ The overall strength of the charter schools' accountability plans and the quality of the annual reports has improved with each passing year.

In summary, the schools have established meaningful goals and have met slightly more than half of their measurable objectives. However, there is considerable school-to-school variation in the quality of the objectives and several cases where schools did not report sufficient data to make judgments. While the annual reports have indicated from one year to the next continuing efforts to improve accountability plans, there is still room for all of the schools to make improvements in both their accountability plans and in their reporting procedures. Relative to other states, Connecticut has succeeded in turning the charter school annual reports into an effective accountability tool. In earlier years, these annual reports were posted on the state's department of education Web site, which insured that a wide variety of stakeholders, including parents, could easily access the reports.

Performance on State Achievement Tests

While charter schools have been in operation for a limited number of years, one question on the minds of policymakers and the general public concerns whether or not charter schools can raise student performance on standardized tests. An analysis of scores from the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT), administered to students in grades 4, 6, and 8, and from the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT), which is administered to students in grade 10, resulted in the following findings.

- ❑ In terms of absolute scores, charter schools initially were performing lower than the state average and lower than their host districts. This information suggests that the charter schools are attracting students whose performance levels are generally lower than students in the host districts. This could also imply that students in charter schools perform poorly in their initial years at the charter school due to the start-up nature of the school or other related factors. Currently, the charter schools are performing at levels similar to their host districts and slightly lower than the state average.
- ❑ In terms of gain scores or value added, the charter schools are outperforming their host districts.
- ❑ Charter schools do better on the CMT than on the CAPT. In other words, the charter schools catering to elementary and middle school students are showing more positive gains as measured by the state's standardized tests than are the charter schools at the high school level. In part, this can be explained by a larger proportion of the charter high schools catering to students at risk. Readers should be reminded that there are a finite set of charter high schools (one of those considered in our analyses has since been closed in the summer of 2001) and that the number of test takers varies extensively between the charter high schools and the district high schools.
- ❑ The results for both our trend analysis and cohort analysis indicated that charter schools were making larger gains than their host districts. The results on the cohort analysis—which we consider a stronger design—are more positive than the trend analysis.

- Thirty-one percent of the trend analyses were positive, while only 4 percent were negative and 65 percent were mixed. Among the stronger cohort analyses, 72 percent of the trends were positive compared with 17 percent that were negative and 11 percent that were mixed.
- Charter schools that have been in operation longer show larger gains on both trend and cohort analyses relative to their host districts.
- If we had analyzed the data with only two years of data, the findings would have been negative. If we had analyzed the data with only three years of results, the findings would have been mixed. However, after four and five years of test data, we can see that charter schools have been outperforming their host districts.

Readers are encouraged to compare the results outlined in the tables and exhibits in this chapter with the data tables presented in Appendix I, which provide complete school-by-school results.

We have analyzed student achievement in charter schools in a number of states and are well aware of the variation in performance that occurs from year to year. We are also aware of the many limitations in the findings and have attempted to clearly spell them out in this chapter. Even though we now have five years of test data to examine in Connecticut, we think it still may be too early to make clear inferences about the causal impact of charter schools on student achievement. On the other hand, compared with the results in other states (see the meta-analysis of student achievement studies in Miron & Nelson, in press), the results we obtained for Connecticut are clearly the most substantial and the most positive that we have found in terms of student achievement gains made by charter schools. Also, given the strength and consistent direction of the trends over time, we conclude that charter schools in Connecticut are having a positive impact on students' achievement.

Indicators of School Quality

Student achievement is a universally recognized indicator of school quality; however, secondary indicators should also be considered. The data that provide the basis for these considerations came primarily from surveys of charter school students, parents/guardians, and faculty/staff. The surveys that we administered include some that were specifically designed for this evaluation as well as the School Climate Survey (SCS) from the National Association of Secondary School Principals. Additional sources of information include data provided by CSDE and archives of charter school documents generated and maintained by the evaluation team.

Inclusion of these indicators of school quality serve to

- supplement the results of the CMT and CAPT with the assessments of charter school students, parents, and teachers
- address the "market accountability" viewpoint by examining the extent to which educational "consumers" have "voted with their feet" for or against charter schools
- examine a number of intermediate or "nonachievement" outcomes, including attendance, discipline, and various elements of school culture and climate

There is legitimate debate about precisely what types of student outcomes charter schools should be held accountable for. While most stakeholders seem to agree that student achievement is an important (if not the only) goal of charter schools, others argue that schools should also be judged on their ability to satisfy their customers.

The following items summarize some important findings related to alternative indicators of school quality in Connecticut charter schools.

- Seventy-three percent of students judged their performance as "excellent" or "good" at their charter school compared with 65 percent who reported that their performance was either "excellent" or "good" at their previous school.
- In 1999-00, 55 percent of those teachers surveyed thought that student achievement was improving at their charter school—up slightly from 53.9 percent in the previous year.
- The average charter school reported that it had 68 students on its waiting list as of the1999-00 school year (based on data from 11 of the 16 charter schools).
- As a group, 12 charter schools reported that they had a student return rate of 75.5 percent.
- Approximately 72 percent of sampled parents reported that the quality of instruction in their charter school is high.
- Slightly more than 71 percent of parents reported that their child's achievement level had improved.
- Approximately 66 percent of the sampled parents said that their child received sufficient individual attention.
- Approximately 57 percent of students surveyed indicated they would recommend the school to a friend, while 18 percent said they would not and another 25 percent were not sure.
- It appears that students' perceptions of safety in charter schools have remained relatively stable, with perhaps a small decline over the years.
- Some 82 percent of teachers and 85 percent of parents agreed with the statement that "students feel safe at school."
- Approximately 78 percent of parents and 73 percent of teachers surveyed in 1999-00 agreed with the statement that "This school has high standards and expectations for students."
- The findings from the nationally-normed School Climate Surveys administered to teachers/staff, parents, and students charter schools were particularly positive (above national norms) in teacher-student relationships, administration, and student academic orientation. Several areas such as security and maintenance, student behavioral values, parent and community-school relationships were below national norms among all three groups.

Governance of Charter Schools

The one evaluation question for this project that specifically mentions school governance is: What successes and shortcomings in the development of the school governance procedures and policies exist or have been developed? One clear success in charter school governance is the involvement of

community members on charter school boards. Board members include attorneys, bankers, clergy, university officials and other professionals. However, involvement by community members who do not serve on charter school boards is minimal. Most board decisions are made without outside influence.

While all boards include parent members, the parents' influence varies among the schools. Only two schools include student representatives on their boards. All boards involve parents, students and teachers in school governance through ad hoc committees. These committees address issues such as curriculum development, technology, and facilities.

About half of the charter school boards clearly view involvement in day-to-day administration of the school as a violation of their role as board members. These boards prefer to leave these administrative issues to the schools' professional staffs. On the other hand, a number of boards are clearly involved in all aspects of their respective schools. This involvement often becomes a barrier to providing more effective service to the school.

Strong, effective boards are able to collaborate and make tough decisions without micro-managing. All the charter school boards have a strong commitment to the school's mission. Most include an excellent cross section of the community and members with diverse skills and world views. All board members share the excitement of participating in an educational experiment.

The Impact of Charter Schools on Local Districts and Communities

Over the course of time, the relationships between charter and noncharter public schools has improved. This may be due to the realization that the charter school reform is not growing rapidly and is unlikely to be a threat to local districts. Even in states with large numbers of charter schools, however, there is a tendency for relations between charter and noncharter schools to normalize over time.

- A number of instances suggest that individuals or groups are not pleased with the existence of charter schools.
- Most of the charter schools could cite instances where the local districts went out of their way to assist them at some point in time.
- Two specific areas in which charter schools and local districts are required to cooperate are special education and transportation.
- A third area where services could possibly be shared is through professional development opportunities.

It was apparent that the charter schools were not having an easily discernible positive or negative impact on traditional public schools, although there did appear to be a relationship between reported positive impacts and positive relationships between charter and host district schools. There were some reports that—due to competition with charter schools—local districts were making efforts to improve their programs and raise test scores. Among the most commonly cited negative impacts were the loss

of students, involved parents, and effective teachers to charter schools. Again, it is important to point out that we found no concrete evidence that the charter schools were having any kind of impact on local districts, although charter school representatives and a few district officials noted some changes that could be due to the presence of charter schools. For the 2002-03 school year, the charter schools received federal dissemination grants ($25,000 for each eligible school) which are intended to help promote the sharing of ideas among charter schools and between charter schools and traditional public schools.

Conclusion

Charter schools in Connecticut have provided an opportunity for small groups of educators and community leaders to be creative and do something different. A number of inspired and highly motivated educators have taken advantage of this opportunity and started charter schools. They have had the opportunity to fulfill their ideas, take risks, and have public money to support their endeavors.

The charter schools in Connecticut provided us with a number of interesting stories as we followed the development of these schools. In some instances these schools have been initially isolated by their surrounding communities and criticized for their performance, even as they struggled to establish their schools and overcome a list of start-up obstacles. Many highly motivated school leaders have been embroiled in learning how to run a school while their lofty visions have had to wait to be implemented. Even while some of the schools have struggled and have not yet developed the schools they envisioned, others have excelled and established exciting learning communities.

Only 13 charter schools remain in operation in Connecticut as of the 2002-03 school year; four schools have closed and two converted to magnet school status in the summer of 2002. The schools that have remained open, are very strong and successful. On the whole, these schools are targeting students with needs not well met in traditional public schools. Because of the selective application process and the closure of struggling schools, those that remain in operation are both highly accountable and provide unique programs that differ from the surrounding public schools.

In terms of performance accountability and regulatory accountability, charter schools in Connecticut are among the very best in the country. This judgement is based on our work in evaluating charter schools in four other states as well as the extensive literature reviews and the metaanalysis of results from studies of charter schools across the country that we have conducted. Some reasons for the exceptional performance of Connecticut's charter schools are that these schools have received relatively better funding and more technical assistance than charter schools have received in other states. Perhaps the most important factor is that the demands for accountability in Connecticut are more rigorous than in any other state we have studied. One should be cautious in generalizing the positive results of charter schools in Connecticut to charter schools in other states because of the large differences in how charter schools are approved, supported, and held accountable.

The small size of the reform has made it possible for the State to provide effective assistance and oversight. At the same time, the very small size of the reform suggests that the greatest hope for positive impact will be the examples these schools set for others, rather than the competitive effect that would put pressure on districts to improve. For this reason, it will be important to continue to monitor and learn from both their successful and unsuccessful experiences.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary i
Table of Contents xv
List of Tables, Figures and Appendices xviii
List of Acronyms xxii
Acknowledgments xxiii

Chapter One Introduction and Frame of the Evaluation 1
1.1 Introduction and Background of the Study 1
1.2 Objectives of the Study and Evaluation Questions 6
1.3 Major Tasks 7

Chapter Two Methodology and Data Collection Procedures 10
2.1 Schedule for Data Collection 10
2.2 Specific Methods for Data Collection 11
2.3 Response Rates on Surveys 13
2.4 Data Analyses and Reporting 14

Chapter Three Development and Overview of the Connecticut Charter Schools . 15
3.1 Approval of Charter Schools 15
3.2 Description of Charter Schools 17
3.3 School Missions 21
3.4 Financial Conditions of Charter Schools 23

Chapter Four Teachers and Staff at Connecticut Charter Schools 28
4.1 Description of Sampled Teachers 29
4.2 Working Conditions for Teachers and Staff 33
4.3 Professional Opportunities for Teachers 38
4.4 Summary 41

Chapter Five Students and Parents in Connecticut Charter Schools 43
5.1 Characteristics of Sampled Students 43
5.2 Characteristics of Sampled Parents 45
5.3 Expectations and Satisfaction of Parents and Students 46
5.4 Parental Involvement 52
5.5 School Safety 55
5.6 Services for Students with Special Needs 57

Chapter Six Innovative Practices in Curriculum, Instructional Practices, Technology, and Organization/Governance 61
6.1 Source of Data and Discussion of How We Define Innovations 61
6.2 Innovations in Curriculum and Instructional Methods 63
6.3 Innovations in Technology 68
6.4 Innovations in Organization and Governance 69
6.5 Summary 70

Chapter Seven Extent to Which School Goals and Objectives are Being Met ... 72
7.1 Do Mission Statements Refer to Educationally Meaningful Goals? 73
7.2 Are Mission Statements Adequately Represented in Goals and Measurable Objectives? ... 74
7.3 Are the Schools Meeting Their Own Goals? 75
7.4 The Quality of Evidence Offered 78
7.5 Improvements in the 2000-01 Annual Reports 80
7.6 Summary 82

Chapter Eight Performance on State Achievement Tests 83
8.1 Description of Our Analyses and Limitations 83
8.2 Trend Analysis: A Comparison Between Charter Schools, Host Districts, and the State ... 89
8.3 Cohort Analysis: A Comparison Between Charter Schools and Host Districts 109
8.4 Summary of Results 114

Chapter Nine Indicators of School Quality 119
9.1 Data and Methods 119
9.2 Subjective Ratings of Student Performance 120
9.3 Market Accountability 121
9.4 Discipline and School Safety 122
9.5 Other Attributes of the School Environment 124
9.6 School Climate 125
9.7 Discussion of School Climate Findings 131
9.8 Summary 132

Chapter 10 School Governance in Connecticut Charter Schools 134
10.1 Responsibilities of Governing Boards 135
10.2 Description of the Operation and Composition of the Governing Boards 136
10.3 Relationships Between the Board and the Various Stakeholders 139
10.4 Conclusion and Summary 143

Chapter Eleven The Impact of Charter Schools on Local School Districts and Communities 145
11.1 Nature of the Relationships Between Charter Schools and Local Districts 145
11.2 Impact of Charter Schools on Local Districts and Communities 147
11.3 Discussion of Findings 148

References 151

Appendices 152

List of Tables, Figures, Exhibits and Appendices

List of Tables

Table 1:1 Evaluation Framework Developmental Stages 4
Table 2:1 Plan for Data Collection 10
Table 2:2 Sample Size and Response Rates on Surveys 13
Table 3:1 Application Criteria and Criteria Point Assignment for the Initial Three Years 16
Table 3:2 Summary of All Charter Schools Operational, 1997-98 to 2001-2002 18
Table 3:4 Student Awareness of School Mission 22
Table 3:5 Teacher/Staff Perceptions of the Extent to Which the School Mission is Being Followed 22
Table 3:6 Teachers' and Staff's Level of Satisfaction with the Mission of the School in 1999-00 23
Table 3:7 Average Total School Revenues and Per Pupil Revenues for Charter Schools 25
Table 3:8 Average Per-Pupil Expenditures for Charter Schools, Host Districts, and the State . . 26
Table 3:9 Per-Pupil Expenditures by Function for Charter Schools, Host Districts, and the State 27
Table 3:10 Distribution of Per-Pupil Expenditures by Function 27
Table 4:1 Teacher Certification Status Among Charter School Classroom Teachers Only . . . 29
Table 4:2 Age of Classroom Teachers in Connecticut Charter Schools 30
Table 4:3 Years of Teaching Experience for Classroom Teacher in Various Types of Schools 31
Table 4:4 Formal Education Levels of Connecticut Charter School Classroom Teachers 32
Table 4:5 Ethnic Background and Gender of Connecticut Charter School Teachers and Staff . 33
Table 4:6 Level of Satisfaction With Working Conditions Among Teachers and Staff 34
Table 4:7 Level of Satisfaction With Salaries and Job Security 35
Table 5:1 School Type Prior to Enrolling in a Charter School 43
Table 5:2 Distribution of Students by Race/Ethnicity 44
Table 5:3 Sampled Teachers/Staff, Parents and Students by Race/Ethnicity 44
Table 5:4 Distribution of Families by Household Type 45
Table 5:5 Household Income and Level of Education for Sampled Parents 45
Table 5:6 Amount of Time Parents Volunteer at Charter School 46
Table 5:7 Summarized Parental Responses Related to Satisfaction for Years 1 and 3 47
Table 5:8 Summarized Student Responses Related to Satisfaction for Years 1 and 3 47
Table 5:9 Percentage of Students who Recommend Charter School to Friend 48
Table 5:10 Overview of Items and Percentage of Student Satisfaction 49
Table 5:11 Parents' Perceptions of the Biggest Discrepancy Between Initial Expectation and Experience Over the Three Years 52
Table 5:12 Mean and Standard Deviation for Items Regarding Perceived Parental Involvement and Quality of Communication with Families 54
Table 5:13 Students', Parents', and Teachers' Perceptions About School Safety Between 1997-98 and 1999-00 55
Table 5:14 Mean and Standard Deviation on Students' Perceptions of Safety at School 56

Table 5:15 Mean and Standard Deviation on Students' Perceptions of Respecting One Another and Their Property 57
Table 5:16 Percentage of Students with Disabilities in Charter and Local School Districts 59
Table 5:17 Special Education Prevalence by Nature of Disability and School 60
Table 7:1 Common Themes Found in Charter School Mission Statements, 1999-00 73
Table 7:2 Distribution of Schools by Coverage Rating 75
Table 7:3 Percentage of Objectives Met By Charter Schools, 1999-00 76
Table 7:4 Success Rate in Meeting Objectives by School and Objective Area, 1999-00 77
Table 7:5 Evaluation of Evidence Associated with Objectives, 1999-00 78
Table 7:6 School-by-School Quality Ratings for Measurable Objectives/Benchmarks 80
Table 7:7 Percentage of Objectives Met By Charter Schools, 2000-01 81
Table 8:1 Years of Available CMT and CAPT Results for Connecticut Charter Schools 88
Table 8:2 Comparison of Six Cohorts in Charter Schools and Their Host Districts on the CMT . 109
Table 8:3 Summary of Comparison Ratings for the Trend Analysis 115
Table 8:4 Summary of Comparison Ratings for the Cohort Analysis 116

List of Figures and Exhibits

Figure 1:1 School Evaluation Model 4
Figure 3:1 Total Enrollment in Charter Schools by Year 17
Figure 3:2 Total Enrollment in Connecticut Charter Schools by Grade Level, 1999-00 19
Figure 5:1 Discrepancy Between Parents Initial Expectation and Current Experience in 1999-00 51
Figure 5:2 Initial Expectation vs. Current Experience in Regards to Leadership & Administration . 51
Figure 5:3 Comparison of Parents' and Teacher's Perception of Parental Involvement at Charter Schools 54
Figure 5:4 Student, Parents, and Teachers Perception of Agree and Strongly Agree about School Safety Between 1997-98 and 1999-00 56
Figure 7:1 Illustration of Assessment of Mission Coverage 74
Figure 7:2 Formulas to Calculate the Success Rate in Meeting Objectives 76
Figure 7:3 Variation in Quality of Objectives and Supporting Evidence Across All Schools .. 79
Exhibit 8:1 Grade 4 Reading Results on the CMT, 1997-98 to 2000-01 92
Exhibit 8:2 Grade 4 Writing Results on the CMT, 1997-98 to 2000-01 93
Exhibit 8:3 Grade 4 Math Results on the CMT, 1997-98 to 2000-01 94
Exhibit 8:4 Grade 6 Reading Results on the CMT, 1997-98 to 2000-01 95
Exhibit 8:5 Grade 6 Writing Results on the CMT, 1997-98 to 2000-01 96
Exhibit 8:6 Grade 6 Math Results on the CMT, 1997-98 to 2000-01 97
Exhibit 8:7 Grade 8 Reading Results on the CMT, 1997-98 to 2000-01 98
Exhibit 8:8 Grade 8 Writing Results on the CMT, 1997-98 to 2000-01 99
Exhibit 8:9 Grade 8 Math Results on the CMT, 1997-98 to 2000-01 100

Exhibit 8:10 Grade 10 Language Arts Results on the CAPT, 1997-98 to 2000-01 101
Exhibit 8:11 Grade 10 Math Results on the CAPT, 1997-98 to 2000-01 102
Exhibit 8:12 Grade 10 Science Results on the CAPT, 1997-98 to 2000-01 103
Exhibit 8:13 Grade 10 Interdisciplinary Results on the CAPT, 1997-98 to 2000-01 104
Exhibit 8:14 Grade 4 Overall Index Results on the CMT, 1997-98 to 2001-02 105
Exhibit 8:15 Grade 6 Overall Index Results on the CMT, 1997-98 to 2001-02 106
Exhibit 8:16 Grade 8 Overall Index Results on the CMT, 1997-98 to 2001-02 107
Exhibit 8:17 Grade 10 Overall Index Results on the CAPT, 1997-98 to 2000-01 108
Exhibit 8:18 Same Class Cohorts Starting in the 1997-98 School Year Comparing Charter Schools and Host District Results on the CMT 111
Exhibit 8:19 Same Class Cohorts Starting in the 1998-99 School Year Comparing Charter Schools and Host District Results on the CMT 112
Exhibit 8:20 Same Class Cohorts Starting in the 1999-00 School Year Comparing Charter Schools and Host District Results on the CMT 113
Exhibit 8:21 Distribution of Comparison Ratings for Trend Analysis and Cohort Analysis ... 117
Figure 9:1 Student Self-Rated Performance at Previous School and Current Charter School . 120
Figure 9:2 Students' Responses Regarding Whether or Not They Would Recommend Their School to Others 122
Figure 9:3 Comparisons of Perceived School Safety by Informant Groups and Year's When Survey Was Administered 123
Figure 9:4 Perceived Levels of Interest Among Students Coming From Public and Nonpublic Schools 124
Figure 9:5 Student Self-Rated Interest in School Work at Current Charter School Compared With Previous School 124
Figure 9:6 Total Results on the School Climate Survey for Staff, Students, and Parents 126
Figure 9:7 Results for Teachers/Staff by Year of Operation 128
Figure 9:8 Results for Teachers/Staff by School Level 128
Figure 9:9 Results for Students by Year of Operation 129
Figure 9:10 Results for Students by School Level 130
Figure 9:11 Agreement and Disagreement on School Climate Among Informant Groups 131
Figure 11:1 Matrix Comparing Nature of the Relationships Between Charter and Noncharter Schools and the Type of Impact Charter School Have 148

List of Appendices

Appendix A Charter School Survey Results for All Connecticut Charter School Teachers and Staff, 1997-1998

Appendix B Charter School Survey Results for All Connecticut Charter School Students (Grades 5-12), 1997-1998

Appendix C Charter School Survey Results for All Connecticut Charter School Parents, 1997-1998

Appendix D School Climate Survey Results for Connecticut Charter School Teachers/Staff, Students (Grades 5-12), and Parents, 2000-01

Appendix E Charter School Survey Results for All Connecticut Charter School Teachers and Staff, 1999-2000

Appendix F Charter School Survey Results for All Connecticut Charter School Students (Grades 5-12), 1999-2000

Appendix G Charter School Survey Results for All Connecticut Charter School Parents, 1999-2000

Appendix H Comparison of Characteristics of Charter School Students with Host Districts

Appendix I Results from the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) and the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) by School and Year

Appendix J Sample Structures of the Governing Boards in Connecticut Charter Schools

List of Acronyms

BEST	Beginning Educator Support and Training
CAPT	Connecticut Academic Performance Test
CISC	Central Instructional Support Center
CMT	Connecticut Mastery Test
COE	Current operating expenditures
CREATE	Center for Research on Educational Accountability and Teacher Evaluation
CS	Charter school
CSDE	Connecticut State Department of Education
CSS	Charter School Survey
EC	The Evaluation Center
EMOs	Education management organizations
ERGs	Education Reference Groups
FAPE	Free appropriate public education
FTEs	Full-Time Equivalents
HD	Host district
HOTS	Higher Order Thinking Skills
IDCS	Integrated Day Charter School
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	Individual Education Plan
ISAAC	Interdistrict School for Arts andCommunication
ITBS	Iowa Tests of Basic Skills
LEA	Local Education Agency
NCES	The National Center for Education Statistics
NGO	Nongovernmental Organizations
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
REACH	Respect, Enthusiasm, Achievement, Citizenship, and Hard Work
RFP	Request for Proposals
SASS	School and Staffing Survey
SAT	Stanford Achievement Test
SCS	School Climate Survey
STEP	Systematic Training for Effective Parenting
WA	Weighted Average
WMU	Western Michigan University

Acknowledgments

We wish to express our appreciation to the charter schools of Connecticut for their cooperation in this ongoing evaluation project. In times of extreme pressure and heavy demands on their time, school directors and teachers provided the evaluation team with information and insights that they alone could describe. Charter schools, as one ongoing reform initiative, represent a pattern of K-12 schooling substantially different from the patterns that we have known in American education over the past 200 years. With relatively short start-up time and few models to follow, the founders of these schools have done a remarkable job in laying the groundwork and beginning a new chapter in an era of an evolving rethinking of public education. We hope that the results of the evaluation will enhance and improve practice and the opportunities for children and youth to fully utilize the opportunities provided by the charter schools of Connecticut.

We thank a number of persons at the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) who provided oversight of this project and feedback on the conduct of the study as well as comments on the draft of this report. First of all we wish to recognize the program officers and evaluation contact persons at CSDE whom we worked with most closely. Listed chronologically they include Yvette Thiesfield, Catherine Oleksiw, Jennifer Niles, Dudley Williams, Mark Linabury, and Barbara Beaudin. Other CSDE staff that provided direction on the evaluation and comments on the draft report include Leslie Averna, Associate Commissioner, Division of School Improvement; Karen Flanagan from legal affairs; Nancy Cappello, Bureau of Special Education and Pupil Services; Elliott Williams, former Bureau chief, and Susan Binkowski, education manager in the Office of Grant Programs and Technology. Without the assistance and input from these persons, we could not have conducted this study in a meaningful and useful manner. We appreciate their dedication to their work and their desire that the evaluation be an objective and valid representation of the individual schools and the overall statewide initiative. In addition, we recognize the Commissioner of Education, Dr. Theodore Sergi, for his vision and commitment to charter schools and his recognition that a long-term evaluation would be in the best interests of the schools, the public, and other stakeholders.

This report benefited from the contributions of a number of staff members at The Evaluation Center. Christopher Nelson, Carolyn Sullins, and Christine Ellis helped analyze the data for and write chapter 7. Chia-Lin Hsieh organized the data for analysis in chapter 8. Deborah Lehman helped with section 5.6. Jamie Helsen, Carla Howe, and Kim Reynolds helped with chapters 6, 9, and 11; Jacqueline Keller and John Risley helped write chapter 10, and Sally Veeder edited the entire report. Daniel Stufflebeam, former director of the Center has provided guidance and support during the preparation and conduct of the study.

In the field, the project benefited from the work of three able and committed Traveling Observers, Diane deVries, Metta McGarvey, and Jacqueline Kelleher, who helped administered surveys, conducted interviews and focus groups, and also analyzed and summarized some of the qualitative data on particular themes. Their contribution to the project has been tremendous, and we are grateful for their work.

To all of these people, we express our sincere appreciation.

Jerry Horn and Gary Miron
September 2002

Chapter One
Introduction and Frame of the Evaluation

1.1 Introduction and Background of the Study

On May 20, 1997, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to potential contractors to develop a design to evaluate all Connecticut charter schools and the charter school initiative. The evaluation was to be funded by the CSDE commencing with the 1997-98 school year and to cover the first five years of the charter school initiative in Connecticut. The contractor selected for the evaluation would be responsible for

1. conducting the state impact and process five-year evaluation with indicators common to all the Connecticut charter schools
2. assisting each charter school in identifying indicators unique to their specific goals and mission
3. providing technical assistance to the charter schools in developing a system for annually collecting and reporting data pertinent to their local evaluation
4. serving as a resource for measurement evaluation and decision-making issues for the duration of the contract

In response to this RFP, The Evaluation Center at Western Michigan submitted a proposal on June 27, 1997, to conduct this evaluation over the period of August 1997 through December 2001. The Evaluation Center was awarded the contract to conduct the evaluation. The initial contract was finalized with an adjusted operations period of October 1, 1997, to September 30, 2002. An amendment to the original contract was initiated by CSDE and approved by the Secretary, Office of Policy and Mangement of the State of Connecticut on 7-7-99. This amendment retained the original starting and ending dates of the contract and the services to be provided. Although the total cost of the services remained the same, the amendment modified the payment procedures.

In conducting the study that formed the basis for this report, it was expected that the outside evaluator would use existing databases; develop, adapt, and administer surveys; and conduct site visits and focus groups to gather data regarding the effectiveness of the charter school initiative in Connecticut. The CSDE Request for Proposals (RFP) for the evaluation contained an explanation regarding the development of charter schools in this state:

> The charter school legislation in Connecticut was in direct response to the perceived need to provide alternative and diverse educational programs for the ultimate goal of improving student academic achievement. The movement behind charter schools promotes the idea that

innovation and creativity in the educational arena can often generate new ideas for educational excellence within the public school system. Charter schools have a governing board of administrators, teachers, parents and community members who actively participate in the development and maintenance of the school as a viable alternative to the local public schools. The school typically manages control of the budget, curriculum, and staffing, with some exception from state regulations. The Connecticut law allow for waivers of existing statutes and regulations, which are considered on a case by case basis.

The *Charter School Application* (1996) explained that Public Act 96-214, as amended by Sections 56 and 57 of Public Act 96-244, established the legal basis for charter schools in Connecticut. This law provides for "the creation of two kinds of nonsectarian charter schools: converted public schools approved by a local or regional school board (local charters) and new schools approved by the State Board of Education (state charters)" (p. 4). This section of the application booklet goes on to define a charter school in Connecticut as ". . . a public, nonsectarian school which is established under a charter granted pursuant to the provisions of this act, is organized as a nonprofit entity under state law, acts as a public agency and operates independently of any local or regional board of education in accordance with the terms of its charter and the provisions of the charter school law."

The concept of charter schools in Connecticut, as reflected above, is consistent with an explanation of how or why the charter school movement has occurred across the United States, as written by Nathan in Charter Schools (1996):

> The charter school movement brings together, for the first time in public education, four powerful ideas:
>
> - ❑ Choice among public schools for families and their children
> - ❑ Entrepreneurial opportunities for educators and parents to create the kinds of schools they believe make the most sense
> - ❑ Explicit responsibility for improved achievement, as measured by standardized tests and other measures
> - ❑ Carefully designed competition in public education (p.1)

Nathan goes on to list a number of strategies that appear to be common across charter schools.

1. Teachers, parents, and other community members can create new schools or convert existing schools by authority of a charter granted by an authorized sponsor.
2. Charter schools are responsible for improved student achievement.
3. In return for accountability for specific results, the state grants an upfront waiver of virtually all rules and regulations governing public schools.
4. The state authorizes more than one organization to start and operate a charter public school in the community.

5. The organizers, usually teachers, parents, or other community members, can approach either a local board or some other public body to be the school sponsor.
6. The charter school is a school of choice.
7. The charter school is a discrete legal entity.
8. The full per-pupil allocation should move with the student to the charter school.
9. Participating teachers should be given support to try new opportunities by having their status protected (Nathan, 1996, p.2).

A more recent publication published by the National School Boards Association and authored by Thomas Good and Jennifer Braden (2000) included the following interpretation of the reasons for the charter school movement.

> Public support for charter schools can be traced to several historical and contemporary trends, four of which are especially significant: (1) increasing pressure for choice in education through publicly funded vouchers; (2) rising public dissatisfaction, based on reports critical of student achievement; (3) increasing support for the privatization of public functions; and (4) a growing desire among some parents for public schools that focus more closely on their specific values. Collectively, these trends have set the stage for the emergence of charter schools and account for much of the popularity that this movement currently enjoys. (p.1)

The Connecticut version of charter schools is legislatively defined in P.A. 95-214, and later amended in subsequent public acts. In section 29 of Public Act 97-47, the following definitions are provided.

> "Charter school" means a public, nonsectarian school which is (A) established under a charter granted pursuant to section 10-66bb, (B) organized as a nonprofit entity under state law, (C) a public agency for purposes of the Freedom of Information Act, as defined in section 10-18a, as amended, and (D) operated independently of any local or regional board of education in accordance with the terms of its charter and the provisions of sections 10-66aa to 10-66ff inclusive;
>
> "Local charter school" means a public school or part of a public school that is converted into a charter school and is approved by the local or regional board of education of the school district in which it is located and by the State Board of Education pursuant to subsection (e) of section 10-66bb; and
>
> "State charter school" means a new public school approved by the State Board of Education pursuant to subsection (f) of section 10-66bb.

For this project and in recognition of the ongoing developmental nature of the charter schools, the WMU evaluation team was guided by the concepts included in the evaluation framework shown in Table 1:1.

Table 1:1 Evaluation Framework Developmental Stages

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Program Issues	Establish the program after determining *needs to be addressed.*	Formulation of sound *policies, plans, assignments, procedures, and schedules.*	Successful *implementation* of policies, plans, etc.	Making an *impact* by delivering services to targeted individuals.	Achieving *effective programming* by bringing about desirable behavioral changes.	*Sustaining* successful program operations by turnkeying them to the targeted community.
Evaluation Components	*Context evaluation* Is there a need for the program? Is the need within our institutional mission?	*Input evaluation* Is the program design appropriate, feasible, and potentially successful?	*Process evaluation* Are the plans implemented as intended? Do the plans work well?	*Impact evaluation* To what extent are targeted persons being reached?	*Effectiveness evaluation* What is the quality of outcomes as seen by those who are to benefit, and as compared to appropriate standards?	*Institutionalization evaluation* To what extent is the program maintained and perpetuated?

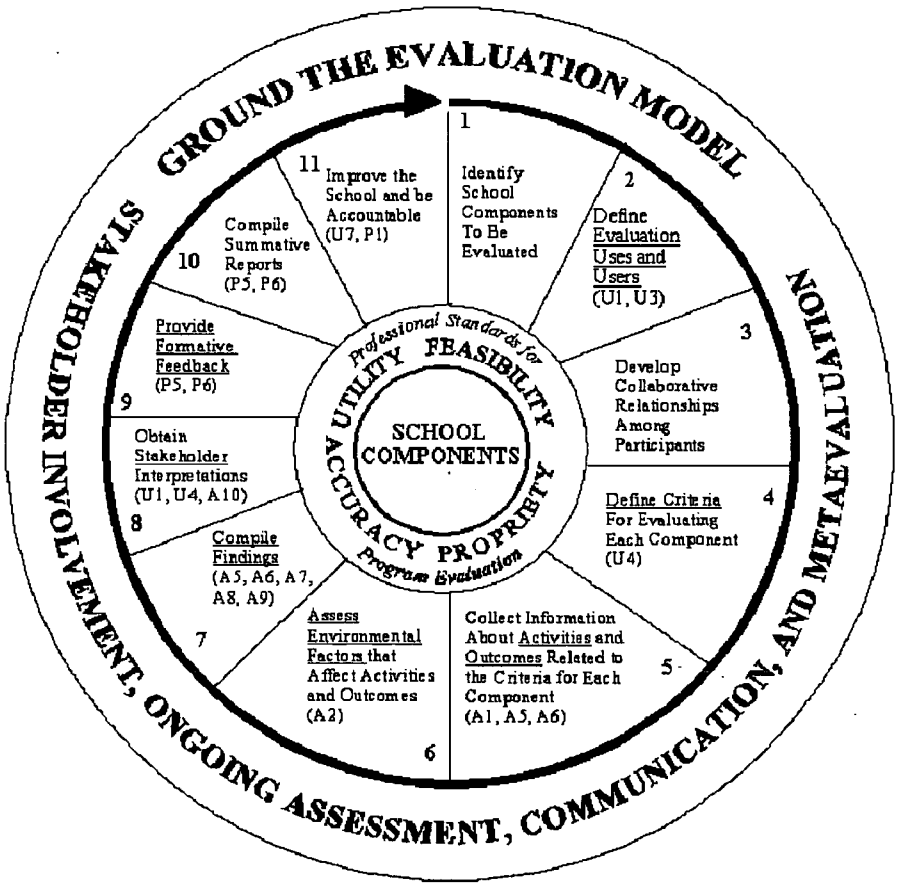


Figure 1:1 School Evaluation Model
Source: Sanders et al. (1995, p. 27)

The evaluation model selected for this project grew out of the work of The Evaluation Center's five-year R & D center known as CREATE (Center for Research on Educational Accountability and Teacher Evaluation), funded by the U.S. Department of Education in 1991-96. The evaluation model is illustrated in Figure 1. Sanders, Horn, Thomas, Tuckett, and Yang (1995) made the following statement about school evaluation in *A Model for School Evaluation.*

> Evaluation of America's schools is one of the most important investments we can make in K-12 education. It is the way we learn of strengths and weaknesses, the way we get direction, and the way critical issues get identified and resolved. School evaluation can be defined as the systematic investigation of the worth or merit of a school. Merit is measured against standards of performance established to judge whatever is being evaluated. Worth is measured against institutional and societal needs. Thus, a teacher who teaches well something that nobody needs has high merit but low worth. A school that provides basic services but does so in a mediocre way has low merit and for that reason cannot be worth much either (p.1).

In this evaluation model, there is a dual focus on formative and summative evaluation. This report reflects our findings based on data collected from school years 1997-1998 through 2001-02. During the course of the evaluation (nearly 5 years), we have seen the schools develop and mature. Our initial reports to the schools and to the Connecticut Department of Education focus on formative feedback, however in this final report we have mapped out summative findings aimed at demonstrating the progress the schools have made and the impact they have had on their students and their local communities.

The evaluation of a revolutionary educational reform effort, such as the charter school initiative, is as unique as the initiative itself. First, each state has its own authorizing legislation and regulations under which these new schools operate. Secondly, each school was founded by a person or groups with varying goals and purposes. Thirdly, the approved mission of each school is distinct. The question arises as to what is the appropriate standard of assessment of success (or failure). Should the standard be the promised lofty achievement gains and dramatic impact on regular public schools as reflected in legislative lobbying efforts or the often subjective expectations and goals reflected in the charter school applications? Some would argue that a comparison with the regular public schools would be most appropriate, but which school or schools and what would be an appropriate comparison group? It is not uncommon to hear some persons inexperienced in operating in the public sector say that the only valid evaluation is whether parents continue to send their children to charter schools, an approach that would not be acceptable to those who demand accountability for use of public funds. In our evaluation, we have attempted to touch upon all of these possible interpretations of appropriateness. We will not be surprised if there are different interpretations of the results or even disagreements with our stated findings and conclusions. At the same time, evaluation reports typically include both positive and negative findings, so it is critical that our approach be robust enough to address the variances among the schools and that stakeholders and others consider the report as a whole and not isolated data or statements.

After five years of implementation, the schools have had a chance to demonstrate what they can do and the potential role they can play in the reform movement as defined in the state of Connecticut.

1.2 Objectives of the Study and Evaluation Questions

The charter school reform is one of a number of efforts to reform and improve K-12 schools in Connecticut. Clearly, there are many activities being designed and implemented to improve schools. Since there are only general guidelines for charter schools, each has its own character and mission. To attribute all successes or all failures to the concept of charter schools would be both inappropriate and inaccurate. Each school is unique, and each is encouraged to identify a mission that will take it beyond the *status quo* and address the needs of various target audiences as defined in the school's documentation and application.

The major objective of the evaluative study is to determine the effectiveness, progress, and impact of the charter schools of Connecticut. Further, it is intended to provide objective, unbiased feedback to the schools, the Connecticut State Department of Education, and other stakeholders about the operations and effectiveness of the schools and the initiative.

The following more specific questions are central to the evaluation within the context, mission, and goals of each charter school and under the overriding goals of the study.

- ✔ To what extent are all students being served?
- ✔ To what extent are the stated specific goals and objectives of the schools being met?
- ✔ What unique and common shortcomings and barriers to meeting student needs can be identified?
- ✔ What successes and shortcomings in the development of the school governance procedures and policies exist or have been developed?
- ✔ What are the long-term (positive and negative) effects on students and parents that are associated with attending or sending children to a charter school?

Several supplemental questions are related to those above:

- ✔ What innovative and creative practices that lead to greater effectiveness or efficiency in meeting the needs of students and the operations of the school have been developed by the charter schools?
- ✔ What is the form and extent of parental involvement in the schools?
- ✔ What is the impact of the charter schools on the local school district(s), and what is the perception of the worth and merit of the charter school within the context of the broader community?
- ✔ What professional opportunities, benefits, and/or problems have educators encountered in their work in the charter schools?

✔ What major problems and barriers are commonly observed in the development of the charter schools during the evaluation period?

1.3 Major Tasks

This evaluation project is a longitudinal study, and the methodology was designed in recognition of the time frame of the project, the developmental nature of the charter schools (including the addition of new schools each year), and the availability and reasonableness of obtaining valid and reliable information from the schools. As with any newly developed entity and especially "brand new" schools, there is a limit to the extent to which the evaluation can and should intrude into the day-to-day operations. However, the schools were obligated to participate/cooperate with the evaluation; and the evaluation team was sensitive to the other responsibilities of the various charter school stakeholders, including administrators, teachers, and students. With these issues in mind and within the framework of the evaluation model, we developed the evaluation project around 13 major tasks.

Task 1 Organize the evaluation team

Task 2 Identify/confirm and plan technical assistance to be required by charter schools

Task 3 Identify and gather baseline information about the Connecticut charter schools and the components to be evaluated

Task 4 Define/confirm the uses of the evaluation and the users/stakeholders

Task 5 Develop collaborative relationships with schools, CSDE personnel, and appropriate others

Task 6 Define criteria, indicators, and procedures for collecting data to be used to evaluate each component

Task 7 Assess environmental/contextual factors that affect activities and outcomes

Task 8 Collect data about activities and outcomes

Task 9 Compile findings on an annual basis

Task 10 Obtain stakeholder feedback on preliminary findings and reports

Task 11 Provide formative feedback to schools and others who may benefit

Task 12 Compile interim and final reports at Years 3 and 5

Task 13 Conduct/facilitate metaevaluation

Technical Assistance

In addition, ongoing technical assistance has been provided to the charter schools in terms of evaluation and the development of a standard format for the required annual report of each charter school, with input from all charter schools and approval of CSDE. In collaboration with CSDE, the evaluation team and representatives of the charter schools developed a common annual report process for each school. The charter schools are required to submit an annual report to CSDE each August. Information for the schools' annual reports is derived from a number of sources, including locally prepared formal and informal documents and descriptive materials, data collected and summarized by the CSDE, and the results of various surveys and other data collection processes conducted by the evaluation team. The annual reports contain measurable objectives covering four areas: student academic performance, mission-related goals, viability of the school, and efforts by the school to reduce racial, ethnic and economic isolation. In past years, annual reports have been posted on the CSDE Website.

The WMU evaluation team provides technical assistance in the preparation of the annual reports by responding to questions regarding interpretations of data; reviewing draft forms of the annual reports; and providing feedback on all questions transmitted via telephone, email, or the regular mail services. The questions from the charter schools are most often specific to a specific school, but the team is cognizant of the need to be sensitive to the frequency of common questions. If they cannot be addressed on an individual basis, the topic or issue is addressed in the periodic workshops. In addition, the Traveling Observer provides informal technical assistance as she visits the schools. Ways to contact a member of the evaluation team are regularly announced in meetings with the school representatives and printed on various documents.

The evaluation team consists of the project director, Dr. Jerry Horn; the project manager, Dr. Gary Miron; and a traveling observer. Three persons have served as Traveling Observers for the project years: Dr. Dianne deVries, Ms. Metta McGarvey, and Ms. Jacqueline Kelleher. In addition, the WMU evaluation team has provided assistance as needed to fulfill the contractual obligations and the expressed needs of the charter schools in terms of evaluation and use of evaluation results. An ongoing metaevaluation of the project is being conducted by Dr. Kenneth McKinley of Oklahoma State University. In the metaevaluation process (evaluation of the evaluation), Dr. McKinley will use *The Program Evaluation Standards* (Joint Committee, 1994) as the standards of professional practice and quality. (A copy of these standards was included in the *School Self-Evaluation Kit* distributed to each charter school and designated CSDE personnel.)

To help the charter schools fulfill the requirement of submitting an annual report and the requirement that the evaluation team provide ongoing technical assistance on evaluation, the *School Self-Evaluation Kit* was designed and developed by WMU. The kit provides information about the procedures and methodologies being used in the Connecticut charter school evaluation process, the Program Evaluation Standards that should be used to measure the professional quality that all evaluations strive to meet, and general school evaluation and reporting techniques/strategies. Further, the kit contains copies of procedures and survey instruments and suggestions for a school portfolio that can be used as a guide for the continual self-evaluation of a charter school.

Technical assistance was provided to the charter schools in an informal/individualized manner during team visits to the schools, and in a more formal way through a series of 3-5 workshops during the first four years of the project. While some of the formal workshops during Year 1 were designed to meet the initially identified needs of the schools, the topics for Years 2, 3, and 4 were defined by CSDE and charter school representatives within the context of their needs and the parameters of the contractual arrangements. For example, a need for technical assistance in the areas of personnel (teacher) evaluation and student assessment via portfolios was identified. The evaluation team made arrangements for Dr. Renae Stetson of Texas Christian University to conduct a workshop on student portfolio assessment. Personnel from the WMU Evaluation Center and other persons who regularly collaborate with The Evaluation Center were also involved in the providing technical assistance.

Chapter Two
Methodology and Data Collection Procedures

Over the course of this five year evaluation, we have used mixed methods of data collection, including surveys, interviews, document reviews, focus group meetings, results of existing tests, direct observations, review of work samples and, as appropriate, school portfolio reviews and case studies. The updated data collection plan is found in Table 2:1. Changes from the original data collection plan were made in concert with designated CSDE personnel.

2.1 Schedule for Data Collection

Table 2:1 Plan for Data Collection *

Activities	Sample	Years of Activity
Student Surveys	One class at each grade level (grades 5 and above)	Years 1 and 3
Teacher Surveys	All teachers and staff working more than 15 hours per week	Years 1 and 3
Parent Surveys	The greater of 20 percent of the families or 25 per school	Years 1 and 3
Student School Climate Survey	One class at each grade level at each school (grades 5 and above)	Years 2 and 4
Teacher School Climate Survey	All teachers and staff working more than 15 hours per week	Years 2 and 4
Parent School Climate Survey	The greater of 20 percent of the families or 25 per school	Years 2 and 4
Student Interviews	10 per year	Years 1 and 2
Teacher Interviews	25 percent of all teachers	Years 1 and 3
School Administrator Interviews	All charter school administrators/directors	Years 1, 2, 3, 4
Community Stakeholder Interviews	5 per school community	Years 2 and 4
Local School Personnel Interviews	2 per community	Year 2
Focus Group Meetings with Parents	Minimum of 1 focus group with 5-8 parents per community	Years 1, 2, 4
Interviews with CSDE Personnel	Direct providers	Years 1, 2, 3, 4
Observations/Schools	All schools (classrooms, playgrounds, and other facilities)	Years 1, 2, 3, 4
Achievement Tests/Students	All schools	Years 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Work Samples/Students	10 per school, if available	Years 2, 3, 4
Review School Procedures, Policies, and Other Documents	All schools	Years 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

* As modified from original proposal by mutual agreement in Fall 1998.

2.2 Specific Methods for Data Collection

This section contains brief descriptions of the data collection methods utilized during the course of the study. Further details on these methods are included in the sections that contain the respective results.

Surveys

Four different surveys were used in the course of the study. Surveys developed by The Evaluation Center were administered to charter school teachers/staff, students, and parents/guardians. A school climate survey from the National Association of Secondary School Principals was also used. While the questions in the charter school surveys were targeted to each group (i.e., parents, students, and charter school staff), identical school climate surveys were administered to all three informant groups in the charter schools.

The charter school surveys were administered across all schools in the first and third years of the evaluation (i.e., spring of 1998 and spring of 2000). The School Climate Survey was administered in Years 2 and 4 (spring of 1999 and spring of 2001). Four new schools opened in the autumn of 1998, and both surveys were administered at these schools during the 1998-99 school year. Although not required in our contract, we assisted several school who wished to administer one or both of the surveys in off years, as well as in Year 5.

The fieldwork went smoothly, and all schools were prepared and eager to work with us. During the site visits, questionnaires were administered to students, teachers/staff, and parents/guardians. Interviews were also conducted, and documentation was collected about the school.

Below a brief description of the questionnaires and targeted informant groups is included as well as information about the timing of the administration of the questionnaires and the actual data collection process. Appendices A-G contain the specific items on the surveys used in this study as well as descriptive statistics.

Teachers/staff charter school survey. All teachers and school personnel who are involved with instruction, including administrative and professional support personnel, were asked to complete this questionnaire. After completion, the respondents were asked to enclose it in an envelope and return it to a designated person at the school. Teachers were instructed not to place their names on the questionnaire, although they were asked to check their names off a list so that we could trace and follow up with missing respondents. Since the completed forms were to be collected, sealed, and mailed to the external evaluator by a designated person at each school, ample assurance was given that the responses would be anonymous. A cover letter explained the purpose of the survey, and each teacher received an envelope in which to enclose the survey.

Student charter school survey. This questionnaire was used only with students in grades 5-12. This meant that a few schools that catered only to lower elementary grades were not included. Three classes of students were selected at each school. These questionnaires were administered by a member of the evaluation team, and all of the students in these classes were asked to complete a questionnaire.

The purpose of the survey and the manner in which the results would be used were explained to the students before they began completing the forms. Students in grades 7-12 could typically complete the questionnaires on their own, after initial instructions. More verbal instructions for individual items were provided to students in grades 5 and 6.

Parent/guardian charter school survey. Depending on the size of the school, between 25 and 35 families from each school were selected to complete the survey. Families were randomly selected from a roster of all students by a member of the evaluation team. Additional details regarding the sampling can be found on the evaluation Website <http://www.wmich.edu/evalctr/charter/ctcharter.html> in the document entitled "Instructions for Administering the Parent/Guardian Survey." A cover letter explained the purpose of the survey, and each parent received a self-addressed, stamped envelope in which to return the survey. School participation in this component of the study was optional during the first round of data collection in May 1999. This was because of the short space of time available before the end of the school year to administer the survey and conduct a thorough follow-up. During the second round of data collection, two dollars were enclosed in each envelope going home to selected parents (although in the third and fourth rounds of surveying, only one dollar was enclosed). This served as a means of expressing our gratitude for the time parents took in completing and returning the survey.

School Climate Survey for teachers/staff, students, and parents/guardians. This is a commercial instrument developed by the National Association of Secondary School Principals. The administration of this instrument was coordinated by the external evaluators or by a traveling observer who worked as part of the evaluation team. One advantage of the School Climate Survey is that national norms are available so that charter schools can compare how they rate compared with other public schools across the nation.

The summarized results from each survey were returned to each school for its own planning purposes. Additionally, a short report containing the responses to the open-ended questions were returned to the schools. When the survey results were returned, we also provided the schools with a primer to help them understand and interpret the results for their school.

Interviews and Site Visits

During the site visits when we administered surveys, as well as during other site visits, we conducted interviews with the directors and with other staff members. At some schools we also had the opportunity to meet with parents and community members. As on other occasions, the purpose of the visits was to collect information about innovative or unique aspects of the schools, as well as to inquire about evidence of success according to the school mission statement.

Document Review

The annual reports the charter schools prepared and submitted to the Connecticut State Department of Education in August/September each year were the primary sources of documentation regarding the operation and performance of the charter schools.

In an effort to be as unobtrusive as possible, we requested documentation already produced by the schools that would likely contain the information we wished to collect regarding each individual charter school. During site visits, we also asked for descriptive information/evidence about the school's success and its ability to fulfill its mission as well as any innovative or unique aspects of the school in terms of curriculum, instructional methods, or governance/operational aspects.

Analysis of CMT and CAPT Results

From the Connecticut State Department of Education web site, and from files and reports provided by CSDE we were able to obtain Connecticut Master Test (CMT) and Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) results pertaining to charter schools and their host districts. By host district, we are referring to the public school district in which the charter school resides. We entered and analyzed five years of CMT results and four years of CAPT results. Two study designs were used, both of which focused on gain scores relative to host districts.

2.3 Response Rates on Surveys

The purpose of our sampling was to build an accurate composite picture of the target population of staff, students, and parents across all charter schools in the state. We pieced together this picture by sampling representative groups of informants at each school (see Table 2:2). Our strategy in sampling teachers/staff was to receive a high response rate from all teachers/staff in the charter schools. For students, the strategy was to select three representative classes at each school. In many cases this involved sampling 100 percent of all the students at grade 5 or above. In all other cases, the three classes represented a large portion of all enrolled students.

Table 2:2 Sample Size and Response Rates on Surveys

	1997-98			1998-99			1999-00			2000-01		
	Target Pop.	Achieved Sample	Response Rate	Target Pop.	Achieved Sample	Response Rate	Target Pop.	Achieved Sample	Response Rate	Target Pop.	Achieved Sample	Response Rate
CHARTER SCHOOL SURVEYS												
Teachers/ Staff	136	136	100%	–	–	–	304	285	93.8%	–	–	–
Students	309	288	93.2%	–	–	–	807	741	91.8%	–	–	–
Parents/ Guardians	293	188	64.2%	–	–	–	425	230	54.1%	–	–	–
SCHOOL CLIMATE SURVEYS												
Teachers/ Staff	–	–	–	264	235	89.0%	–	–	–	327	285	87.2%
Students	–	–	–	684	606	88.6%	–	–	–	737	694	94.2%
Parents/ Guardians	–	–	–	406	209	51.5%	–	–	–	435	174	40.0%

Since one of the key purposes of the charter school reform is parental choice, parents are clearly one of the most important informant groups. Unfortunately, parents are also the most difficult group from which to collect information. Many other studies invest time and effort into sampling all parents but then invest little effort into follow-up. In order to achieve a representative sample, our strategy was to sample a smaller group of parents at each school and then work hard to obtain a high response rate from this randomly selected group. Either of the two approaches would likely have yielded a similar number of returned surveys, but from our experience we find that the parents who initially respond are either extremely critical or extremely positive about the school. In other words, a small, well-drawn sample is better than a large, poorly drawn sample, since the former is more likely to be representative of the target population. Table 2:2 illustrates the overall sample and response rate by informant group and year.

2.4 Data Analyses and Reporting

Quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analyzed according to professionally acceptable standards of practice. The survey results were scanned by machine in order to enter the quantitative responses to closed-item questions. After processing and scanning the surveys, the data were disaggregated and sorted by school. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data (i.e., largely frequencies, means, standard deviations). Templates were developed for reporting the results back to each school. After compiling profiles from the surveys, the results were formatted and printed. All the results were shared with the schools and with CSDE.

As the surveys were collected and returned to The Evaluation Center, all of the open-ended responses were typed up and recorded in a separate database with responses linked to school ID, role of informant, and question number. The written comments from teachers/staff, parents, and students were returned to each school. All comments were stripped of identifying information in order to assure the anonymity of the respondents.

Information from field notes, interviews, and from document review were entered into a relational database, allowing us to quickly review information on particular topics across all schools and data sources. This facilitated the organization of information and the analysis of these types of data. The collected data yielded information to help us make judgments about individual charter schools, groups of charter schools, and the charter school initiative as a whole. In all cases, the Program Evaluation Standards were followed in the conduct and operation of this study.

In recognition of the various stakeholder groups, decision makers, and interested parties, special efforts were made to communicate the procedures, findings, conclusions, and recommendations in understandable formats. In an effort to provide evaluative information to the various stakeholders, a Web site <http://www.wmich.edu/evalctr/charter/ctcharter.html> was established that contained information about the evaluation as well as copies of the data collection instruments and other fieldwork-related documentation.

Chapter Three
Development and Overview of the Connecticut Charter Schools

3.1 Approval of Charter Schools

Each year since 1996, the Connecticut State Department of Education has made available a "Charter School Application" booklet to interested parties and others with an interest and/or need to know about the requirements and process of gaining approval for a charter school. The opening two paragraphs of the 1997 version of this booklet provide a summary of the initiative in this state.

> Recognizing the need for improvement in our public schools, Connecticut responded to the ever growing interest in public school choice and charter schools by adopting charter school legislation. Connecticut's law, passed during the 1996 legislative session, responds to the unique concerns raised during several years of debate on the establishment of such schools. It was the belief of the legislature and governor that charter schools can prove to be catalysts in the restructuring of our public schools. Charter schools can serve as another vehicle in the creation of innovative and diverse educational settings for our students. The Educational Improvement Panel, a panel of broadly represented Connecticut citizens created in response to the Connecticut Supreme Court decision in *Sheff v. O'Neill*, saw charter schools as one vehicle in the reduction of racial isolation. This recommendation resulted in amendments to the charter school legislation which give preference to charter school proposals that reduce racial and economic isolation of students.
>
> Through a *charter* granted by the State Board of Education, a private entity or a coalition of private individuals is given the public authority to run independent public schools which are legally autonomous from the local school district. If developed properly, they can create opportunities for improved student learning and academic excellence for all students by allowing for flexibility in the design of each school's educational program without compromising accountability for success.

From the first (1996) solicitation of applications, the narrative in this booklet goes on to say that the ". . . State Board of Education received 29 applications from groups made up of teachers, parents, community members, higher education faculty, and private organizations from across the state. The Board chartered twelve schools, ten were state charter schools and two were local charter schools. Approval of these schools authorized the enrollment of 1,000 students in charter schools, the enrollment cap enacted by the legislature. During 1997 the legislature removed the cap but provided funding for 500 additional seats in 1998-99 which will allow for enrollment growth in the existing schools and some modest increase in new schools."

The 1997 booklet indicated that this offering may result in "two or three new state charter schools" and the "development or conversion of existing schools or programs into local charter schools." Further, this offering indicated that "Special emphasis will be placed on the development of high academic standards and improved educational achievement for students, and on proposals that seek to reduce racial and economic isolation of students."

In the 1998 application booklet, it was noted that ". . . seventeen charters had been granted (prior to this application period). Thirteen state charter schools and three local charter schools are serving 2,044 students throughout Connecticut. An additional local charter school is scheduled to open in the fall of 1999." It also stated that an important factor in the overall development of charter schools in Connecticut was that "state" charter schools are limited by the availability through the state government, i.e., enacted by the Connecticut General Assembly, while "Local charter schools receive funds directly from their sponsoring districts and thus do not rely on the state budget for funding."

Table 3:1 contains a listing of evaluation criteria and the point assignment for each criterion that were applicable in the first two years of the application process.

Table 3:1 Application Criteria and Criteria Point Assignment for the Initial Three Years (1996-1998)

Application Component		Total Points		
		1996	**1997**	**1998**
School Vision and Design				
-Mission and Vision -Quality of Educational Program	-Learning Objectives -Student Assessment	30	25	25
Strength of Organizational Effort				
-Description of Founders -Evidence of Support	-School Governance	10	10	10
Student Composition, Services, & Support				
-School Demographics -Admissions Policy & Criteria -Student Health & Welfare	-Special Needs Populations -Student Discipline Policies	20	15	15
School Viability & Administration				
-Human Resources Policies & Information -Transportation -Charter School Accountability	-Building Options -Financial Plan -Waiver Requests -Timetable	20	20	20
Priority School Districts		10	5	5
Higher Education Institution		10	5	5
Reduction of Racial, Ethnic, & Economic Isolation		–	10	10
Location at Work Site		–	5	5
Application is proposed for an unserved geographic location, age/grade level, or mission not previously addressed in existing charter schools		–	5	5
Total Points		100	100	100

Thus, under the Connecticut legislation and the applicable review process, 12 schools were approved and became operational in the first year (1997-98) of the Connecticut Charter School Initiative. (See Table 3:2). Over time, six additional schools were approved and became operational, while others have ceased to operate under the auspices of the CSDE.

3.2 Description of the Charter Schools

Growth of Connecticut Charter Schools

Altogether 18 charters have been granted. However, because 4 schools have closed and 2 have been converted to magnet schools, there are only 13 charter schools operating in Connecticut as of the 2002-03 school year. A variety of reasons can be cited to explain why the four schools have closed. The Coventry Science Center was not designated as a charter school after its first year of operation because it was essentially a "school within a school," and technically did not qualify as a separate charter school. Village Academy was closed in 1999 due to a variety of issues related to the operation and governance of the school. This school was fraught with internal and external problems almost from the beginning, and its closure probably could best be described as predictable and necessary. Ancestors closed in 2001 and Charter Oak closed in 2002. These latter two closures occurred when the schools decided not to seek renewal. Decreasing enrollments and performance levels at Ancestors were likely related to the decision not to seek renewal. The two schools sponsored by Hartford School District, Breakthrough and Sports Sciences, were converted to magnet schools in 2002. The schools willingly accepted this change of status because they would receive greater per pupil resources. Nationally, about 4 percent of the charter schools have been closed, while in Connecticut the figure is more than 25 percent, not including the two schools that converted to magnet schools.

The schools have been distributed throughout the state and are found in large cities as well as the small towns: Bridgeport, Fairfield, Hamden, Hartford, Manchester, New Haven, New London, Norwich, South Norwalk, Stamford, Waterbury, and Winsted. For the most part, it is fair to say the charter schools in Connecticut are established in areas where performance levels are an issue of concern. Additionally, many of the charter schools serve students that have not performed well in the traditional public schools. Table 3:2 provides a complete listing of all schools that were operational for some period

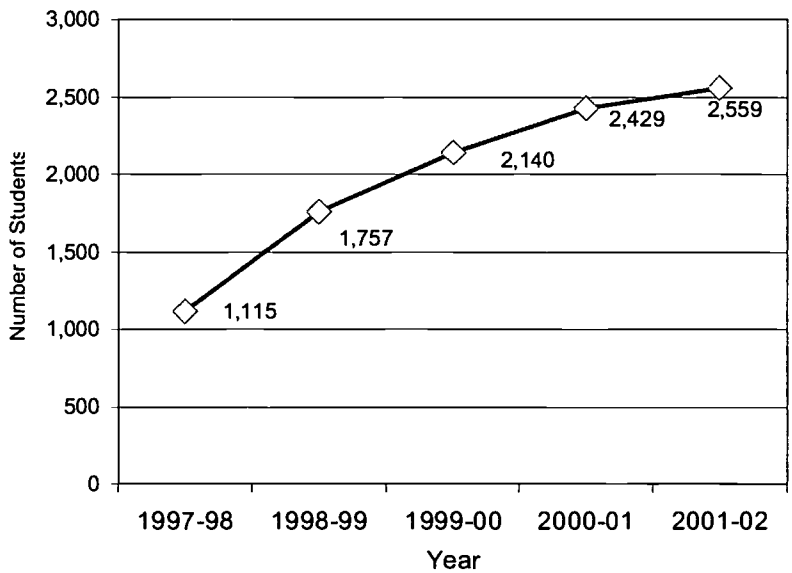


Figure 3:1 Total Enrollment in Charter Schools by Year

of time from academic years 1997-1998 through 2001-02. This table also contains information on enrollment in each school over time.

The growth of charter schools in Connecticut has been quite slow compared with other states. Expansion in the number of state charter schools, as well as the number of students enrolled in these schools, is limited by the funds allocated by the state legislature for charter schools. Figure 3:1 illustrates the enrollment growth of the charter schools over the last five years.

Table 3:2 Summary of All Charter Schools Operational, 1997-98 to 2001-02

School Name	Location	Dates of Operation	Grade Levels	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02
Ancestors Community School	Waterbury	1997-2001	9-12	67	101	45	39	–
The Bridge Academy	Bridgeport	1997-	9-12	162	170	160	174	175
Common Ground	New Haven	1997-	9-12	66	81	88	100	100
Coventry Science Center	Coventry	1997-1998	9-12	34	–	–	–	–
Explorations	Winsted	1997-	9-12	45	63	55	59	60
Integrated Day C.S.	Norwich	1997-	K-8	175	220	240	264	286
Interdistrict School for Arts and Communication	New London	1997-	6-8	40	90	114	96	115
Jumoke Academy	Hartford	1997-	PreK-6	150	145	188	230	250
Odyssey Community School	Manchester	1997-	6-12	44	74	105	105	105
Side by Side Community School	Norwalk	1997-	PreK-8	140	160	180	209	210
Sports Sciences Academy	Hartford	1997-2002	9-12	110	204	268	295	295
Village Academy	New Haven	1997-1999	K-4	82	–	–	–	–
Breakthrough Charter School	Hartford	1998-2002	Prek-8		133	150	169	169
Brooklawn Academy	Fairfield	1998-	6-8		61	69	72	69
Charter Oak Preparatory Academy	New Britain	1998-2002	6-9		101	100	119	120
Highville Mustard Seed Charter School	Hamden	1998-	PreK-8		154	222	261	300
Amistad Academy	New Haven	1999-	5-8			84	130	197
Trailblazers Academy	Stamford	1999-	6-8			72	107	108
				1,115	1,757	2,140	2,429	2,559

Note: New Beginnings Family Academy was opened in the autumn of 2002. This school is located in Bridgeport and serves 142 students in grades K-3.

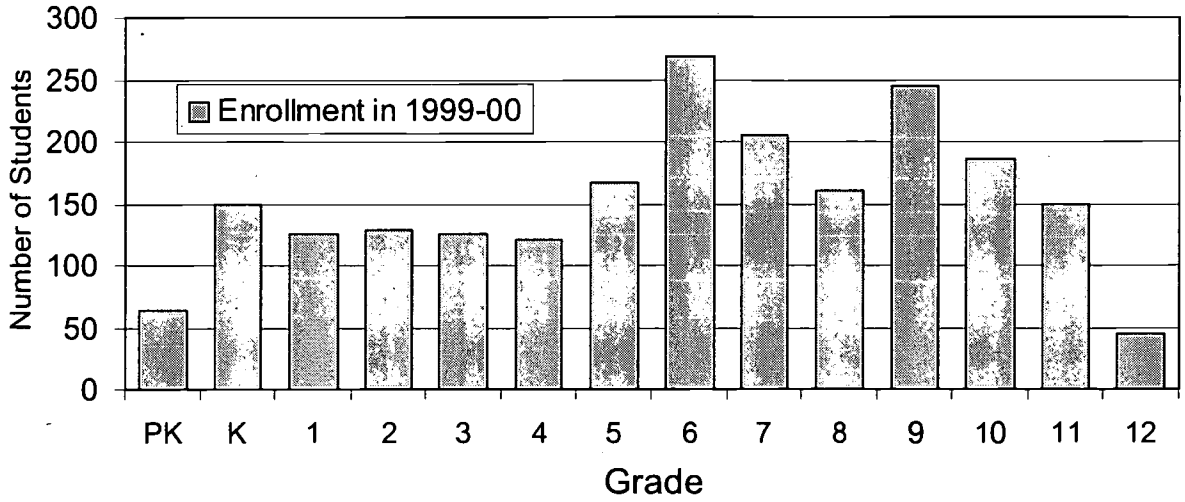


Figure 3:2 Total Enrollment in Connecticut Charter Schools by Grade Level, 1999-00

Grade Levels Served in Connecticut Charter Schools

The Connecticut charter schools cater to students at elementary, middle school, and high school levels. In fact, the enrollment in these schools is rather evenly distributed across the grades as illustrated in Figure 3:2. In some states, when there is a set per-pupil foundation grant, there is a tendency for charter schools to concentrate on the lower elementary level, because the average per-pupil costs are lower at the elementary level than at the secondary level. This has not been the case in Connecticut, however.

There is considerable variability in enrollment among the charter schools of Connecticut. These differences are evident in the enrollments (from 45 to 268 in 1999-2000), the facilities in which they are located, the founding members/coalition, and the missions of the schools. While the enrollment in the Sports Science Academy is more than 250 and 5 times the enrollment of the smallest school (Ancestors Community School), all Connecticut charter schools have small enrollments compared with charter schools in other states. There has been a concerted effort to limit the enrollment sizes, which are effectively controlled by the availability of resources allocated for the schools.

At the same time, there is an even distribution of grade levels served across all 16 of the operational schools with 5 serving basically elementary school children (some of these also provide or intend to provide instruction in middle school grades), 6 focusing on the junior high/middle school grades, and 5 reflecting a high school emphasis.

Founding Groups

While a wide array of stakeholder groups are represented among charter school founders in Connecticut, it might be more important to consider the mix of groups within the coalitions. Examples of the make-up of several founding coalitions are shown below.

Example A: teachers, parents, community activists, civic and business leaders, attorneys, scholars, and students

Example B: social service agencies, business leaders, and teachers

Example C: teachers, higher education institutions, parents, and business representatives

Example D: teachers

Example E: teachers, community organizations, and higher education institutions

Example F: parents and educators

Example G: community agency, local school district, and local government

Facilities

The locations of the buildings in which the schools are located likely reflect the interests of founding members and the availability of suitable space. Particularly during the first year, there was only a short period of time to locate and renovate space for instructional and administrative use. Schools now occupy space that recently served as a bank, abandoned factory, "mothballed" parochial school, community agency meeting space, office building for health service organization, environmental education center, etc. Federal start-up funds, awarded through the CSDE to the charter schools, provided much of the money that enabled these schools to emerge almost overnight in a physical sense.

The physical locations of the schools within the communities they serve range from downtown office and commercial areas to the fringe of environmentally protected natural areas. Some schools are in rented facilities that test the teachers' mettle to create a minimally productive learning environment, and others are in facilities that have been nicely remodeled and are attractive and seemingly effective learning environments. Probably the most notable differences in these school facilities and what one would expect to find in a public school are the lack of spacious and well equipped playgrounds, gymnasiums and sports facilities, auditoriums and other specialized rooms/laboratories, convenient and adequate parking, and automobile access roads.

Teachers and Staff in Connecticut Charter Schools

Teachers, school directors, and other personnel are critical elements in any school and particularly a school that is new in every respect, i.e., conceptual framework, facilities, students, parents, etc. In various locations in other parts of this report, we describe the makeup, roles, perspectives, and opinions of these key stakeholders. In many respects, they are brave pioneers who have in many cases made substantial sacrifices in terms of salaries, career options, and their own time to pursue dreams and personal and professional goals that they think would never be realized in a traditional public school setting.

As the evaluation team visited their schools, conducted interviews, and engaged in formal and informal discussions with charter school staff in technical assistance workshops, it was clear that for the most part they were physically tired but not discouraged. Teachers were observed working classrooms and preparing instructional materials for the next day long after the children had departed the schools.

School directors or administrators often assume multiple roles, i.e., administrator, teacher, public relations officer, etc., and they are challenged by the heavy demands of accountability that accompany the use of public funds. To some, this was viewed as a mere inconvenience, while others voiced disdain at the many requirements for completing forms and sorting through the large amount of materials that they received from various agencies. In essence and until other arrangements or decisions are made, a charter school is like a local school district, and that includes receiving and responding to many of the same kinds of official requests/demands.

Chapter 4 examines the role of charter school staff and provides a thorough description of the teachers and staff as well as a summary of their levels of satisfaction and perceptions of their schools.

3.3 School Missions

Charter schools provide choices for parents and an opportunity for teachers to choose learning communities that match their interests and skills. The choice premise of the charter school concept assumes that teachers choose schools according to the school's mission and that this, in turn, makes the schools more likely to achieve positive student outcomes. In this section, we describe the diverse nature of the mission statements across the schools and then explore two general questions related to school mission: (i) how familiar are teachers/staff, parents, and students with the mission of their school? and (ii) are charter schools able to fulfill their missions?

The charter schools have a wide variety of mission statements that reflect each school's unique goals and objectives. The mission statement illustrates the vision for the school, explains why it exists, and describes what it hopes to accomplish. The development of a mission statement by the founding group provides an opportunity to build consensus and a common vision. In some schools, the mission statement has been revised over time. Below we have included statements from the school missions that illustrate their diverse nature:

- to challenge our students with a rigorous academic program and to teach them to act as effective public citizens
- to provide an alternative educational experience for students who are unable to succeed in a traditional high school environment
- to provide a diverse group of middle school students who are at risk of academic failure with innovative academic, social skill building and community service opportunities in their learning process
- to foster intellectual and personal development through interaction in a small learning community designed to prepare students to contribute effective and responsible leadership
- to provide a college preparatory curriculum designed to overcome the problems found in the inner city
- to provide the community with a PreK-8 school with a global studies curriculum, which will incorporate the arts and foreign language as a means to teach the basic skills as well as the Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS)

- to prepare children to compete in the global marketplace through sound basic education founded on early intervention, parental involvement
- to create a multiracial learning environment for urban and suburban children and their families that will promote social justice
- to create a safe, supportive, structured school community

Awareness of Mission Statements

Parents' survey responses indicate they are very aware of their school's mission and that they think the mission is being met. Ninety-one percent of parents reported they were aware of their school's mission and slightly more than 80 percent of parents thought their school followed the mission well or very well, similar to previous years' findings. Students, on the other hand, were not as familiar with their school's mission. In 1999-00, 49.4 percent of student respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were aware of their school's mission, while 33.1 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 17.4 percent neither agreed nor disagreed. On a 5-point scale (1=low and 5=high) the mean score was 3.23 with a standard deviation of 1.63 (n = 667). A comparison to 1997-98 responses, which indicated 67.8 percent students agreed or strongly agreed that they were aware of their school's mission,11 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 21.2 percent neither agreed nor disagreed, indicates a decrease in student awareness of school mission (see Table 3:4).

Table 3:4 Student Awareness of School Mission

	Are you aware of the mission of your school?		
	Disagree	*Neither Agree Nor Disagree*	*Agree*
1997-98	11%	21.2%	67.8%
1999-00	33.1%	17.4%	49.4%

Ability to Fulfill Missions

In the 1999-00 sample, more than three-quarters of the teachers and staff indicated that they thought that the mission of their schools was followed "well" or "very well." Only 4 percent of the teachers and staff indicated that they did not think their school mission was being followed (see Table 3:5).

Table 3:5 Teacher/Staff Perceptions of the Extent to Which the School Mission is Being Followed

	To what extent is the mission being followed by the school?		
	Not very well	*Fair*	*Well & very well*
1997-98 (School=10; N=122)	2.6%	10.4%	86.9%
1999-00 (School=10; N=117)	6.4%	15.6%	78.0%
1999-00 (School=16; N=267)	**4.1%**	**19.9%**	**76.0%**

In order to compare change over time, we compared the results from the 10 schools from which we collected similar data in both 1997-98 and 1999-00. Table 3:5 includes the findings of this comparison as well as the results for all 16 schools in 1999-00. Surprisingly, the results indicates that a smaller proportion of the teachers and staff thought the school was following its mission after nearly three years of operation compared with the school's first year of operation.

Teachers/staff were also asked to rate their level of satisfaction with their school's mission statement and their ability to fulfill the stated mission (see Table 3:6). Approximately 39.1 percent of the staff indicated that they were "very satisfied" with the mission of their school, while another 39.8 percent indicated that they were "satisfied" with it. While the teachers/staff were generally quite satisfied with the schools' missions, they were not equally convinced that the schools could fulfill them. Nearly 14.3 percent of the staff indicated that they were "dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied" with their school's ability to fulfill its mission, while 22.3 percent were uncertain. Still, 43.2 percent of the staff indicated that they were "satisfied" with their school's ability to fulfill its mission, and 20.1 percent were "very satisfied" or certain that their school could do this.

Table 3:6 Teachers' and Staff's Level of Satisfaction with the Mission of the School in 1999-00

N=285	*Very dissatisfied*				*Very satisfied*	*Mean*	*STD*
	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*		
School mission statement	1.1%	2.9%	17.2%	39.8%	39.1%	4.13	0.87
Ability of school to fulfill its stated mission	3.3%	11.0%	22.3%	43.2%	20.1%	3.66	1.02

The difference between teachers'/staff's levels of satisfaction with the school mission and their perceptions of the school's ability to fulfill the mission have decreased slightly since 1997-98. This might indicate that there is less difference between the "ideal school" represented by the mission statement and the "actual school" represented by the item addressing the school's ability to fulfill its mission. It will be interesting to continue to trace the difference between these two indicators over time. After several years of operation, one would expect to find a positive trend in teacher/staff belief in their school's ability to fulfill its mission; however, we did not find this trend in the data. Appendices A and E contain the complete staff survey results from 1997-98 and 1999-00, respectively.

3.4 Financial Conditions of Charter Schools

Clearly, the cost of starting a new school and arranging for funding in timely fashion has been and continues to be a major challenge for the charter schools. A part of the early problems dealt with start-up costs and the late approvals of the charters. Further, the inexperience of many directors (and their boards) in dealing with public monies was a major factor in some situations. As personnel in local and state funding agencies and schools have gained knowledge and experience in this area, the problems have lessened. The first two reports from the national study of charter school finance (Nelson, Muir, & Drown, 2000; 2002) provide a more thorough and complete review of revenues and expenditures in charter schools.

While improvements are apparent in the data reported by charter schools in their annual reports during the last few years, there are still inconsistencies in the financial data reported in the annual reports. In this section, we analyzed the financial data reported by charter schools in their annual reports. Specifically, we examined the financial data reported in their 1999-00 annual reports, which include unaudited data for the 1999-00 school year and some estimated data for the 2000-01 school year. We calculated average revenues and expenditures across all schools and made comparisons between the 2 local charter schools and the 14 state charter schools. We also compared expenditures between the charter schools, their host districts, and the state. Given that the data reported by charter schools are unaudited, and given the apparent inconsistencies in the data reported by charter schools, the reader should consider the results as tentative.

Per Pupil Revenues

The charter school legislation indicates that charter schools should receive 105 percent of foundation-level aid per student, while local charter schools negotiate their funding with the local board. Per pupil funding for state charter schools was $6,000 in 1997-98, which was slightly more than the state foundation grant level, which was $5,775 for the same year. Local district schools also receive local funding to supplement the state foundation grant so the charter schools received less than their noncharter public school counterparts. In 1998-99 the per-pupil state foundation grant was increased to $6,500 for state charter schools, in 2000-01 this was increased further to $7,000 per pupil. The state has also assisted the charter schools with some resources for facilities.

The two local charter schools (both in Hartford) receive funding from the district in which they are located. The total per-pupil amount these two schools receive has been substantially higher than what the state-sponsored charter schools received. In-kind services provide the largest difference in revenues between the local and state charter schools, since the Hartford school district has covered the building costs for its two local charter schools. Interestingly, when these two schools converted to magnet schools in the summer of 2002, they were ensured that total revenues would be even higher than what they received as locally sponsored charter schools.

While there have been noticeable increases in revenues for charter schools, many charter school administrators/leaders are still concerned that there is insufficient funding for charter schools, particularly for facilities.

After Year 1, we made the following statement, which was largely based on a comprehensive review of the schools' annual reports for Year 1.

> The quality and specificity of the information reported by each school was extremely diverse. There appears to be considerable confusion about the categories of funding specified in the annual report, i.e, local, state, federal, and other. The inconsistent pattern of reporting sources and amounts of funding undermined a thorough analysis across the 12 schools and can misrepresent actual finances. The lowest overall reported budget was $266,000, as compared with the highest reported budget of $2,200,776.

Since then, the quality of the reporting of financial data has improved considerably. Table 3:7 presents a summary of the revenues available for charter schools for the 1999-00 school year.

Table 3:7 Average Total School Revenues and Per Pupil Revenues for Charter Schools

Source	1999-2000 (unaudited) Total Dollars	Percent of Budget by Source	Per Pupil Dollars	Per Pupil (Std. Deviation)
State Enrollment-Based Grant	$917,237	72.0%	$6,826	(1,054)
CT Competitive Grants	$32,536	2.6%	$224	(387)
Federal Start-Up Grant	$94,233	7.4%	$863	(476)
Federal Competitive Grants	$32,443	2.5%	$137	(257)
Federal Entitlements	$23,816	1.9%	$151	(156)
Local District(s) In-Kind	$39,976	3.1%	$299	(301)
Private Sources	$134,555	10.6%	$1,369	(2,659)
Total	$1,274,796	100%	$9,869	(2,746)

Source: Data was derived from 1999-00 annual reports submitted by the charter schools to CSDE.
Note: The state enrollment-based grant also includes the enrollment-based grants from the two local charter schools, even though this might be considered local district or in-kind revenues.

These figures are likely to be higher than reported since a number of schools reported no revenues in categories in which they should have received revenues. For example, while all schools should be receiving some local district resources, at least in-kind resources for special education and transportation, 4 schools reported that they had received no local in-kind resources. In the 1997-98 annual reports, 5 of the 12 schools reported no local or in-kind revenues. The 1997-98 annual reports allowed for greater detail regarding financial data. In terms of local finance, the specific sources at that time included local clubs, grants from banks, loans from banks, special funds for renovating a building, business pledges, and private donations. The total local sources of finance for those schools that reported receiving such funding in 1997-98 ranged from a total of $1,100 to $885,203. Two schools reported conducting fund-raising activities that yielded between $2,000 and $3,000. Of course, several citations of income were in the form of loans and not grants or other nonrepayable types.

In the future, the schools will need to be instructed more carefully about what should be reported under local finance, since some of the information provided can be very misleading. Several schools reported sources of finance in the "other sources" category that are similar to some of the specific sources of money reported by other schools in the "local funding" category.

All charter schools can apply for competitive grants administered by the State Department of Education and, in accordance with federal law, for any federal funds available for the education of pupils attending public schools. Many of the charter schools did not appear to do well with the competitive grants. Seven of the 16 schools reported no revenues for state competitive sources, and 11 schools reported no revenues in terms of federal competitive sources. On the other hand, only 4 charter schools reported receiving no federal entitlement funds. The federal entitlement grants include the national school lunch program, Title I, Title II grants, Title IV grants, and Title VI grants. The federal start-up grants ranged from $35,866 to $122,480 in 1997-98 and from $25,816 to $146,467 in 1999-00. The average per-pupil resources from the federal start-up monies was $863 in 1999-00. This compares favorably with other states.

The average amount of private sources of revenues was $1,369 per pupil which is quite high. Unfortunately, the amount of private revenues varied extensively among the schools (i.e., the standard deviation was $2,659), and 2 schools reported no private revenues. In terms of the proportion of total revenues from various sources, the charter schools received 74.6 percent of their revenues from state sources in 1999-00, while federal sources accounted for 12 percent of the revenues and private sources provided 10.6 percent of the total revenues. Revenues from local sources accounted for the remaining revenues.

Per-Pupil Expenditures

In terms of total per-pupil expenditures, the charter schools spent an average of $9,028 per pupil in 1999-00. This is slightly lower than the per-pupil expenditures by the host districts during the previous year ($9,339), but higher than the state average during the previous year ($8,373). Table 3:8 contains the average per-pupil expenditure figures for the charter schools, their host districts, and the state. Because the expenditure differences between the 2 local charter schools and the other state-sponsored charter schools are large, we have presented the results separately for these two groups of charter schools. The 2 local charter schools reported an average per-pupil expenditure of $9,227, which is only slightly more than for the other 13 charter schools for which we had data. However, the data reported by 1 of the 2 local charter schools appeared incomplete.

The charter schools spend less on salary and benefits than their host districts or the state as a whole. However, they spend more on instructional supplies and equipment and more on purchased services than do their host districts and the state.

Table 3:8 Average Per-Pupil Expenditures for Charter Schools, Host Districts, and the State

Expenditures by Object	Salaries	Benefits	Instructional			Purchased Services	Other	Total
			Sup-plies	Media	Equip-ment			
13 State Charter Schools*								
Host District(s)*	$5,984	$1,247	$198	$26	$67	$1,310	$309	$9,141
Charter Schools **	$5,373	$812	$546	$55	$164	$1,968	$78	$8,997
2 Local Charter Schools								
Host District(s)**	$7,341	$1,385	$237	$69	$59	$998	$536	$10,625
Charter Schools ***	$6,569	$326	$641	$171	$460	$96	$965	$9,227
All State and Local Charter Schools								
Statewide Average for K-12 Districts** 1999	$5,817	$1,020	$178	$39	$69	$945	$305	$8,373
Host District(s)**	$6,165	$1,265	$203	$32	$66	$1,268	$339	$9,339
Charter Schools ***	$5,533	$747	$559	$70	$203	$1,718	$196	$9,028

Source: Data was derived from 1999-00 annual reports submitted by the charter schools to CSDE.
* There should be data for 14 state charter schools. However, we did not include the data for Brooklawn because of apparent flaws in the data and because it was not broken down by per-pupil figures.
** Statewide average and district figures reflect 1998-1999 fiscal year figures.
*** Charter school financial information is for the 1999-2000 school year and was unaudited at the time the schools provided the information.

Expenditures by Function

Tables 3:9 and 3:10 illustrate the per-pupil expenditures by function and compare the charter schools with their host districts and the state. While Table 3:9 contains the average per-pupil costs in dollars, Table 3:10 illustrates the distribution of the expenditures across the five predetermined functions: instructional programs, pupil and support services, administration, plant services, and building and debt.

Table 3:9 Per-Pupil Expenditures by Function for Charter Schools, Host Districts, and the State

Expenditures by Function	Instructional Programs		Pupil and Instructional Support Service		Adminis-tration		Plant Services		Buildings and Debt	
	Mean	STD	Mean	STD	Mean	STD	Mean	STD	Mean	STD
Statewide Average for K-12 Districts* 1999	$5,365	(110)	$796	(796)	$861	(861)	$846	(846)	$766	(766)
Host District(s)*	$6,019	(701)	$795	(217)	$916	(330)	$937	(162)	$927	(684)
Charter Schools **	$5,156	(1,025)	$1,073	(1,217)	$1,348	(596)	$932	(557)	$582	(626)

Source: Data was derived from 1999-00 annual reports submitted by the charter schools to CSDE.
* Statewide average and district figures reflect 1998-1999 fiscal year figures.
** Charter school financial information is for the 1999-2000 school year and was unaudited at the time the schools provided the information.

Per pupil expenditures vary considerably between schools. Table 3:9 also contains the standard deviation for each figure. The standard deviation is much higher for the charter schools than for the host districts and state. In part this is because of the smaller number of schools in the group. For the most part, the larger standard deviations for the charter schools illustrates the extensive variation among the 16 charter schools.

Table 3:10 Distribution of Per-Pupil Expenditures by Function

Expenditures by Function	Instructional Programs	Pupil and Instructional Support Service	Adminis-tration	Plant Services	Buildings and Debt	Total
Statewide Average for K-12 Districts* 1999	62.1%	9.2%	10.0%	9.8%	8.9%	100%
Host District(s)*	62.7%	8.3%	9.5%	9.8%	9.7%	100%
Charter Schools **	56.7%	11.8%	14.8%	10.2%	6.4%	100%

Source: Data was derived from 1999-00 annual reports submitted by the charter schools to CSDE.
* Statewide average and district figures reflect 1998-1999 fiscal year figures.
** Charter school financial information is for the 1999-2000 school year and was unaudited at the time the schools provided the information.

The charter schools spend substantially less on instructional programs than do their host districts and the state. At the same time, the charter schools spend more on pupil and instructional support and on administration. The data also indicate that the charter schools are spending less per pupil on their buildings and debt (i.e., an average of $582, standard deviation of $626). Many schools reported that they were spending no money on buildings and debt, while a few schools left this item blank in their annual report. Therefore, this figure is likely to be a low estimate, and the actual figure is likely to be similar to or greater than for the comparison groups.

Chapter Four
Teachers and Staff at Connecticut Charter Schools

A description of the background characteristics of charter school teachers is included in this chapter. Also included are an overview and discussion of the working conditions and professional opportunities for teachers. There are noticeable variations in teachers' qualifications and years of experience among the Connecticut charter schools. More striking, perhaps are the differences in qualifications and experience between charter school teachers in Connecticut and charter school teachers in other states. Because of a number of unique regulations in Connecticut, the teaching force in the charter schools is more experienced and better paid than charter school teachers in other states.

We administered the Charter School Survey to teachers and staff in all schools in 1997-98 and 1999-00. In 1998-99, we administered the nationally normed School Climate Survey. The Charter School Survey focused on satisfaction with various aspects of the school, background characteristics of staff, reasons for choosing to work at the charter school, and a comparison of initial expectations with current experience.

We have presented the results in this chapter in a variety of ways. First of all we present survey results for all 16 charter schools in operation during the 1999-00 school year. This presents the best picture of the overall charter school initiative.

Comparing the 12 schools that were in operation in 1997-99 with the 16 schools that were open in 1999-00 would not allow us to examine change in the schools over time; since 2 of the original schools closed and 6 new schools were opened in 1998 and 1999. Therefore, when we examine change over time, we use both a trend analysis and a cohort analysis. The trend analysis refers to a comparison of the 12 schools that were in operation in 1997-98 with the 16 schools operating in 1999-00. The cohort analysis present the results from the 10 schools that were in operation in both 1997-98 and 1999-00. In order to exclude any teachers/staff that were not included in the 1997-98 sample, this cohort comparison includes only teachers and staff who reported working for 2 or more years in the 10 cohort schools in 1999-00. This essentially allows us to compare the same group of charter school staff at 2 points in time. Changes in survey results are, therefore, likely to be due to change in the school rather than a change in the persons completing the surveys.

A number of items on the teacher/staff surveys are of particular importance to classroom teachers, such as status of certification, years of experience, etc. On these items we include only staff members who have indicated they are classroom teachers. Therefore, in the presentation of results, "teachers and staff" refer to all sampled teachers and staff, and "teachers" refer only to classroom teachers.

4.1 Description of Sampled Teachers

A total of 285 teachers and staff from the 16 charter schools completed surveys in 1999-00. The 285 respondents consisted of 53 percent teachers, 14.7 percent teaching assistants, 6.3 percent specialists, 7 percent school administrators, and nearly 18 percent in a variety of other positions. These percentages were similar to those recorded in 1997-98 when 136 teachers and staff were sampled. The sampling frame included all staff involved with instruction as well as key administrative staff. The response rate was 93.8 percent.

For the cohort analysis there were 113 teachers and staff in the 10 schools in 1997-98 and 115 teachers and staff in the 1999-00 sample that reported working 2 or more years at the school.

Teacher Certification

The majority (86 percent)of sampled classroom teachers in 1999-00 indicated that they were certified to teach in Connecticut (it is important to note that the State Department of Education accountability plan requires that all teachers who are not currently certified possess an appropriate certificate such as a durational shortage area permit or long-term substitute authorization form in order to teach in a charter school). Of the remaining teachers, 1.3 percent were certified in another state, 12 percent were working to obtain certification, and 0.7 percent were neither certified nor working to obtain certification. These figures, when compared with 1997-98 findings (89.9 percent certified teachers), indicate a slight decrease in the number of certified teachers working in Connecticut charter schools (see Table 4:1). Although this information can be considered indicative of certification levels, it should not be taken as conclusive. For example, of those teachers who indicated they were working to obtain certification, some may be working for a second certification; however, because the surveys were anonymous, clarification on this issue is not possible from survey data and follow-up would be difficult.

Table 4:1 Teacher Certification Status Among Charter School Classroom Teachers Only

		Certified in Connecticut*	Certified in another state	Working on certification	Not certified & not working on certification
Trend	1997-98 (School=12; N=69)	89.9%	1.4%	8.7%	0.0%
	1999-00 (School=16; N=151)	**86.0%**	**1.3%**	**12.0%**	**0.7%**
Cohort	1997-98 (School=10; N=61)	91.8%	1.6%	6.6%	0.0%
	1999-00 (School=10; N=64)	92.2%	0.0%	6.3%	1.5%

A comparison of the cohort group over time indicates a slight increase (0.4 percent) in certified teachers in Connecticut charter schools between 1997-98 (91.8 percent) and 1999-00 (92.2 percent). The results are not surprising, since a number of the teachers who were working on their certification in 1997-98 likely obtained their teaching certificate by 1999-00. The increase in teachers who indicated they were not certified and not working on certification, from none in 1997-98 to 1.5 percent in 1999-00, may be explained by the teacher turnover or by increases in total teachers employed.

Connecticut charter schools, on the whole, have a higher rate of certified teachers than charter schools in other states. For example, in 1999-00 the percentage of teachers that were certified in Illinois was only 71 percent (Nelson & Miron, 2000), and in Pennsylvania it was 79.3 percent (Miron & Nelson, 2000).

Teachers/staff who participated in 1999-00 were fairly evenly divided among grade levels taught with approximately 28 percent teaching grades K-5, 23 percent teaching grades 6-8, and 25 percent teaching grades 9-12. The remainder of the teachers/staff respondents indicated that the grade level was not applicable. Most teachers (85 percent) reported that they were teaching in their area of certification, with only 7 percent teaching a subject in which they were not certified, similar to previous findings.

Teacher Age

Demographic information collected from Connecticut charter schools reveals a shift toward younger teachers. The age distribution among the Connecticut charter school teachers in 1999-00 indicates 40.3 percent in their 20s, 24.2 percent in their 30s, 22.1 percent in their 40s, and 13.4 percent 50 or older.

A comparison of the cohort group from 1997-98 to 1999-00 indicates that there is a moderate trend toward younger teachers. Most notable is the increase in teachers in their 20s from 26.7 percent in 1997-98 to 34.9 percent in 1999-00 (see Table 4:2).

Table 4:2 Age of Classroom Teachers in Connecticut Charter Schools

		20s	30s	40s	>50s
Trend	1997-98 (School=12; N=69)	25.0%	32.4%	23.5%	19.1%
	1999-00 (School=16; N=149)	**40.3%**	**24.2%**	**22.1%**	**13.4%**
Cohort	1997-98 (School=10; N=60)	26.7%	31.7%	23.3%	18.3%
	1999-00 (School=10; N=63)	34.9%	23.8%	22.2%	19.0%

The age distribution of teachers in Connecticut in 1999-00 is similar to charter schools in Pennsylvania, although Illinois charter school teachers were found to be noticeably older and the charter school teachers in Michigan were found to be substantially younger.

Prior Teaching Experience

Most teachers in charter schools indicate that they have prior experience in traditional public schools. In 1999-00, teachers indicated average experience of 4.9 years in the public schools, 0.43 years in private schools, 0.16 years in parochial schools, and 1.8 years in charter schools. The teachers had

an average combined total of 7.29 years of experience in education. These data indicate a trend toward less experienced teachers, which is not unexpected in light of the trend toward younger teachers. In comparison, the cohort study indicates an overall increase in teaching experience in both the charter school and total years categories (see Table 4:3).

Table 4:3 Years of Teaching Experience for Classroom Teacher in Various Types of Schools

		Years of Teaching Experience				
		Public School	Private School	Parochial School	Charter School	Combined Average Length
Trend	1997-98 (School=12; N=69)	6.52	0.52	0.06	0.94	8.04
	1999-00 (School=16; N=152)	**4.90**	**0.43**	**0.16**	**1.80**	**7.29**
Cohort	1997-98 (School=10; N=61)	5.57	0.59	0.00	1.00	7.23
	1999-00 (School=10; N=64)	6.23	0.28	0.00	2.63	9.19

A closer examination of prior teaching experience provides some information regarding why teachers may seek employment at charter schools and how experience may affect attitudes toward the school.

When asked to rank the importance of factors related to why teachers/staff sought employment at the charter school, on a scale of 1 (not important) to 5 (very important), teachers/staff with fewer than two years in the current school indicated a significantly higher mean for the factor "difficult to find other position"($M=2.18$, $p<.05$) than did those who had two or more years at their current charter school ($M=1.84$).

Likewise, when asked to indicate level of agreement, on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), to statements about their charter school, teachers/staff with fewer than two years more strongly agreed with the statement "lack of student discipline hinders my ability to teach"($M=3.28$, $p<.05$) than those with two or more years in the current school ($M=2.96$).

These findings seem to indicate that new teachers/staff are more likely to be motivated to join charter school faculties because of difficulty finding other positions than are teachers/staff with more experience . Moreover, less experienced teachers/staff are more likely to express concern with student behavior and discipline, which is not unexpected.

When comparing age and experience data, it is not surprising to find that Illinois charter school teachers, on average, had slightly more experience (9.1 years) since they were older. In Pennsylvania and Michigan, the average years of experience for classroom teachers was found to be lower than in Connecticut.

Formal Education Level of Classroom Teachers

Charter school teachers in 1999-00, although younger and less experienced, appear to be well qualified. More than 42 percent had a BA as their highest college degree, 50 percent had an MA, 6.7 percent had a 6 year certificate, and 0.7 percent had a Ph.D.

The trend data indicate a moderate increase in teachers with BA degrees and a slight decrease in teachers having completed an MA degree. The cohort study also suggests a moderate increase in teachers with BA degrees, with those holding an MA remaining the same, and a decrease in 6 year certificates (see Table 4:4).

Table 4:4 Formal Education Levels of Connecticut Charter School Classroom Teachers

		Highest degree held by classroom teachers			
		BA	MA	6 year certificate	Doctorate
Trend	1997-98 (School=12; N=69)	38.2%	52.9%	8.8%	0%
	1999-00 (School=16; N=150)	**42.7%**	**50.0%**	**6.7%**	**0.7%**
Cohort	1997-98 (School=10; N=60)	36.7%	53.3%	10.0%	0%
	1999-00 (School=10; N=64)	40.6%	53.1%	6.3%	0%

A larger percentage of the classroom teachers in Connecticut have completed graduate degrees than charter school teachers in Illinois, Michigan, or Pennsylvania. The number of charter school teachers with bachelor's degrees in Connecticut was similar to Pennsylvania (44.1 percent) and Illinois (41.9 percent). In Michigan, there was a large concentration of classroom teachers with only bachelor's degrees.

Teacher/Staff Ethnicity and Gender

In 1999-00, the racial/ethnic data for teachers/staff indicated 66.8 percent were white, 19.8 percent black, 12.7 percent Hispanic, and just under 1 percent were Asian or Pacific Islanders. No Native American/American Indians were among the charter school staff. Gender data indicated 71 percent of the teachers/staff were female and 29 percent male (see Table 4:5).

In the trend study, the percentage of white teachers/staff decreased from 1997-98 to 1999-00 while the percentage of Hispanic teachers/staff increased. Female teachers/staff maintained a clear majority over the same period of time with the ratio between female and male increasing slightly in favor of females. Considering that charter schools tend to serve elementary grades more than upper grades and females account for a larger proportion of elementary teachers than do males, these ratios are expected.

Table 4:5 Ethnic Background and Gender of Connecticut Charter School Teachers and Staff

		Ethnicity				Gender	
		White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/Pacific Islanders	Male	Female
Trend	1997-98 (School=12; N=136)	70.1%	20.5%	8.7%	0.8%	30.2%	69.8%
	1999-00 (School=16; N=268)	**66.8%**	**19.8%**	**12.7%**	**0.7%**	**28.6%**	**71.4%**
Cohort	1997-98 (School=10; N=115)	73.0%	17.4%	8.7%	0.9%	27.4%	72.6%
	1999-00 (School=10; N=113)	75.2%	15.0%	9.7%	0%	28.2%	71.8%

The data, however, also reflect an increase from 12 to 16 schools and almost twice as many teachers/staff. It seems that charter schools may have recruited, or attracted, slightly more male and white teachers/staff in 1997-98 than in 1990-00; however, the total number of teachers/staff employed may also be an important factor to consider when examining changes in gender and/or ethnicity.

In the cohort study, there is a slight increase in white teachers/staff and a slight decrease in black teachers/staff. The gender ratio remained similar over the years.

4.2 Working Conditions for Teachers and Staff

The school building, or facility, is a major factor when considering working conditions for teachers/staff. The facilities for most of the charter schools in Connecticut were not designed to be schools; therefore, a number of modifications and makeshift arrangements have been necessary. To the credit of both charter school teachers and administrators, the charter school staff have exhibited a remarkable sense of patience and understanding with complaints seldom heard regarding the physical facilities. However, there are a number of instances where complaints would be easily justified. Unsatisfactory teaching facilities including classrooms with too little space; inadequate work and private space for teachers; unattractive exteriors of buildings; and unsatisfactory, largely unusable school grounds are a few examples of facility problems facing many charter schools.

An analysis of survey data indicated that in 1999-00, 38.7 percent of teachers/staff were satisfied or very satisfied with the school buildings and facilities, and on a separate item 34.9 percent agreed or strongly agree that physical facilities were good.

The trend study data indicate a slight increase in teachers'/staff satisfaction with the school buildings/facilities from 1997-98 (35.3 percent) to 1999-00 (38.7 percent). In addition, a moderate increase from 1997-98 (23 percent) to 1999-00 (34.9 percent) in agreement that the physical facilities were good is indicated. Since each school is unique in the facilities it occupies and on-site observations indicate considerable diversity, this response pattern is not unreasonable.

In the cohort study, a comparison between 1997-98 and 1999-00 responses reveal a flat change in teacher satisfaction with school buildings (36.9 percent and 36.2 percent), but a more noticeable change in teachers' satisfaction with the quality of the facilities (23.7 percent and 27.0 percent) (see Table 4:6). This would seem to indicate an effort to improve their facilities.

Table 4:6 Level of Satisfaction With Working Conditions Among Teachers and Staff

		Satisfaction with School Building & Facilities	*Satisfaction with the Quality of the Facilities*
Trend	1997-98 (School=12; N=136)	35.3%	23.0%
	1999-00 (School=16; N=275)	**38.7%**	**34.9%**
Cohort	1997-98 (School=10; N=118)	36.9%	23.7%
	1999-00 (School=10; N=111)	36.2%	27.0%

Other factors related to working conditions include availability of funding to support instructional resources. Teachers'/staff responses to items related to financial resources have not changed much over the years of this study. In both 1997-98 and 1999-00, more than half of teachers'/staff responding indicated they were satisfied with the resources available for instruction, although nearly two-thirds of the teachers/staff indicated that they thought financial resources at their school were not sufficient. Teachers'/staff satisfaction with instructional resources seems to indicate that schools may be placing the highest priority on the use of available resources for instructional purposes. This priority has been confirmed in site visits and interviews, although some teachers expressed strong concerns about the lack of textbooks. Lack of new textbooks might be more directly related to the limited amount of time available to purchase textbooks during the first year; however, resistance to the immediate purchase of textbooks may also be related to the perceived detrimental effect they might have on the use of creative approaches for instruction and on shaping the mission/emphasis of the school as each school's curriculum evolves.

Salary and Job Security

Working conditions are also affected by issues related to financial resources, salary and fringe benefits, class size, teaching loads, parking, and communications with administrators and other teachers. The 1999-00 data indicate that a majority of teachers and staff (43.7 percent) were satisfied with their salary. In terms of schools' future security, more than 1/3 of teachers and staff (37.8 percent) indicated that they perceive a secure future at the school, 36.2 percent said they think their future is insecure, and the rest were neutral.

The trend study findings indicate that teachers/staff had little change in the level of satisfaction with their salaries, 42 percent in 1997-98 to 43.7 percent in 1999-00, while the level of dissatisfaction increased from 18.2 percent in 1997-98 to 23.7 percent in 1999-00. Although teachers were generally more satisfied with their salaries, there was a large decline (14.7 percent) in teachers'/staff perceptions of a secure future for the school. While a majority of teachers and staff (52.5 percent)

indicated in 1997-98 that their future at their particular school was secure only 37.8 percent of the teachers/staff indicated that were secure about their future in 1999-00 (see Table 4:6). It is not clear if this insecurity is due to uncertainty about the charter school reform initiative or due to the role of the school in its particular community and its ability to live up to its mission.

The cohort study data indicate a decrease in the percentage of teachers/staff satisfied or very satisfied with salaries from 45.1 percent in 1997-98 to 43.7 percent in1999-00, while the percentage of teachers/staff dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with salaries increased almost 10 percent from 15.9 percent in 1997-98 to 25 percent in1999-00. It is interesting to find that there is also a large decline (16.7 percent) of teachers/staff in the cohort group who indicated they were secure about their school's future, from 51.3 percent in 1997-98 to 34.6 percent in 1999-00. At the same time, the percentage of teachers/staff who were insecure about their school's future increased from 25.7 percent to 39.6 percent between 1997-98 and 1999-00 (see Table 4:7). This drop in perception of job security may be explained—in part—by the renewal process that was taking place in 2001 for many of the schools.

Table 4:7 Level of Satisfaction With Salaries and Job Security

		Teacher/Staff satisfaction with salaries			*Teacher/Staff perception of future at the school*		
		Dissatisfied	*Neutral*	*Satisfied*	*Insecure*	*Neutral*	*Secure*
Trend	1997-98 (School=12; N=136)	18.2%	39.7%	42.0%	27.2%	20.3%	52.5%
	1999-00 (School=16; N=275)	**23.7%**	**32.7%**	**43.7%**	**36.2%**	**26.0%**	**37.8%**
Cohort	1997-98 (School=10; N=113)	15.9%	38.9%	45.1%	25.7%	21.0%	51.3%
	1999-00 (School=10; N=112)	25.0%	31.3%	43.7%	39.6%	25.7%	34.6%

The difference in satisfaction levels with salaries between the trend study and the cohort study may be reflective of the large overall increase in total number of teachers/staff and the increase in the number of new teachers/staff being hired with less experience. Meanwhile, the decrease in teachers/staff who were secure about the future of their school may be reflective of many of the charters being up for renewal soon and increased levels of oversight for all charter schools.

It is interesting to note that Connecticut charter school teachers/staff were overall more satisfied with their salary than their peers in Pennsylvania (29.5 percent satisfied), Illinois (36.8 percent satisfied), or Michigan (39.3 percent satisfied). The distribution of teachers/staff who indicated they were dissatisfied was also considerably lower in Connecticut than in Pennsylvania (32 percent) and Illinois (38.6 percent); but similar to Michigan.

In 1999-00, Illinois teachers (50.5 percent) seemed to be most secure about their future at their charter school, while Pennsylvania (42.7 percent) and Michigan (40.8 percent) teachers/staff were slightly more secure than Connecticut teachers/staff.

One other area that speaks to working conditions concerns work duties. Survey results from both 1997-98 and 1999-00 indicate that most teachers/staff, 55.4 percent and 44.7 percent respectively, have many noninstructional duties in addition to their teaching load. In the site visits and interviews, there were some complaints about this and some concerns about burn-out; but on the whole, the teachers and staff were quite aware of the large commitment they needed to make to get the school "up and running" and were willing to make this commitment.

Intending to Return Next Year

Intentions to return to their positions for another year provide some indication of the level of satisfaction that teachers/staff have for their jobs. In 1997-98, 84 percent of teachers/staff indicated they did plan to return to their jobs the next year. In 1999-00, 79 percent of the teachers/staff indicated that they did plan to be teaching in that particular school next year. This indicates that over time, a slightly larger proportion of teachers do not intend to return the following year. While teachers/staff may not plan to return due to personal reasons not related to their experiences at their school, others have shared professional reasons for not planning to return. For example, a female teacher from one school expressed that she would not be returning next year due to "frustration with lack of supplies and professional support—mostly the lack of professional support and guidance." In another school, a female specialist explained that she would not be returning since "there is not enough money in the budget to keep a full-time physical education teacher."

Teacher/Staff Initial Expectations vs. Current Experience

A number of identical items were used in the surveys to examine and compare the charter school staffs' "initial expectations" as opposed to "current experience." Responses from these items indicated that in both 1997-98 and 1999-00, teachers/staff were content with their school, satisfied with the working conditions, and generally pleased with the instructional services they provide. It is interesting to note, however, that there are (statistically) significant differences between what was initially expected and what the educators were currently experiencing.

In 1997-98, teachers'/staff expectations in terms of the student performance, quality of instruction, and operation of the school were significantly higher than what they were currently experiencing. When comparing paired means for 1997-98 data, all but three items showed significantly reduced scores, indicating that the expectations were much higher than what was currently being experienced. Specifically, the three items that showed only small declines when comparing expectations and actual experience were as follows: "The school will have small classes," "The school will support innovative practices," and "Teachers will be autonomous and creative in their classrooms."

In 1999-00, teachers'/staff expectations in terms of student performance, parent involvement and communication, and leadership were higher than what they were currently experiencing. Teacher/staff results in 1999-00 (see Appendix E, question 16) show, in a comparison of paired means of expectations and current experiences, that all items showed significantly reduced scores, indicating that the expectations were much higher than what was experienced.

In the trend study, the biggest difference in 1997-98 (12 schools) between initial expectation and current experience were on the following items:

1. Support services (mean difference [md]=.48)
2. Students will have access to computers and other new technology (md=.42)
3. There will good communication between the school and parents (md=.38)
4. Students will receive sufficient individual attention (md=.31)
5. Parents will able to influence the direction and activities at the school (md=.31)

The biggest difference in 1999-00 (16 schools) between initial expectation and current experience were on the following items:

1. The school will have effective leadership and administration (md=.39)
2. Student will be eager and motivated to learn (md=.38)
3. There will be good communication between the school and parents (md=.35)
4. Parents will be able to influence the direction and activities at the school (md=.33)
5. Teachers will be able to influence the steering and direction of the school (md=.28)

The trend study seems to indicate that the hot issues for teachers/staff are having good leadership, motivated students, parental involvement, and teacher empowerment.

In the cohort study we see a similar pattern. The biggest differences in 1997-98 (10 schools) between initial expectations and current experience for the cohort group were on the following items:

1. Support services (md=.51)
2. Students will have access to computers and other new technologies (md=.43)
3. There will be good communication between the school and parents (md=.36)
4. Parents will be able to influence the direction and activities at the school (md=.29)
5. Students will receive sufficient individual attention (md=.28)

The biggest difference in 1999-00 (10 schools) between initial expectation and current experience were on the following items:

1. Student will be eager and motivated to learn (md=.50)
2. Parents will be able to influence the direction and activities at the school (md=.44)
3. The school will have effective leadership and administration (md=.38)
4. There will be good communication between the school and parents (md=.36)
5. The achievement levels of students will improve (md=.31)

These differences, in both years, do not infer that teachers were not satisfied with these aspects of their school; rather, they infer that they had very high expectations in these areas that did not correspond with their current experience. The findings also indicate that teachers/staff have shifted their needs from services to products. For example, in 1997-98, three of the biggest differences between initial expectations and current experience were support services, access to computers, and students receiving sufficient individual attention. In 1999-00, the biggest differences between initial expectations and current experiences were in students being eager and motivated to learn and improvement in the achievement levels of students. In addition, parental involvement and the need for an effective leader/administrator has remained a hot issue over the years. Obviously, service issues over the years are no longer the hot issues for teachers/staff. Instead, the focus is on the product–student learning and achievement.

Because these questions are actually nonparametric in nature, the margin statistically ($p = .05$) homogeneity test was used to compare the paired distribution of responses. Significant reductions in expectations were found on all items. It is interesting to note, however, that a comparison of responses to these items in past years does not indicate any sort of trend developing; therefore, teacher/staff expectations and experiences are different each year.

This may indicate that teachers' initial expectations and current experiences in charter schools may depend on the individual school context rather than the statewide factors. It also may indicate that teachers had very high expectations over the years that did not correspond with their experiences, especially in the areas of students' individual attention, parents' involvement and communication, students' technology resources, and school leadership.

4.3 Professional Opportunities for Teachers

One of the great promises in the enabling/authorizing legislation for charter schools across most states is in the area of increased professional opportunities for teachers. According to Nathan (1996, p. 16),

> The public system often is unnecessarily bureaucratic and unresponsive, like many other monopolies. Sometimes administrators seem aloof or disinterested. Sometimes labor-management agreements seem to discourage committed teachers or parents.

Interviews were held with experienced teachers in which they were asked why they chose to teach in a charter school. Their responses often indicated that they were attempting to escape the perceived rigid and regulated environment of the public schools or seeking greater opportunities to participate in school governance, to have greater control over the curriculum, and to be more free to develop curriculum and choose instructional styles

The most common form of professional development mentioned was participation in workshops and conferences. Charter schools seemed to place particular emphasis on professional development activities related to student assessment in 1999-00. This may be a result of the level to which charter

schools are held accountable for student achievement. This emphasis on student achievement can be compared with traditional public schools, which tend to have professional development activities that focus more on pedagogy than on student assessment (NCES,1998). Below we have included a representative sample of some of the professional development activities in which the teachers and staff participate:

- Three of our teachers were BEST trained, two attended school law conferences, one went to two days of computer network training, one went to a CT Writing Project conference, and our administrator went to a five day charter school conference in Washington, D.C.
- Teachers attended in-service training sessions each month. The topics covered were identified during summer training sessions. Three staff persons participated in workshops sponsored outside of the system.
- Less experienced teachers were paired to team-teach with veteran teachers as much as possible. Each teacher also serves as a guidance teacher. Teachers take courses and workshops outside of school as time allows. All teachers attend governing board meetings and sit on board committees.
- Bi-weekly early dismissal for professional development gave the staff an additional eight hours per month for collaborative staff development.
- Negotiation Workshop at Connecticut College, Responsive Classroom, Math Workshops, Grant Writing Workshop, IDEA Workshops, AMISTAD Workshops, Dance Workshops through Connecticut College and Garde Arts, CMT Holistic Scoring Workshop, National Charter School Conference, Monthly Charter School Director Meetings, School Law in CT.
- Our budget this year enabled our staff to go to a number of workshops, presentations, and to take college courses this summer. These workshops, institutes, and presentations were in areas of interest that in some cases also related to the courses we offered.
- Teachers have been given greater autonomy with respect to decisions that affect the educational outcomes of the school.
- Visits to other schools

In the teacher survey in 1997-98, teachers were asked to respond to the question, "There will be/are new professional opportunities for teachers." Seventy-four percent of teachers expected there would be new professional opportunities, while 23.2 percent thought this statement would be partially true. In 1999-00, 68.6 percent and 28.4 percent of teachers thought this statement would be true or partially true, respectively. With regard to current experiences, teachers/staff experienced a somewhat less positive environment for professional opportunities, with 61 percent agreeing and 31.4 percent indicating partial agreement in 1997-98 and 53.3 percent and 35.4 percent indicating agreement or partial agreement in 1999-00.

Generally speaking, charter school teachers believe that professional development is a high priority for their schools. Nevertheless, several teachers expressed that opportunities were limited due to

lack of funding or organization. Many teachers noted that team building has become an important aspect of their professional development.

An important question is whether teachers have a sense of greater professional opportunities or if their participation in these professional opportunities translate to better teaching and improvements for children. This, of course, is a very complex question and one that cannot attribute a cause and effect relationship with any reasonable degree of certainty.

Charter schools offer their staff many different professional development activities. We have categorized the professional development activities that the schools identified into six areas including educational technology for instruction, methods of teaching in the field, student assessment, curriculum, cooperative learning, and others. A representative sample of professional development activities in which the teachers and staff participated during the 1999-00 school year is presented below.

Educational Technology for Instruction

- ❑ Technology-based professional development
- ❑ Classroom use of technology
- ❑ Technology training

Methods of Teaching in the Field

- ❑ How to succeed in algebra
- ❑ Welcoming grammar into the classroom
- ❑ A writing program that works

Student Assessment

- ❑ Improve CAPT scores using performance-based learning and assessment
- ❑ Using performance-based and portfolio assessment in the classroom
- ❑ How to prepare students for the interdisciplinary section on the CAPT
- ❑ CAPT test preparation
- ❑ Science CAPT training
- ❑ SDE training on assessment and accountability

Curriculum

- ❑ Update school curriculum
- ❑ Algebra curriculum
- ❑ Developing a multicultural curriculum

Cooperative Learning

- ❑ Collaborative team teaching
- ❑ Learning cooperative learning teaching strategies

Other

- ❑ Strategies for coping with block scheduling
- ❑ School violence
- ❑ School evaluation
- ❑ Legislative training
- ❑ Improving teacher evaluation and hiring practices
- ❑ Issues in transition planning for students with disabilities

Professional development activities in some charter schools included team activities as well as workshops or conferences. For example, one school's professional development included (a) literacy team meetings daily for 45 minutes, (b) primary/intermediate team meeting daily for 45 minutes, (c) team-building activities, and (d) mentor/collaborative teaming activities. Charter schools reported a variety of approaches to professional development: specific activities and topics include those listed below:

- ❑ Less experienced teachers team-teaching with veteran teachers as much as possible.
- ❑ All teachers attend governing board meetings and sit on board committees.
- ❑ Bi-weekly early dismissal for professional development to provide staff an additional eight hours per month for collaborative staff development.
- ❑ Workshops on a variety of topics including responsive classrooms, math - NCTM, grant writing, IDEA 97, dance, art, CMT holistic scoring, school law
- ❑ National Charter School Conference
- ❑ Monthly charter school director meetings
- ❑ Visits to other schools.
- ❑ Technology-based professional development.
- ❑ Curriculum development
- ❑ Strategies for block scheduling
- ❑ Strategies for improving test scores
- ❑ Assessment portfolios
- ❑ Guest speaker presentations on problem solving, planning around curriculum, instruction, and assessment issues
- ❑ STEP (Systematic Training for Effective Parenting) training

4.4 Summary

There are noticeable variations in teachers' qualifications and years of experience among the Connecticut charter schools. In 1997-98 and 1999-00, we administered the Charter School Survey to teachers and staff in all schools. This survey focused on satisfaction with various aspects of the

school, background characteristics of staff, reasons for choosing to work at the charter school, and a comparison of initial expectations with current experience.

The analysis strategies we have used have allowed us to develop a composite picture of the current status and working conditions of charter schools teachers and staff in Connecticut. The cohort analyses have also allowed us to examine change over time. Teachers/staff are predominantly female and white, even though most of the charter schools are located in urban, multiethnic settings. They were slightly younger in 1999-00 than in 1997-98, largely due to new schools being added to the group with younger teachers but they were more evenly divided between those with bachelor degrees and master degrees. According to survey responses, 86 percent of the classroom teachers were certified in 1999-00.[1] On average, the teachers had 7.3 years of teaching experience. In terms of certification, qualifications and experience, the Connecticut charter school teachers compare favorably with other states. Also satisfaction with salaries and benefits among teachers is higher in Connecticut than what we have found in other states. Nevertheless, we found that teachers in Connecticut charter schools are not as secure about their future at their schools as they were in 1997-98 and Connecticut charter schools teachers were more uncertain about their employment than were teachers in Pennsylvania and Illinois.

In addition, the survey data provided information regarding teachers'/staffs' initial expectations when first hired and what they had actually experienced working in a charter school. The findings indicated that teachers had much higher expectations when first hired compared with their actual experience. In 1997-98, teachers'/staffs' expectations in terms of student performance, quality of instruction, and operation of the school were significantly higher than what they experienced. In 1999-00, teachers'/ staffs' expectations in terms of student performance, parent involvement and communication, and leadership were still higher than what they were currently experiencing. Some changes were noted in items related to expectations and current experience. For example, in 1997-98 teachers indicated differences between expectations and experience in areas related to products such as support services and technology and communication with parents; in 1999-00 teachers had much higher expectations for teachers and parents to influence the schools' direction and for effective leadership than they experienced.

A greater number and quality of professional opportunities were among the promises of the charter school initiative across the country and something that the 1997-98 teachers expected. In 1999-00, 68.6 percent thought this would be true as compared with 74 percent in 1997-98. A slightly lower percentage of teachers (53.3 percent) perceived that this was actually happening in 1999-00. In reviewing documents and interviewing school personnel, it is clear that a broad spectrum of professional development opportunities is offered by the schools or made available to teaching personnel, including a focus on educational technology for instruction, methods of teaching in the field, student assessment, curriculum, developing a multicultural curriculum, and cooperative learning.

---

[1] It is important to note that the State Department of Education accountability plan requires that all teachers who are not currently certified possess an appropriate certificate such as a durational shortage area permit or long-term substitute authorization form in order to teach in a charter school.

Chapter Five
Students and Parents in Connecticut Charter Schools

5.1 Characteristics of Sampled Students

A total of 741 charter school students from 16 schools were sampled in 1999-00, compared with 288 students from 11 schools in 1997-98. Rather than conduct a random sample of all enrolled students grades 5 and above, an attempt was made to sample 2 or more classes in each school or 1 class at each grade level. More students from the lower grades were included in the survey, with 63.2 percent representing grades 5 to 7 and 36.7 percent from grades 8 to 12, because charter schools focus on students in elementary through middle school (see Appendices B and F contain further information about the student samples as well as detailed results from the student surveys).

Recruitment and Selection of Students

The most common form of recruitment is through advertisements and flyers. Many charter schools also had open houses and set up booths at fairs to promote their school and recruit families. Some schools reported that they required application letters and interviews before enrollment. All schools have lotteries when needed, and many schools indicated that they allowed priority to siblings.

School Attended Prior to Charter School

Charter school students come primarily from traditional public schools (76 percent), 6.5 percent from private or parochial schools, and 12.5 percent fell into the "other" category which largely meant they were home schooled or did not attend school (for example, Kindergarten students did not previously attend school). Table 5:1 illustrates that precharter school enrollments have changed somewhat since 1997-98; with slightly more students coming from private or parochial schools, and a larger percent either not attending formal schooling or attending another charter school or being home schooled. It is interesting to note that close to 84 percent of the students indicated they have maintained friendships with students from their previous school.

Table 5:1 School Type Prior to Enrolling in a Charter School (As Reported by Parents)

	Public school prior to charter school	Private or Parochial school prior to charter school	Other (i.e., home school, other charter school, did not attend school, & other)
1997-98	80.9%	6.5%	12.5%
1999-00	76.0%	7.3%	16.8%

Student Gender and Ethnicity

The distribution of students by gender was fairly even, although Bridge had noticeably more girls and Ancestors, Sports Sciences, Explorations, Charter Oak, Trailblazers, and Odyssey had more boys. The data obtained from survey results in 1999-00 indicate a slightly higher percentage of boys (50.6 percent), than girls (49.4 percent) overall in the charter schools. The gap has decreased from the 1997-98 school year when survey results indicated that 43.7 percent of students were girls and 56.3 percent were boys. These figures largely corresponded with data presented in the schools' annual reports.

Minorities were highly represented in the charter schools in 1999-00 with 41 percent black, 26 percent Hispanic, 1.1 percent Asian or Pacific Islander, and 4 percent Native American Indians. Of particular note is the decrease in white students since 1997-98 from 41 percent to 28 percent, while minorities increased from 59 percent to 73 percent (see Table 5:2). This was largely due to the addition of four new urban schools, and not a shift in demographics within the original schools.

Table 5:2 Distribution of Students by Race/Ethnicity

	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/Pacific Islander	Native Am. Indian
1997-98	41.1%	30.7%	26.1%	0.4%	1.8%
1999-00	27.5%	41.1%	26.3%	1.1%	4.0%

Table 5:3 provides a breakdown by ethnicity/race for all three informant groups (teachers/staff, parents, and students) and includes total enrollment in the state's public schools during the 1998-99 school year to allow for comparison of student enrollment statewide to overall charter school enrollment. Hispanic parents appear to be underrepresented in our sample even though surveys in Spanish were made available for bi-lingual families or parents whose first language was Spanish.

Table 5:3 Sampled Teachers/Staff, Parents, and Students by Race/Ethnicity

	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/Pacific Islander	Native Am. Indian
Sampled teachers/staff (N=285)	66.8 %	19.8%	12.7%	0.7%	0.0%
Sampled parents (N=227)	41.3%	40.9%	16.0%	0.9%	0.9%
Sampled students (N=280)	27.5%	41.1%	26.3%	1.1%	4.0%
Total enrollment in Connecticut public schools during 1998-99*	71.2%	13.6%	12.4%	2.6%	0.3%

* Most recent enrollment data from CDE; *Connecticut Education Facts 1998-99.* Connecticut State Department of Education <http://www.state.ct.us/public/der/datacentral/edfacts>

5.2 Characteristics of Sampled Parents

Between 25 and 30 families were randomly selected for participation in the survey with one parent from each sampled family asked to complete and return the form. More than 80 percent of the responding parents were females. Table 5:4 contains data that describe the household types in terms of single parent or two-parent households. In 1999-00, 60.6 percent of the sampled households were two parent/guardian households, and 39.3 percent were from single parent households. In 1997-98, a larger percentage of the sampled households were two-parent/guardian households. The proportion of minorities in the parent sample was lower than in the sample of students.

Table 5:4 Distribution of Families by Household Type

	Parent Household Types	
	Single parent household	Two parent household
1997-98	28.9%	71.0%
1999-00	39.3%	60.6%

Household Income and Education

The estimated annual household income varied considerably, with the largest groups of informants having household incomes less than $40,000 (55 percent) and a nearly equal proportion with incomes higher than $40,000 (20.9 percent had household incomes between $40,000 and $59,000, 17.7 percent had household incomes between $60,000 and $99,999, and 6.4 percent had incomes larger than $100,000). In comparison with 1997-98, the percentage of annual household income below $40,000 increased from 44.5 percent to 55 percent. Among the sampled parents, 8.8 percent did not complete high school, 19.7 percent completed high school, 37.7 percent took only some college level courses, 11 percent had a college degree, 8.8 percent had taken graduate level courses, and 14 percent had a graduate or professional degree. In comparison with 1997-98, parent education levels of charter school students in1999-00 have decreased: 40 percent of parents had a bachelor's degree or higher in 1997-98, compared with 34 percent of parents in 1999-00 (see Table 5:5).

Overall, the background characteristics of families attracted to charter schools have changed over time. Between the 1997-98 and 1999-00 school years, charter schools attracted more families with lower household incomes and lower levels of formal education for parents. Also there was an increase in the percentage of single family households.

Table 5:5 Household Income and Level of Education for Sampled Parents

	Household Income			Parent Education					
	< $40,000	$40,000-$59,999	> $60,000	Less than high school	High school	Less than 4-year of college	BA degree	Graduate courses, no degree	Graduate degree
1997-98	44.5%	28.0%	27.5%	6.4%	22.5%	31.6%	16.6%	10.7%	12.3%
1999-00	55.0%	20.9%	24.1%	8.8%	19.7%	37.7%	11.0%	8.8%	14.0%

Parent Volunteering

Considering most charter schools have mission/goal statements that involve high levels of parent involvement, it was interesting to find that the majority of parents reported that they did not volunteer at all or had limited involvement volunteering at their school. However, a smaller proportion of the parents reported volunteering quite extensively. In 1999-00, 47.5 percent of the parents reported that they did not volunteer at the school, 32 percent reported that they volunteered between 1 and 3 hours per month, 9 percent of the parents volunteered between 4 and 6 hours per month, and 11.3 percent 7 or more hours per month. Over the years, parent volunteer activities did not change much except for a decline of 5 percent in those who volunteered 12 hours per month (see Table 5:6).

Table 5:6 Amount of Time Parents Volunteer at Charter School Per Month

	Did not volunteer	1-3 hours	4-6 hours	7-9 hours	10-12 hours	>12 hours
1997-98	45.9%	28.6%	9.2%	2.7%	3.2%	10.3%
1999-00	47.5%	32.1%	9.0%	4.1%	1.8%	5.4%

Distance to Charter School

The average distance from students' homes to a charter school was 4.78 miles, while the average distance to the nearest applicable traditional public school was 2.18 miles. Over the years, there was not much difference in the average distance to a charter school. In most instances where parents live outside the district of the charter school, parents have had to provide transportation. However, on the whole, the busing arrangements provided by the school district in which the charter school lies improved over time and was functioning in a satisfactory manner according to most charter school directors.

5.3 Expectations and Satisfaction of Parents and Students

From the onset of the charter school movement, some proponents have argued that satisfaction is the only factor that should be considered in an evaluation of a school or the initiative itself. This position is largely based on the notion that people know and will choose what is best and, in this case, it is the educational choice for children and youth. While some children and youth may have some input into this choice, certainly at the elementary school level it is parental choice.

Others will argue that satisfaction is but one factor that should be considered in judging the worth and merit of an object, practice, or activity. Certainly, there is concern about how public monies are spent and what value is derived from this use. With this in mind, we surveyed parents and students during Years 1 and 3. In Tables 5:7 and Table 5:8, we selected specific questions that are considered to be most directly related to "satisfaction" and summarized the responses across all schools by year and by respondent group, i.e., parents and students.

Table 5:7 Summarized Parental Responses Related to Satisfaction for Years 1 and 3*

Item	Year 1		Year 3	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Students feel safe at this school	4.38	0.99	4.41	0.87
This school has high standards and expectations for students	4.32	0.92	4.27	1.15
I am satisfied with the instruction offered	3.98	1.02	4.05	1.10
This school has good administrative leadership	3.98	1.22	4.13	1.17
I am satisfied with the school's curriculum	3.95	1.04	4.02	1.12
This school is meeting students' needs that could not be addressed at other local schools	3.94	1.18	3.84	1.30
Teachers and school leadership are accountable for student achievement/performance	3.92	1.15	4.00	1.18
This school has been well received by the community	3.85	1.09	3.87	1.16
Too many changes are occurring at this school	2.25	1.20	2.63	1.43

*1= Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree

Table 5:8 Summarized Student Responses Related to Satisfaction for Years 1 and 3*

Item	Year 1		Year 3	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Teachers and administrators know me by my name	4.57	0.90	4.51	0.95
My teacher is available to talk about academic matters	4.23	1.10	4.08	1.17
The grades I receive reflect what I think I deserve	3.99	1.29	3.93	1.28
This school is a good choice for me	3.99	1.32	3.65	1.43
I am learning more here than at the previous school	3.82	1.35	3.81	1.39
The school building is clean and well maintained	3.78	1.15	3.37	1.35
Students feel safe at this school	3.68	1.34	3.37	1.36
Students at this school are more interested in learning	3.25	1.39	3.10	1.38
I thought the teachers at this school would be better	3.17	1.43	3.31	1.41
Students respect one another and their property	3.03	1.37	2.65	1.40

*1= Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree

As we conducted interviews with school personnel and parents, it was evident that initially there were some misconceptions about the concept of charter schools, the role of the parent in deciding the direction of the school, the missions, and the range of services that would be available to parents. One school representative stated the following:

> All parents came to the school with fairly high expectations–expectations that we built up during our marketing efforts. On top of the high expectations (most of which were appropriate) we encountered a handful of parents who were either extremely impatient or extremely dysfunctional (or sometimes both). We were surprised that parents would sign up for a brand new school of choice and then be angry after eight weeks because we were still finding our way with so many procedures. We were also surprised by parents who were so quick to blame the school and our staff for their child's inappropriate behavior or poor grades.

Through the growth and maturity process of the past three years, it appears that school officials are more realistic in their public statements about what the schools can accomplish, the conditions that parents and students should expect, and the ability of the school to fulfill its mission. We have also noticed that school goals and objectives have been sharpened. In addition, the orientation and planning that went into the preparation of annual reports helped the schools better understand objective measures of success/performance and to appropriately align the curriculum to the missions. Factors such as these are likely to result in more reasonable and realistic expectations on the part of parents enrolling their children in charter schools.

Student Satisfaction

It seems that student satisfaction with the charter schools has declined over the years as the percentage of students who would recommend their charter school to a friend went down, the percentage of who would not recommend their charter school to a friend went up, and the percentage of those not sure went down (see Table 5:9). In 1999-00, 57 percent of students said they would recommended their charter school to a friend, 18 percent said they would not recommended their charter school to a friend, and 25 percent were not sure. In 1997-98, 61 percent of students thought they would recommend that a friend enroll in their charter school, 9.4 percent reported they would not recommend their charter school to a friend, and nearly 30 percent were not sure.

Table 5:9 Percentage of Students who Recommend Charter School to Friend

	Yes	No	Not sure
1997-98	61.6%	9.4%	29.5%
1999-00	56.8%	18.4%	24.8%

To determine some factors that could cause students' thoughts on recommending their school to friends, a number of items dealing with student satisfaction were included in the student survey. An overview of those items and students' responses are presented in Table 5:10.

Table 5:10 Overview of Items and Percentage of Student Satisfaction (1999-00)

Items Related to Student Satisfaction	Percentage of Students Who Agree or Strongly Agree
Teachers and administrators know me by my name	More than or equal to 70% of students
My teacher is available to talk about academic matters	
There are rules at this school we must follow	
My parents are glad that I attend this school	
I think I deserve the grades I receive	More than 50% and less than 70% of students
I am earning more here than at the previous school	
This school provides enough extracurricular activities	
My parents ask every day about what happened at school	
I wish there were more courses I could choose from	
I have a computer available at school when I need one	
My teachers encourage me to think about my future	
There are students who don't follow the rules	
Almost every assignment that I turn in to the teacher is returned with corrections and suggestions for improvement	
This school is a good choice for me	
Teachers want me to be in school and ask me why I wasn't there when I have been absent	
A counselor is available to talk about personal problems	
A counselor is available to talk about academic matters	
I have more homework at this school than at my previous school	Less than or equal to 50% of students
Students at this school are more interested in learning	
I thought the teachers at this school would be better	
Students feel safe at this school	
I am aware of the mission of my school	
Students respect one another and their property	
The school building is clean and well maintained	
If the teacher left the room, most students would continue to work on their assignments	

Those aspects with which the students most strongly agreed dealt with the "smallness" and individual attention the students received. (See Appendix F for results on all items in this). It seems that students are most satisfied with the close relationship between student and teacher, academic

support from teachers, and school discipline. Students were also satisfied with overall support from school personnel, caring and encouragement from staff, and learning more than at their previous school.

Comments taken from student surveys provide additional insight into some of the issues/topics that students consider to be the greatest or most noteworthy in their schools:

- A twelfth grade student from one school said she would recommend the school to a friend "because teaching is done on a general level, and some people are too advanced while others are under that teaching level."
- A fifth grade student explained why she would recommend the school to a friend: "Because they have really good music here and have good education."
- "I like how teachers, counselor, etc. help seniors with college. They're encouraging when it comes to learning." (twelfth grade student)
- "This school has a more relaxed setting than other schools. It's more outdoors and group activities and we have less tailored and rigid classes." (tenth grade student)
- "The quarter-credit courses. These are special courses run outside of the regular school day that allow students to study some very specific or different area of science or science-related topic of their choice." (eleventh grade student)
- "The way that I get to choose what I want to learn and the way the teachers are very responsive to us." (tenth grade student)
- "The thing that I like most in this school are the smaller classes, it's easier to pay attention and understand. I also like the outdoor education and jobs on Fridays. It gives us a chance to see what the outside world really is." (tenth grade student)
- "That the teachers are there to listen to our problems and that they want to help us with our problems" (sixth grade student)
- "The best thing I like about this school is that you have fun learning and that you learn from each other." (fifth grade student)
- "You get more attention because there's less students." (ninth grade student)

Among the biggest problem at their schools, the students mentioned the following:

- "We don't have our own school [building]." (tenth grade student)
- "The biggest problem is that most of the students here are immature; they don't see that there are other people that can't speak the language." (eleventh grade Hispanic student)
- "It lacks certain programs like art and sometimes we are not challenged enough as some of the students are not motivated." (tenth grade student)
- "Some students don't like each other, and other students from other schools, make fun of us because we are in a farm school." (tenth grade student)
- "The fact that it is so cheap. It cuts budgets all the time and looks like a dump." (tenth grade student)
- "What I don't like [about the school] is that we don't have enough money to build a gym and have sports teams." (sixth grade student)
- "The teachers are pushing morals on the students." (seventh grade student)
- "There aren't too many after school activities." (previously home-schooled ninth grade student)

Expectations of Parents

Parents sending their children to charter schools had very high expectations for the school. In all categories where we solicited information on parents' initial expectations and current experience, we found significant decreases between expectations and actual experiences (see Appendices C and G).

In 1999-00, the largest disparities between initial and current expectations were in the areas of school leadership/ administration and children receiving sufficient individual attention (See Figures 5:1 and 5:2). While the differences were great with these two items, they represented a slight improvement from 1997-98 when there were even larger differences between initial expectations and current experience on these two items. Other items where there were large discrepencies between expectations and current experience include "quality of instruction," "influence on the direction of the school," "good communication between school and my household," and "accountability of school personnel."

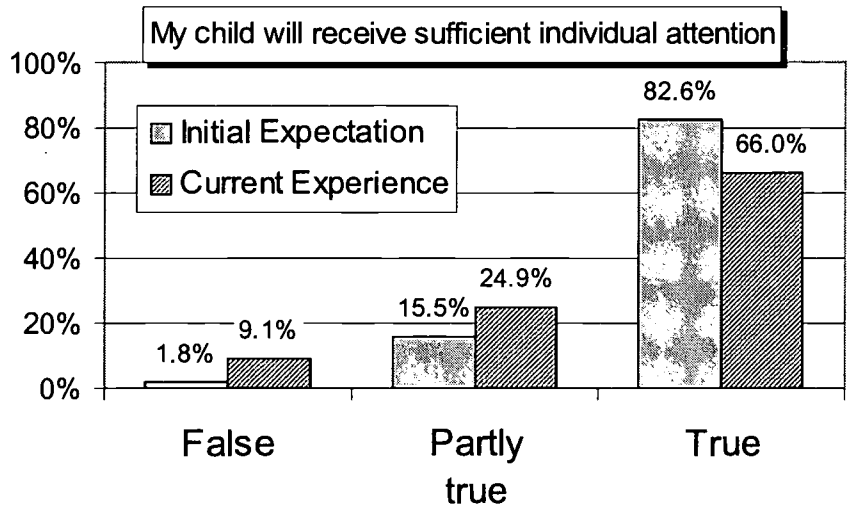


Figure 5:1 Discrepancy Between Parents Initial Expectation and Current Experience, 1999-00

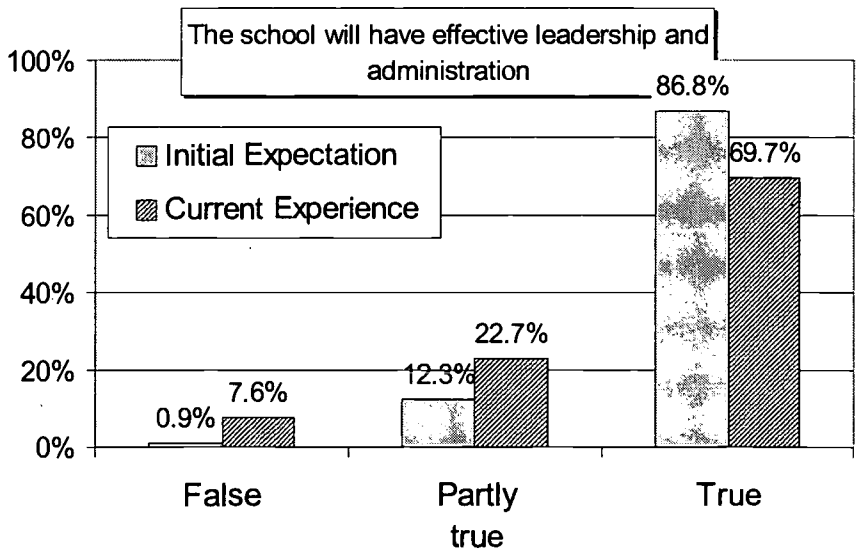


Figure 5:2 Initial Expectation vs. Current Experience in Regards to Leadership and Administration, 1999-00

In 1997-98, one other item showed large differences between expectations and current experience—the accessibility of computers and technology. Given that the schools were all new at that time, this finding was not a surprise.

It is interesting to observe that parents' high expectations have moved from the child's individual level, to the leadership and classroom level, then to teachers' instructional practice and accountability, and to parental ownership (involvement). This suggests a trend from passive observation to active participation (see Table 5:11). The majority of parents were still satisfied in these areas, but what distinguishes them is that the parents' initial expectations were strikingly and statistically significantly higher than their current experiences.

Table 5:11 Biggest Discrepancies Between Parents' Initial Expectations and Perception of Current Experience Over the Three Years*

1997-98	1999-00
My child will receive sufficient individual attention.	The school will have effective leadership and administration.
The school will have effective leadership and administration.	My child will receive sufficient individual attention.
My child's achievement levels will improve.	The quality of instruction will be high.
My child will have access to computers and other new technologies.	I will be able to influence the direction and activities in the school.
	There will be good communication between the school and my household.
	School personnel will be accountable for my child's achievement.

* Dependent t-test was conducted to compare the relationship between parents' expectations and experience, and p values are less than 0.05. For all items in this table, the mean difference between initial expectation and current experience was greater than 0.21. The items are rank-ordered with the items with greatest disparities at the top.

See Table 15 in Appendix C (1997-98) and Table 15 in Appendix G (1999-00) for descriptive statistics related to the items in Table 5:11 as well as other items that parents were asked to rate.

5.4 Parental Involvement

An important element in most charter school plans is the increased involvement of parents. This involvement takes many forms, including simply having parents spend more time with their children in school-related activities, assisting teachers and other school personnel, encouraging input from parents in school decisions, and having parents serve as members of the school's governing boards. Some schools included statements regarding a requirement that parents commit to a specific number of hours of work with the schools, while others only encouraged and invited greater participation.

In the Year 1 survey, about two-thirds (63.1 percent) of the parents agreed or strongly agreed that "parents are involved and can influence instruction and school activities," while only 11.8 percent strongly disagreed or disagreed.

Parental involvement is included in many schools' mission statement or goals. To encourage parent involvement, schools often provide a variety of volunteering opportunities. Most schools stress an open-door policy for their students' entire family, not just the parents/guardians. A few schools required parent participation at various meetings throughout the year, but these were not enforced. Two schools stressed teaching parents how students learn to better help their children gain an education. One school even hired a part-time parent coordinator to assist in organizing parent activities and volunteering.

Most schools had parents represented on the board of trustees or governing board to help develop appropriate policies and guidelines for the students. Two schools enlisted parents as teachers in certain areas of the school curriculum. Other activities where parents were involved over the years included the following:

- ❑ Chaperone assistance during field trips
- ❑ Fund-raising assistance (bake sales, car washes, book sales, t-shirt sales)
- ❑ Monthly or weekly parent meetings to disperse information about school activities
- ❑ Student celebrations, performances, and activities
- ❑ Study teams or homework clubs
- ❑ Orientation, open house, and information sessions
- ❑ Building maintenance assistance (plowing the parking lot, computer set-up, donation of cleaning and paper supplies, developing the playground/landscape, painting, repairing, office assistance)
- ❑ Technology training (training on software, running web site)
- ❑ Classroom, kitchen/dining room, and media center volunteers
- ❑ Participation in workshops
- ❑ Transportation to and from school
- ❑ Technology training (training on software, running web site)
- ❑ Classroom, kitchen/dining room, and media center volunteers

The overall trend for parental involvement in most charter schools is to have some form of parent group whether it be a PTA (Parent-Teacher Association), other committee or involvement through the board, or volunteering contracts or requirements.

Amount of Parent Volunteering in the Schools

The reported amount of time that parents volunteered to schools varied greatly—from 20 hours to 2,160 hours over the course of a year. Some schools collected volunteer information only when it occurred during the school day, while others collected information for all aspects of volunteer

efforts. The situation with parent volunteers did not change much in Year 3. The amount of time that parents volunteered to schools still varied greatly.

One school provided a very good example of how to measure parental involvement and a primary school objective: to provide a school where parents, students, and teachers felt they were valued members of the education community. Parent participation was used as one *measure* of this objective. The *evidence* of accomplishing this objective was that, at the close of the school year, 550 entries were made in the volunteer log and 120 of 140 families attended a particular school event.

Teachers were asked whether they thought parents had an effect on the direction of the school. Thirty-six percent reported that parents are able to influence the direction and activities at the school, 53 percent said that it is partly true, and 11 percent said that it is not true. Parents were asked whether they thought they had an effect on the direction of the school. Forty-six percent indicated that they are able to influence the direction and activities in the school, while 36 percent said that this is partly true, and 18 percent said that they are unable to influence the direction and activities at the school (see Table 5:12, & Figure 5:3 for the comparison of parents' and teachers' perception of parental involvement.

Table 5:12 Mean and Standard Deviation for Items Regarding Perceived Parental Involvement and Quality of Communication with Families

1999-00	*Parents are able to influence the direction & activities at the school*				*There is good communication between the school and parents*			
	N	*Mean*	*SD*	*p*	*N*	*Mean*	*SD*	*p*
Teachers/Staff	277	2.34	0.75	.26	279	2.44	0.61	.00
Parents	215	2.43	0.87		217	2.66	0.68	

* The scale is a 3-point Likert scale with 1 meaning false, 2 meaning partly true, and 3 meaning true. Independent t-test was conducted to compare the difference between two groups.

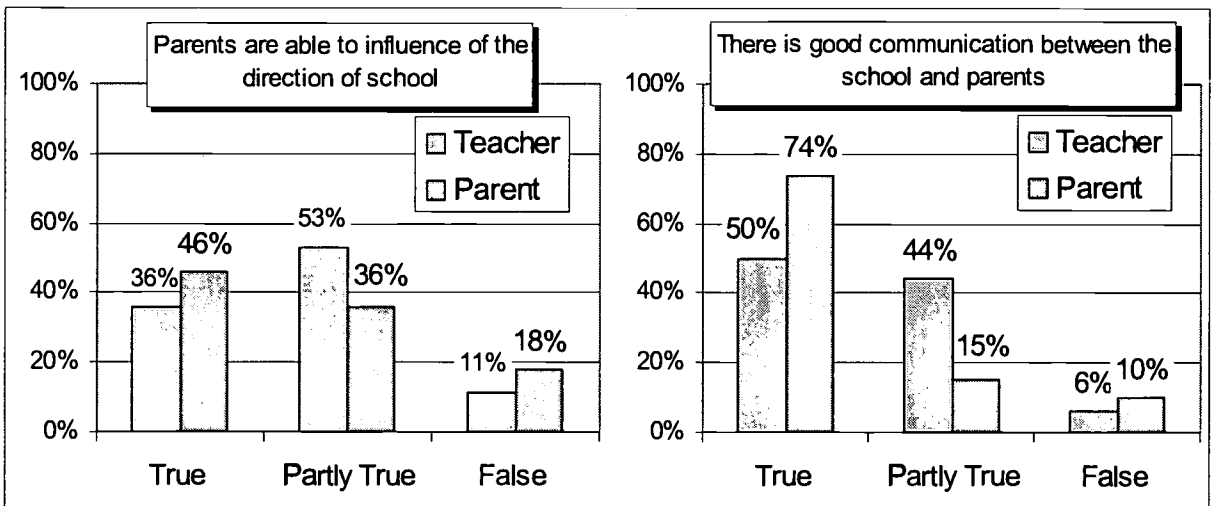


Figure 5:3 Comparison of Parents' and Teachers' Perceptions of Parental Involvement at Charter Schools

When asked about the quality of communication between the school and parents, 50 percent of teachers indicated that there is good communication between the school and parents, while 44 percent said that this is partly true, and 6 percent said that this is not true. When parents were asked about the quality of communication between the school and parents, 74 percent reported that there is good communication between the school and my household, while 15 percent said that this is partly true, and 10 percent that communication between the school and parents was not good.

We conducted an independent t-test to examine the difference between parents' and teachers' experiences about parental involvement. It is interesting to find that the experience of teachers and parents are similar in terms of parents' ability to influence the direction and activities at the school. However, parents perceived that there is good communication between the school and parents, while considerably fewer teachers agreed ($p<.05$) (see Table 5:12 and Figure 5:3 on previous page).

We also asked students to reflect on their parents' involvement with school-related matters. Fifty-one percent of students agreed that their parents ask them every day about what happened at school, while 28 percent disagreed, and the remaining students (21 percent) neither agreed or disagreed.

On a related item in the teacher survey, teachers and staff were asked about the effect that parental involvement has on instruction and school activities. Forty-two percent of teachers agreed that parental involvement can influence instruction and school activities, while 23 percent did not agree and 35 percent neither agreed nor disagreed.

5.5 School Safety

In order to evaluate how teachers/staff, parents, and students perceive safety in their school, each group was asked to indicate to what extent they agree with the statement "Students feel safe at this school." Interestingly, a much higher percentage of teachers and parents believe that students feel safe at their charter schools than do the students. Indeed, some 81.6 percent of teachers/staff and 85 percent of parents agreed with the statement that "students feel safe at school." This indicates a decrease from 1997-98 for teachers/staff when 91.7 percent agreed that students felt safe. Parents' perceptions remained basically unchanged (see Table 5:13 & Figure 5:4).

Table 5:13 Students', Parents', and Teachers' Perceptions About School Safety Between 1997-98 and 1999-00

	Students feel safe at this school		
	Students	Parents	Teachers
1997-98	58.0%	85.6%	91.7%
1999-00	47.8%	85.0%	81.6%

Students had decidedly different attitudes toward their safety in their schools. Of those students surveyed in 1999-00, approximately half (47.8 percent) either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "Students feel safe at this school." This represents a 10 percent decrease from the 58 percent who agreed or strongly agreed in 1997-98. When comparing independent t-test, the mean dropped significantly from 3.68 in 1997-98 to 3.37 in 1999-00 ($p<.05$) (see Table 5:14).

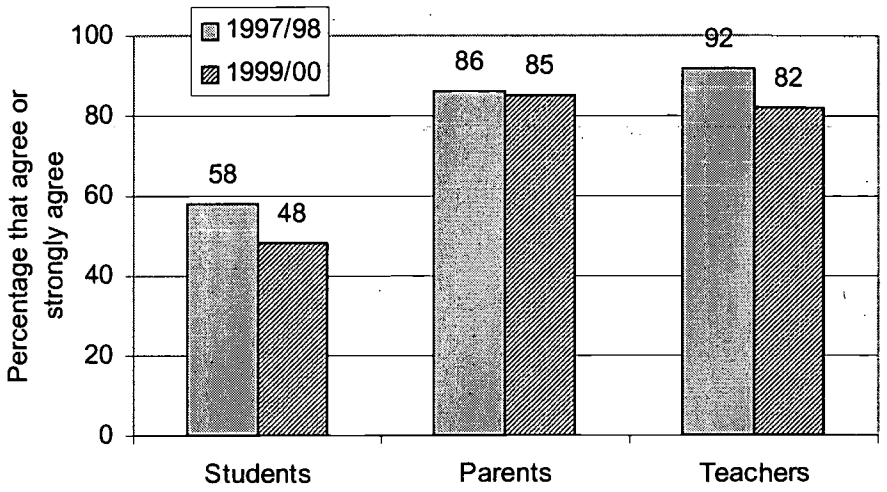


Figure 5:4 Students', Parents', and Teachers' Perception of School Safety Between 1997-98 and 1999-00 (All Schools Included)

Table 5:14 Mean and Standard Deviation on Students' Perceptions of Safety at School

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	p
1997-98	257	3.68	1.34	0.002
1999-00	603	3.37	1.36	

* Independent t-test was conducted to compare the students' perception of feeling safe at this school between 1997-98 and 1999-00.

When asked a related question, "Students respect one another and their property," the percentage of students who agreed was much lower, declining from 39.5 percent in 1997-98 to 29.6 percent in 1999-00. When comparing means with an independent t-test, the mean dropped significantly from 3.03 in 1997-98 to 2.65 in 1999-00 ($p<.05$) (see Table 5:15). For both questions additional t-tests were conducted, controlling for length of school operation and for student grade levels to determine if these variables had an impact on the findings. Consistent results were found on all t-tests performed, indicating a steady decline in student perceptions of safety in charter schools.

Table 5:15 Mean and Standard Deviation on Students' Perceptions of Respecting One Another and Their Property

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	p
1997-98	279	3.03	1.37	0.000
1999-00	711	2.65	1.40	

* Independent t-test was conducted to compare the students' perceptions of respecting one another and their property between 1997-98 and 1999-00.

5.6 Services for Students with Special Needs

Connecticut charter school law mandates that the local school district in which a student resides is responsible for the provision of special education services for its students enrolled in charter schools. Overall, there has been little to no resistance and few problems complying with this provision. Identification of students with disabilities and development of individualized education programs (IEPs) are a joint responsibility, with the local district providing, at minimum, a representative at all IEP meetings.

A couple of basic service delivery models have been observed in Connecticut districts with charter schools and appear to be a direct result of the joint responsibility built into the law. One model has the charter school hiring special education teachers or contracting with independent consultants to provide services to students qualifying for special education. In this model, charter schools and the noncharter school district reach agreements as to billing procedures for these services, usually monthly or quarterly. Another model involves noncharter school district personnel providing some combination of indirect (consultation to teachers) or direct services to students, with the special education funding staying with the district school.

The fact that most students with disabilities who attend charter schools have mild to moderate levels of disabilities and can function fairly well in inclusion settings makes these two models workable and reasonable. Unfortunately, when district personnel provide direct services to students, it is usually provided as "pull out" one-on-one or small group sessions. This requires students to work with the special education provider outside of the regular education classroom and does not provide much opportunity for the special education and regular education teacher to work together.

Although these two basic models seem to be working, some charter schools staff have expressed concern about the availability of special education services. In particular, two schools indicated they did not receive adequate services for special education. One school reported receiving social services, which had positive impacts on the students receiving the services, but no instructional services were made available. Teacher comments included in survey data indicate that the level of satisfaction with special education services vary, with some indicating that the inclusion model and support for special needs students were positive, even innovative, aspects of their school, while other teachers had concerns about lack of services and support.

The impact of these service delivery models is not well documented; however, one special education teacher from the Simsbury district did report behavior changes in students who had transferred to a charter school. These students, with whom the teacher had worked in the traditional district, had a positive change in behavior. The students' inappropriate behavior were reportedly reduced so that they were demonstrating only mild behavior problems, a change that was like "night and day," according to this teacher. She attributed these changes to the charter school environment, which was more conducive to meeting their needs.

Special education services require the development of a collaborative relationship between charters and districts and, in fact, some charter schools mention good, collaborative relationships with the public district. Although the positive impact described above is the only case reported by a district special education teacher, it should not be concluded that positive impacts for students with disabilities is not happening in other schools or that the collaboration between the schools and the districts is not working out well. Still, no other charter school reported any specific cases to demonstrate in what ways the collaboration/relationship was positive. In the case of special education, a lack of conflict, rather than the development of positive collaborative relationships, is what was most often considered to be positive impact within the schools.

Differences in the enrollment of students in charter and noncharter schools is also an important consideration. When examining the prevalence of special needs students in Connecticut charter schools, we found that many charter schools have lower proportions of students eligible for special education when compared with local districts and statewide averages. Information on the proportion of students qualifying for special education in charter schools was obtained from the charter school annual reports.

Table 5:16 provides the reported percentage of students eligible for special education services. The percentages are provided for each charter school, with the local district school data shown in parentheses. The charter school data were taken from their yearly annual reports. The state and local district data were obtained from the Connecticut Department of Education Web site (*Special Education Profiles by District 1999-2000*; http://www.csde.state.ct.us). Data for the local school districts reflect the percentage of students eligible for special education for whom the district is fiscally responsible and includes the students enrolled in charter schools. However, the charter school students generally account for less than 0.5 percent of the districts' reported total percentage of students eligible for special education. Although the total average percentage of special education enrollment in charter schools is not largely dissimilar to statewide averages, many charter schools have considerably lower percentages than their local school districts. In addition, the reported overall average charter school percentage is skewed by a couple of schools that report special education enrollment at nearly twice the rate reported by the district school.

Table 5:17 includes more recent data for 2000-01 and breaks down the special education figures by disability category. As one can see, students with disabilities in charter schools are most likely to have learning disabilities (57 percent) followed by speech impairments and emotional problems.

Table 5:16 Percentage of Students with Disabilities in Charter and Local School Districts

Charter School (Local District)	1997-98 Special Education Percentages	1998-1999 Special Education Percentages	1999-2000 Special Education Percentages
Ancestors (Waterbury)	21% (17.8%)	12.0% (17.7%)	14.0% (18.0%)
Bridge Academy (Bridgeport)	1% (11%)	3.5% (11.4%)	6.0% (11.7%)
Common Ground(New Haven)	8% (14%)	14.0% (13.6%)	6.0% (13.3%)
Explorations (The Gilbert School)	13% (10.3%)	33.0% (9.8%)	22.0% (8.9%)
Integrated Day (Norwich)	6.8% (14.3%)	10.4% (13.9%)	8.0% (14.3%)
Interdistrict School for Arts and Communication (New London)	10% (20.3%)	9.0% (19.4%)	8.0% (20.4%)
Jumoke Academy (Hartford)	8.7% (16.3%)	8.9% (16.4%)	7.0% (13.5%)
Odyssey (Manchester)	13% (13.5%)	4.1% (13.2%)	5.0% (12.2%)
Side by Side (Norwalk)	12.9% (9.4%)	7.5% (9.3%)	9.0% (9.5%)
Sports Sciences (Hartford)	9.1% (16.3%)	8.8% (16.4%)	9.0% (13.5%)
Breakthrough (Hartford)		10.0% (16.4%)	10.0% (13.5%)
Brooklawn (Bridgeport/Fairfield)		12.0% (11.4/16.9%)	11.0% (11.7/14.4%)
Charter Oak (NewBritain)		32.7% (16.6%)	17.0% (16.3%)
Highville (Hamden/NewHaven)		11.7% (13.9 /13.6%)	13.0% (14.0/13.3%)
Amistad (New Haven)			12.0% (13.3%)
Trailblazers (Stamford)			28.0% (14.7%)
Charter School Average		11.28%	10.0%
State Average	13.65%	13.45%	12.8%

Source: Charter school data is taken from the schools' annual reports and the district data is taken from the *Special Education Profiles by District.* The data for The Gilbert School is taken from the School's SSP. (On-line: http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/der/datacentral/ssp/ssp_frameset.htm)

Special education presents a challenge to charter schools across the country. There are a variety of arrangements for financing and service delivery in the various states. Despite these differences, charter schools typically enroll fewer students with disabilities and when they do, they typically enroll students with milder disabilities. These patterns are related in some cases to the difficulty that some charter schools have faced in reaching funding agreements with local school districts. Overall, however, the legal requirement that local districts provide funding and, in so doing, share responsibility seems to be an overall positive factor. The necessity of some communication, if not true collaboration, regarding special education services provides some built-in oversight of charter schools by local schools.

Table 5:17 Special Education Prevalence by Nature of Disability and School, 2000-01

	Special Need														
	Mental Retarded	Hear Impaired	Speech	Emotional disorder	Ortho Impaired	Other Health	Learning Disability	Multi Disorder	Autism	Uncategorized	ADD/ADHD	Neur Impaired	Total	Total Enrollment	Percent Special Education
Ancestors Community Charter							1						1	39	2.6%
Bridge Academy	2			1			5						8	174	4.6%
Common Ground High School		1		1		1	12						15	100	15.0%
Explorations				5		1	6				1		13	59	22.0%
Integrated Day Charter			4			2	12		1		4	1	24	264	9.1%
ISAAC				1	1	1	1	1				1	6	96	6.3%
Jumoke Academy			5				3						8	230	3.5%
Odyssey Community			1			2	2						5	105	4.8%
Side by Side Community			5				5		1		1	1	13	209	6.2%
Sports Science Academy				4			19						23	295	7.8%
Breakthrough			1	1			14			1			17	169	10.1%
Brooklawn Academy							1						1	72	1.4%
Charter Oak	1		1	1		6	21	2					32	119	26.9%
Highville	1	1	8	2		1	8				2		23	261	8.8%
Amistad	1		1	2		1	8						13	130	10.0%
Trailblazers	1		5	3		1	10	2					22	107	20.6%
Total	6	2	31	21	1	16	128	5	2	1	8	3	224	2,429	9.2%
Percent by Category	2.7%	0.9%	13.8%	9.4%	0.5%	7.1%	57%	2.2%	0.9%	0.5%	3.6%	1.3%	100%		

Data for this table was provided by the Connecticut State Department of Education.

Chapter Six
Innovative Practices in Curriculum, Instructional Practices, Technology, and Organization/Governance

One of many commonly expected outcomes of charter school reforms is the development of innovative practices. However, there are a number of common features of charter school reforms that suggest that it will be difficult for these schools to be innovative. Among these features, the following are most noteworthy: (i) less per-pupil funding than other public schools and limited funds for capital investments, (ii) relatively young and inexperienced teachers, and (iii) the expectation that these new schools meet already prescribed state standards. We have evaluated charter school reforms in several states and have found that the charter schools in Connecticut have been more successful than charter schools in other states in creating curricular and instructional approaches that are innovative or unique from what might be found in other public schools.

6.1 Source of Data and Discussion of How We Define Innovations

The data used in this chapter come from two main sources. First, staff at The Evaluation Center compiled archives of documentation about charter schools from annual reports submitted to the Connecticut State Department of Education and from documents gathered during site visits to the schools. Second, we relied on data from the charter school surveys developed by The Evaluation Center and on the National Association of Secondary School Principals' School Climate Survey. The former has the advantage of being keyed to charter school issues, while the latter survey has the advantage of providing comparisons with national norms. Surveys were administered to all teachers and staff and to samples of parents and students (grade 5 and higher). Details on the surveys and sampling procedures may be found in chapter 2. Finally, we collected information through interviews with charter school personnel, representatives of local school districts, and representatives of community organizations.

Charter school staff were asked to list three or four innovations at their school in three different areas: (i) curriculum, (ii) instruction, and (iii) organization/governance. This request resulted in a lengthy list that was then refined and shortened to account for overlapping and similar innovations among schools. While many of these innovations have been observed by a member of the evaluation team, most are included simply because they were reported by charter school directors and other staff. Therefore, the innovations we sum up in the following sections largely reflect what the schools

reported to be innovative or unique and does not necessarily infer that we believe them to be innovative or unique to their communities.

Although there could be a considerable amount of discussion and debate about the operational definition of an innovation, it is important for us to recognize that what is "new" or "innovative" to one person may be recognized by others as simply "old hat" or something that is commonly found in other schools. This was the case at the end of Year 1 when we noted that many of the practices that were reported by the schools would not be considered new or innovative by most experienced educators. For the purpose of this report, we consider an innovation to be either a newly developed practice or a practice that is unique from what can be found in other schools in the community. We believe that the intent of the charter school initiative is that charter schools are to develop new practices. Additionally, we believe that another intent of the charter school legislation, was to create greater diversity in public school programs and provide meaningful parental choice (i.e., without a diversity of options, there can be not meaningful choice). For these reasons, we have broadened our interpretation of innovations to include both new and unique curricular approaches/materials, instructional practices, and operational- or governance-related practices or models. Even though some charter schools may not be innovative in the sense of developing something new, we are aware that many of them have at least developed schools that differ substantially from surrounding traditional public schools. A more extensive discussion regarding innovation diffusion and impact to surrounding traditional public schools can be found in chapter 10.

A number of factors suggest that charter schools should be more able to innovate than traditional public schools (Miron & Nelson, 2000):

- ❑ Charter schools have most rules and regulations waived.
- ❑ Charter schools are not bound by seniority rules and union contracts so they can more easily hire like-minded educators committed to the school's particular vision.
- ❑ Charter schools have more flexibility in implementing reforms because they are not bound by union work rules governing how personnel spend their time.
- ❑ Charter schools can selectively hire teachers and staff in building a team that matches and is committed to the unique mission of the school.
- ❑ Charter schools have more flexibility to hire people with diverse, yet complementary, credentials.

It is also important to recall that charter schools have many disadvantages. For example, they appear to have less money for instruction, and teachers in many charter schools have salaries that are less than what they could expect to earn in surrounding public schools. For these reasons, hiring and retaining effective teachers is difficult.

Also, the fact that the charter schools are in a start-up phase limits their ability to innovate. The charter school boards and staff struggle to establish the schools and often have little time left over for implementing the often unique or innovative curriculum suggested in their applications.

Unlike many educational reforms, the charter school concept is largely silent on particular curricula, assessment, and instructional methods–except to say that many methods used in traditional public schools are insufficient. Instead of prescribing a specific reform package, charter school laws carve out an opportunity space in which charter schools may exercise autonomy over such matters. The charter school concept suggests that granting schools more autonomy will make them better able to address the particular needs of their students. Data collected on the charter school surveys indicated that approximately 85 percent of responding teachers and staff initially expected support for innovative practices, and 82 percent of the teachers and staff initially (i.e., 2997-98) expected that they would have autonomy and opportunities for creativity in the classroom. This can be contrasted with what they perceived to be true at the time of the survey in the spring of 1999, when only 66 percent of teachers responded that they experienced support for innovative practices and 69 percent of teachers responded that they experienced autonomy and opportunities for creativity in their classrooms. While the difference between initial expectations and current experiences seems large, it is smaller than what we have seen in other states, suggesting that charter schools in Connecticut are more capable and optimistic that they can translate the autonomy they are granted into new practices within their schools.

In chapter 4 we explored what charter schools are doing with their autonomy in the area of teacher professional development and working conditions. In this chapter, we continue our analysis of the uses to which charters put their autonomy by focusing on charter school curriculum and instruction, technology, organization, and governance.

6.2 Innovations in Curriculum and Instructional Methods

> *Teaching methods here are not new to education. We've eclectically borrowed about everything. But what is new is honoring what teachers are excited about and allowing and supporting their consistent development of that across classrooms throughout the school.*
>
> Connecticut Charter School Administrator

The curriculum is the heart and soul of any school, and to develop and implement an appropriate curriculum in a new school with a rather unique mission is predisposed to be difficult and time-consuming. Teachers confirmed this over and over again. A number of the schools' teachers spent all summer, mostly on their own time, working individually and in small groups to develop a curriculum and teaching materials for the opening of the school. In some cases, a prepackaged curriculum was selected and adapted for local use; in other cases, individual teachers were responsible for their own curriculum and for ensuring that it was supportive of the mission and the needs of the students under their charge. Some brief descriptions of the various curricula are paraphrased below:

- Our school adapted the school-to-career model as the foundation of its curriculum framework. Essential to the model is the concept that learning is geared to preparing youth for the 21st century workplace. Learning is not limited to the classroom but is extended into the community. Students link their school-based program to their work site training experiences through a series

of planned, developmentally sequenced connecting activities. In this case, specific learning experiences are focused on the sport sciences.

- The staff at this school share the philosophy that children learn best "by doing." Children construct their own meaning as they observe and interact with the people and things in their environment. The curriculum is based on research that supports the importance of teaching the way children learn best. The core of the curriculum is social studies, which is the study of the world around us and the people in it. They integrate math, reading, art, music, science, and other areas of the curriculum into the social studies units. The curriculum centers around ten identified challenges, e.g., the ability to use language and mathematics well and thoughtfully, the ability to use their talents and imaginations to express themselves creatively, the ability to be informed consumers, and the ability to find information and be independent learners.
- The curriculum adopted by this school is entitled Core Knowledge, published by the Core Knowledge Foundation. The elementary school series is "edited by Dr. Hirsch, who first wrote about cultural literacy, and the need for a base of knowledge that reinforces our cultural heritage and improves our ability to communicate across racial, ethnic, and socio-economic lines."
- Our curriculum is evolving into a six-point model. We think of it as an evolution because while we identified a curriculum focus in our original charter application, we didn't give it the majority of our attention. We were constantly trying to balance our energies between learning how to run the school on a daily basis and developing what and how we wanted our students to learn. The model we are developing has six overlapping elements: (i) applied learning theory, (ii) performance assessment, (iii) individual learning plans, (v) interdisciplinary curricula, (v) media literacy, and (vi) academic standards.
- The curriculum this charter school focuses on the principles of ecology: that everything is connected, that matter can neither be created nor destroyed, and that life processes require a constant input of energy. Every discipline contributes to the understanding that people and their institutions, history, and culture are not independent of these processes. The core of the curriculum is interdisciplinary.
- The social studies-based curriculum involves working with the basic institutions of democracy to create microsocieties in the school. Students study real systems like courts, banks, newspapers, and so forth, and practice setting up democratic institutions at school. A constitutional convention will be held for students to develop their student government system.
- The school's reading program aims to mirror that of the First Steps Whole Language approach developed in Western Australia, which is strongly phonetic, but also rich in literature. This approach recognizes a continuum of oral language, reading, writing, and spelling skills; using defined developmental stages and their behaviors, a resource book identifies strategies for moving kids along that continuum from one stage to another.
- A comprehensive curriculum framework has been developed that is centered around the Connecticut State Department of Education Curriculum Framework, K-12, and national curriculum standards. The framework will identify and integrate skills embedded in the curricular theme of reading, writing, research, and technology. The curriculum framework will

specifically outline the scope and sequence of content to be learned, goals and objectives to be met, skills to be mastered, examples of unit plans, and assessment tools.

- ❑ The theme-based unit of study crosses academic disciplines and is initially developed by the students through a teacher-directed process. After the theme is determined, the teaching teams then develop it into a curriculum that incorporates the goals and objectives focusing on language arts and communication for middle school students determined by the Connecticut State Department of Education Frameworks.
- ❑ The curriculum emphasizes project learning to help students learn to work with one another and to prepare them for real-world work experiences. It will emphasize community service as a means by which students learn about responsibilities to others and about interdependence in the world community. The intended curriculum is experiential, project-based, hands-on, and takes kids out into the community so that community service learning becomes an integral teaching/learning tool.

It is probably best to say that the curricula of the charter schools in their first year of operation was fluid. This seems to be an area where probably not enough thought had gone into what was to be taught and what materials would be used to facilitate this learning emphasis. However, the changes are not a major redirection in emphases, but along the lines of refinement and growth. Very few schools have persons with backgrounds in curriculum development, and few have sought outside assistance in this process. An examination of the reported curriculum and the mission of the schools reveals some connection, but not to the extent one would expect. Much needs to be done with the development of appropriate curricular materials suitable for the mission and the type and age range of students in these charter schools.

After two or more years of operation, the curricula has stabilized in most of the schools. The idealism and excitement of developing new schools and curricula have generally been replaced by a more guarded approach to the development of the whole school with fuller consideration for student needs, parental expectations, capabilities of school personnel, need to prepare for the state assessment tests, and the availability of resources and facilities.

To provide a deeper understanding regarding the curriculum at the various charter schools, we have extracted the following selected statements/narrative in the "official description" of the schools, as presented in the annual reports submitted by the charter schools in September 2000.

- ❑ We challenge our students with a rigorous academic program
- ❑ Our school has includes a challenging core curriculum
- ❑ We stress purposeful learning through which students gain knowledge, utilize higher order thinking, and exercise body, mind and value learning
- ❑ We provide students who are at risk of academic failure with innovative academic, social skill building and community service opportunities in their learning process
- ❑ Our school provides a model of 21st Century communications with an emphasis on computer literacy, telecommunications, reading, writing, and research

- ❑ Our school provides a college preparatory curriculum designed to overcome the problems found in the inner city
- ❑ Our school has a global studies curriculum, which will incorporate the arts and foreign language as a means to teach the basic skills as well as the High Order Thinking Skills (HOTS)
- ❑ At our school, the framework (derived from the basic premise of ecology . . . all living things and non-living things are connected and interdependent) guides the interdisciplinary curriculum
- ❑ The curriculum at our school includes experiential educational activities such as career exploration, adventure education, video technology, magazine production, in addition to their individual course work
- ❑ We teach all children a foreign language, encouraging strong parental involvement, mastery of basic skills, and technology and arts literacy
- ❑ Intense emphasis is placed on character education and community service.

Examples of some other innovations that would fall into this category in the area of *instruction* are the use of cooperative learning models/cooperative learning; alternative grading schemes, extensive use of teacher assistant and classroom aides that facilitate a more extensive individualization of instruction, and technology integration.

As one can see, it is difficult to identify a school's curriculum by simply reading the descriptions or purposes the school provide. It is necessary to interact with teachers and administrators, to verify what you heard at on-site observations, and to review appropriate documents. Following the compilation and synthesis of data and documentation regarding innovative curriculum and instructional practices, we developed the following summative statements about the Connecticut charter schools:

- ❑ A number of named curricula are employed in the various Connecticut charter schools, but there is not a consistent pattern of one or a few of these being predominant. However, there is a fairly clear pattern of an interdisciplinary approach with recognition of the Connecticut State Department of Education Curriculum Framework: K-12 and national curriculum standards.
- ❑ Themes from individual schools are incorporated in the curriculum in the form of specific emphases or offered as specialized content courses. In both cases, the school is viewed as a community with a primary goal of developing a sense of family and support within the school.
- ❑ Many schools select the curriculum and activities that are related to the needs and interests of the students, while other schools offer a basic curriculum that includes the traditional subject areas of math, science, social studies, language arts, etc.
- ❑ Some schools have attempted to integrate a subject matter sequence, like mathematics, which tends to stretch the curriculum across multiple years and in a form that better fits the developmental level of students.
- ❑ Certain variations or alternatives to expected subject areas are being implemented, such as a form of martial arts for physical education, media communications for language arts, adventure

education for physical education, environmental education for various other forms of science for elementary and middle school students, etc.

- ❑ A number of schools are developing community participation programs that include community projects, job shadowing, etc.
- ❑ Included as a part of the core curriculum in a number of schools is an emphasis on character education.

In total, the curriculum evolves according to the emphasis or theme of the school and matures as the school grows and develops over time. New approaches seem to be accepted, but there is an important question that must be answered: "Does the curriculum provide our students with the opportunity to achieve?"

Instruction can be the mode of implementation for curricular innovations. Innovative or unique aspects of the charter schools, in terms of instruction or the delivery of the curriculum, include the following:

- ❑ Before and after school programs that focus on learning styles and students' areas of interest
- ❑ Use of computers in conducting research and developing papers
- ❑ Variations of physical education, i.e., tae kwon do and multicultural dance/movement classes
- ❑ Ability grouping/tracking of students, especially in the areas of reading and math skills
- ❑ Independent learning plans developed for each child
- ❑ Identifiable focus of a school, i.e., REACH philosophy (Respect, Enthusiasm, Achievement, Citizenship, and Hard Work), global community, environmental education, sports science, etc.
- ❑ Workplace shadowing by students
- ❑ Expanded (three hour) interdisciplinary courses that are team taught
- ❑ Alternative daily scheduling of instruction in required and elective courses
- ❑ Research-based curriculum—student-designed research projects as the basis for academic achievement
- ❑ All-school meetings of teachers and students in which joys or achievements are celebrated and issues are discussed
- ❑ Multiple types of assessments to reflect student learning, including work samples, "authentic" and/or performance assessment, student-maintained logs and portfolios, student self- and peer-evaluation, holistic grading
- ❑ Use of video recorders for student portfolios
- ❑ Parental involvement through contracts, volunteering, and increased communication

While many charter schools distinguish themselves by their unique themes or profiles, it is also important to point out that most of these schools use curriculum and instructional practices similar

to those used by the public schools that surround them. Even so, nearly 60 percent of teachers and staff agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with their school's curriculum.

6.3 Innovations in Technology

To work, learn, and flourish in the information age, our students need to become skilled in finding information from a variety of sources, evaluating it, and making critical judgements about its value, reliability, and validity. . . Technology will be an important tool for our students in the quest
Charter School Director

The presence and usage of computers and technology influence the nature of any given school's curriculum and instruction. For this reason, we decided to explore this topic more deeply. Visits to all of the charter schools provide clear evidence that technology in the form of computers is found in every school. In a few instances, however, we found that new computers were initially largely unused. Statements in the annual reports clearly show that there is a commitment to the use of technology, and one school has made a large commitment toward the use of an array of technology to support its emphasis on media literacy. Mostly, computers are being used as tools and not an entity to be learned in themselves. One school director stated that "Our technology use is guided by a commitment to the concept of appropriate technology. Computer use complements instead of substitutes for actual hands-on experience measuring, building, graphing, drawing, and presenting. The school envisions graduating students who are technologically literate, able to master new skills, and acquire new forms of knowledge." Plans or estimated needs for technology generally focus on the use of computers, but one charter school has indicated the need for greater acquisition of distance education support. Another school focuses on the use of technology in the communication arts.

In our review of the schools' annual reports, observations in the schools, and in discussions with students and school personnel during the past three years, we find the use of technology primarily tied to computers. Examples of how they are used are listed below:

- ❑ Learning the keyboards and word processing
- ❑ Resume writing
- ❑ Writing papers and reports
- ❑ Accessing the Internet and other broad-based data systems
- ❑ Remediation instruction
- ❑ Track student activities and achievement in specific areas
- ❑ Student record keeping
- ❑ Use of videos for projects and assessment
- ❑ Teacher planning and curriculum development
- ❑ Staff development in the use of technology

With the exception of one school that focuses on technology, there was general use of technology in the form of computers, but not evidence of especially creative use of computers and/or other forms of technology. One might expect more use of distance education or other uses of technology other than computers, but such is not the case.

The need to continually maintain and upgrade computers and other forms of technology in a rapidly changing environment is a major concern to most charter school directors. While some creative methods have been used to obtain donations and other forms of support can be cited, there is a general sense that special consideration should be given to charter schools (and likely all other K-12 schools) for adequate and reasonable funding for technology. The charter school format and enabling legislation provide an excellent opportunity for a focused and carefully planned experiment in the full integration of technology into the teaching and learning process. However, this would require external expertise and substantial outlays of funds that are not now available through the regular funding process, which is not to say that external funds are not available for this type of innovative effort.

6.4 Innovations in Organization and Operation of Charter Schools

Among the most prevalent and prominent innovations reported by charter schools in the area of organization and governance, the following can be noted:

- Teachers make decisions about budgets, professional development, school policies, class assignments, peer evaluation, and other important decisions that affect the everyday operations of the classrooms and schools.
- Daily schedules for teachers that permit some interactions and dialogue between and among teachers and school directors.
- Block scheduling and other types of scheduling for instruction that are intended to accommodate student learning.
- Inclusion of parents and more involved stakeholders as members of boards of trustees

The notion that everyone has a voice in the decision-making process and in the direction of the school has been misunderstood by some parents, questioned as impractical in some cases by school directors, and viewed as unrealistic by other stakeholders. The idea that everyone can be empowered to do whatever they wish has been tested time and time again. As a result, the idea that everyone can have an opportunity for input and consideration by the boards of trustees is viable, but at some point there must be a consensus of views or there must be a recognized process of decision making.

Several other unique or innovative practices in school management and operations were observed and include the following:

- Nonelected board members
- Local (school level) control of the budget in state authorized charter schools

- ❑ Efforts to state school or district objectives in an observable form that facilitates measures of accountability.
- ❑ Shared decision making among charter school teachers and administrators/school leaders
- ❑ Committees of stakeholders, including teachers, parents, and other community members
- ❑ Family style lunches that include teachers and students
- ❑ Contracts between the school and parents and students
- ❑ Student involvement on board

We have not made judgments about whether the identified "innovative" or new practices have merit or worth in individual schools or across all charter schools, nor do we find targeted internal evaluations of them. When questioned about the value of a practice, the responses generally fall in one of two categories, i.e., "it works well for us in this situation/school," or it is based on "research" of a named person, group, or movement. In capacity-building workshops for charter school representatives, the evaluation team has made suggestions for evaluation and presented *The Program Evaluation Standards* as viable guidelines to determine the effectiveness of charter school practices.

We are reasonably encouraged about the growth in understanding and appreciation among charter school leadership and teachers with regard to the need for them to be accountable. We hope the evaluation team and representatives of the Connecticut Department of Education will continue to support and further develop this concept with the charter schools.

Scheduling

Most of the charter schools offered between 180 and 185 days of instruction per year, although New Beginnings Family Academy, which opened in September 2002, will have 200 days of instruction each school year. Because of transportation provided by the local districts, a number of charter schools indicated that it is difficult to have schedules that differed from the district. Some schools offer full day kindergarten and/or preschool, while others manipulate their school day to accommodate for better learning, such as two schools that focus on academics in the morning while "the students are fresh." A few other schools offer block scheduling and/or looping as an alternative schedule. Before and after school activities seem to be an important aspect of many of the schools. A few schools offer enrichment classes such as arts and crafts, cooking, choir, ceramics, leadership, homework club, communications, and theater games.

6.5 Summary

Charter schools have fewer rules and regulations to follow than traditional public schools. In turn, there is an expectation that this greater autonomy will lead charter schools to experiment with innovations in curriculum, instructional practices, and/or organization and governance. However, to define innovation is a task in itself. The term *innovation* is quite ambiguous and therefore hard to define. Thus, this report depended on the observations and perceptions of the charter school staff. The innovations discussed throughout this chapter describe characteristics as reported by the charter schools themselves. Intentional, purposeful, and genuine actions or decisions with regard to curriculum, instructional practices, and organization and governance are reflected in the lengthy

innovations list. Schools are implementing "new" ideas or practices; however, the "newness" of these practices is relative within the realm of education.

Curriculum, as a guiding force for a school, is a key area where innovations may be implemented. Charter school curricula ranged from original, staff-created programs to prepackaged commercial programs. Within each, though, innovations can be found. Although the curriculum itself may not be particularly innovative, the method or practice with which it is implemented may be. Many schools focus the curriculum on one particular area, such as career-to-work or a global studies-based curriculum, or they focus on meeting the needs of one particular group of students.

Most charter schools are adopting interdisciplinary curricular and instructional approaches that are in line with the state's curriculum framework. Although some schools structure their program around traditional subject areas, others have integrated special focus areas such as environmental studies, physical education, experiential learning, and community service across the curriculum to meet the needs of the students and to set their school apart from traditional public schools.

Charter schools have implemented instructional and assessment techniques that are different from what has been the tradition in public schools. The incorporation of specific themes, such as community involvement, environmental conservation, or physical fitness, have also provided opportunities to provide instruction and assessment in unique ways. Some charter schools offer before and after school programs that extend the students' learning opportunities and focus on individual student learning styles and interest. In addition, some schools develop individual learning plans for each student, not just for those who qualify for special education services. Collaboration between teachers, students, and parents to assure learning motivation and achievement is also considered an important innovation at many of the schools.

Integration of technology across the curriculum is a goal of many of the charter schools and, indeed, charter schools have fewer students per computer than is the average for district schools across the state. For the most part, however, computers are used as tools for writing, for remedial instruction, and for records maintenance, which is similar to traditional school usage.

Organization and governance are the areas most cited by charter schools as innovative. As a whole, charter schools attempt to include teachers, parents, and students in important decisions regarding the academic climate (including interpersonal behavior standards) and facilities of their school. Class schedules and teacher assignments that allow for interactions between faculty, administrators, and parents are important considerations. Parent and other stakeholder involvement is achieved through volunteer participation at the school and through inclusion in decision making committees or governing board membership.

The true test of *innovations* may be in the overall impact that is realized in student achievement outcomes, institutionalization of practices over time, and reform of traditional approaches to education that have not produced desired outcomes.

Chapter Seven
Extent to Which School Goals and Objectives are Being Met

In this chapter we address the question, "Are Connecticut charter schools meeting their own goals?" To answer this question we examined and analyzed each school's annual reports for 1999-00 and 2000-01. Before presenting our findings regarding the schools' "success rates" in meeting their goals, we shall describe and comment on the process of goal setting and development of measurable objectives that are analyzed in this section.

During 1998, 1999, and 2000 both the CSDE and members of the evaluation team provided technical assistance to schools that focused on establishing goals and objectives based on the schools' mission and identifying indicators and relevant benchmarks to measure progress. In the summer of 1988 the 12 charter schools that were in operation completed annual reports that were largely descriptive in nature, as was called for in the guidelines presented to the schools. The following year, the template or structure of the annual report was modified with input from members of the evaluation team. The new annual reports were to focus more on reporting school results based on the measurable objectives established by each school. In particular each school was expected to formulate general goals and measurable objectives that reflected the mission of the schools and covered four predetermined areas:

1. Student progress
2. Accomplishment of mission, purpose, and specialized focus
3. Organizational viability: financial status and governance
4. Efforts to reduce racial, ethnic, and economic isolation and to increase the racial and ethnic diversity of the study body

This new annual report structure helped to strengthen the annual report as an tool for accountability. The same template or structure of the annual report has been used since 1999 with only minor modifications. While all schools complied with this framework for the goals and objectives, the quality of the goals and objectives varied by school and goal area. The schools received feedback on their annual reports, and improvements have been apparent with each passing year.

Connecticut charter schools are still in the process of developing strong accountability systems and annual reports, and we are impressed with the overall quality of the reports. The schools are clearly on their way to providing an exceptional accountability model that is mission driven and includes a number of relevant alternative indicators. This model encourages schools to tell their own story and report on goals and objectives that are unique to their schools.

We first examined the types of goals the schools have set out for themselves. This helped us to determine the extent to which the schools' mission statements refer to educationally meaningful goals. Second, we assessed the extent to which charter schools' missions are reflected in goals and measurable objectives. Indeed, a high success rate in meeting goals would not be meaningful if the indicators and benchmarks used fail to fully represent the school's mission. In the third section we address the question of charter schools' success rates in meeting their goals. Next, we examine the quality of the evidence schools offer to support claims that they have met their goals. A school's high success rate is less meaningful if the school relies on weak or insufficient data to draw such conclusions. Finally, we briefly examine the progress in developing and achieving appropriate objectives from the 1999-00 to the 2000-01 school year.

7.1 Do Mission Statements Refer to Educationally Meaningful Goals?

All of the school mission statements we examined contain educationally meaningful goals and aspirations. In order to provide a general characterization of themes found in charter school mission statements, we examined each school's annual report and identified a number of common themes. Table 7:1 summarizes the findings by identifying five common themes and the number of school mission statements in which each is found.

Table 7:1 Common Themes Found in Charter School Mission Statements, 1999-00

Mission themes	*Number of schools*	*Percentage of schools (n=16)*
Academic/curriculum	16	100%
Specific instructional approaches	15	94%
Individual development	14	88%
School climate	9	56%
Community involvement and collaboration	9	56%
Other	1	6%

Source: Compiled from 1999-00 charter school annual reports by The Evaluation Center

The most common theme in the mission statements from 1999-00 annual reports centered around academic and curricular goals. Indeed, all school mission statements contain statements about such issues as academic rigor, emphases in particular academic subjects, communication skills, and so on. The next most common theme found in the mission statements (94 percent) pertains to specific instructional approaches, such as direct instruction, interdisciplinary teaching, experiential learning, and so on. A similar percentage of mission statements (88 percent) contain references to student individual development, including acceptance of responsibility, aesthetic appreciation, citizenship, leadership, and others. Over half of the mission statements also alluded to goals related to school climate (e.g., safety and discipline, strong learning communities, etc.) and community involvement/collaboration (e.g., partnerships with community and civic organizations). Finally, one school's mission referred to interest in sports (classified as "other" in the table).

7.2 Are Mission Statements Adequately Represented in Goals and Measurable Objectives?

After developing a mission statement, the next step for a charter school is to operationalize the key elements of that mission into measurable objectives. In this section we assess the extent to which each school's list of measurable objectives fully represents the range of goals and values in its mission statement.

We made subjective ratings of the extent to which the goals and measurable objectives articulated in the 1999-00 annual reports cover the range of goals set out in the mission statements. We framed the task as a content validity problem, estimating the proportion and range of the missions covered by the measurable objectives. From this perspective, charter school missions define a "content universe," or range of school and student attributes that the school wishes to influence. To illustrate this point we have included Figure 7:1. In this figure, the content universe is represented by the large circle. Goals and measurable objectives seek to represent most or all of this content universe. We estimate that the goals and measurable objectives included by the charter schools represent more than half of the identified content universe covered by the mission statements.

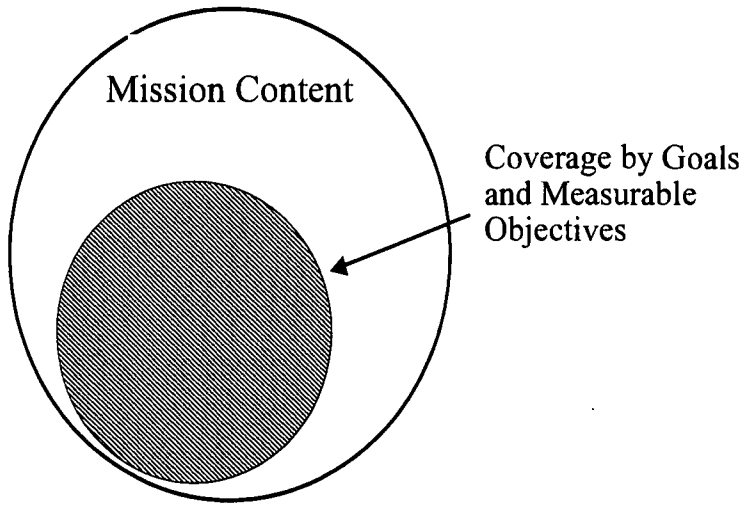


Figure 7:1 Illustration of Assessment of Mission Coverage

Given that it is difficult, and probably impossible, to develop wholly objective ratings of the annual reports, we resisted the attempt to quantify this coverage precisely in percentage terms. Instead, we developed the following five-point scale:

1 = no coverage

2 = approximately 25 percent coverage

3 = approximately 50 percent coverage

4 = approximately 75 percent coverage

5 = approximately 100 percent coverage

The findings are presented in Table 7:2. As the table shows, in the majority of schools (69 percent), the measurable objectives covered most or all of the goals articulated in the mission statements.

Only two schools failed to articulate at least half of their mission statement's goals in the measurable objectives. As one would expect, many schools had some difficulty in operationalizing the visionary and sometimes lofty missions noted above. Nonetheless, most schools did a reasonably good job, especially given the difficulty of the task.

Table 7:2 Distribution of Schools by Coverage Rating

Coverage Rating (1 - 5)	*Number of Schools*	*Percent of Schools*
1	0	0%
2	2	12%
3	3	19%
4	7	44%
5	4	25%
Median	4	

Source: Compiled from 1999-00 charter school annual reports by The Evaluation Center

Interestingly, there was only a weak and statistically nondiscernible relationship between the extent to which the measurable objectives covered a school's mission statement and the number of measurable objectives. This suggests that schools do not have to measure a large number of phenomena in order to fully assess their ability to fulfill their missions.

7.3 Are the Schools Meeting Their Own Goals?

Given the time table of the evaluation work plan, we restricted our in-depth analysis to the 1999-00 annual reports. To maximize the consistency and fairness of the comparisons, we restricted our analysis to the sections of the annual reports that address the four state-mandated areas where the charter schools are expected to elaborate goals and measurable objectives: (i) student progress; (ii) accomplishment of mission, purpose, and specialized focus; (iii) organizational viability: financial status and governance; and (iv) efforts to reduce racial, ethnic, and economic isolation. For each area we counted the total number of measurable objectives and compared this number with the number of objectives that, according to the data provided in the report, were met by the school. In judging whether a particular goal was met, we strictly applied the benchmark provided by the school. For instance, if a school's benchmark was that 80 percent of the students would achieve passing grades on an exam, we considered the school to have achieved the objective only if the reported pass rate was 80 percent or higher. If, for instance, the school reported a 79 percent pass rate, we coded it as not achieving its objective. We considered constructing a coding system that judged schools on the numerical difference between benchmarks and reported values. While such a system would have the advantage of giving schools credit for coming close to their benchmarks, many of the benchmarks were qualitative in nature and thus were not amenable to such an analysis.

Table 7:3 reports summary statistics on the extent to which Connecticut charter schools have met their self-determined goals. The findings are reported for each of the four state-mandated areas, along with aggregate totals. Across all four areas, Connecticut charter schools met 50 percent of the measurable objectives identified in their annual reports. Not surprisingly, the success rate was highest (57 percent) for objectives related to the schools' specific missions and foci, where the schools have the most flexibility in defining goals. The success rate was lowest (39 percent) in

objectives related to the educational progress of students. The success rate was next-to-lowest (47 percent) in objectives related to reducing racial, ethnic, and economic isolation. In most cases, this appears to be the result of often disadvantaged locales in which the schools are situated and the difficulty of enticing students from other neighborhoodsto attend schools in these areas.[1] The overall success rate for objectives related to schools' organizational viability was 55 percent. This is largely due to financial aspects that were—in part—out of the control of the charter schools.

Table 7:3 Percentage of Objectives Met By Charter Schools, 1999-00

Area	Number of Objectives Achieved	Total Number of Objectives	Percent of Objectives Achieved
Educational progress of students	41	104	39%
Accomplishment of mission, purpose, and specialized focus	82	143	57%
Organizational viability: financial status and governance	22	40	55%
Efforts to reduce racial, ethnic, and economic isolation	27	57	47%
Totals	172	344	50%

Source: Compiled from 1999-00 charter school annual reports by The Evaluation Center.

It is important to bear in mind that for the purposes of this analysis, the success rate is defined by the formulas included in Figure 7:2, which were used to calculate the success rates of the charter schools in terms of meeting their objectives. A less restrictive definition of success would substitute the number of objectives *for which there is sufficient data* in the denominator (see the second formula in Figure 7:2). On this latter definition, Connecticut charter schools met 65 percent of their objectives. The former definition has the advantage of providing schools with an incentive to develop and maintain high standards for the development of measures and data collection. Table 7:4 provides a school-by-school breakdown in terms of the success rate in meeting their objectives.

Figure 7:2 Formulas to Calculate the Success Rate in Meeting Objectives

$$\frac{\text{Number of objectives met}}{\text{Total number of objectives}} = 50\%$$

$$\frac{\text{Number of objectives met}}{\text{Total number of objectives with sufficient data}} = 65\%$$

[1] Because of federal regulations, charter schools can only select students through a lottery when oversubscribed. However, because of the *Sheff v. O'Neill* court ruling, Connecticut charter schools are expected to make efforts to reduce isolation. Charter schools work toward this end by active recruitment and by engaging their students in activities that expose them to groups that are ethnically or socially different from their own group.

Table 7:4 Success Rate in Meeting Objectives by School and Objective Area, 1999/2000

	School		Educational Progress of Students					Mission, purpose, specialized focus					Organizational viability: finance and governance					Reduce racial, ethnic, and economic isolation					Totals				
			Met Bench mark	*Partially Met Bench-mark*	*Poor Datal Bench mark*	*No Datal Bench mark*	*Total*	*Met Bench mark*	*Partially Met Bench-mark*	*Poor Datal Bench mark*	*No Datal Bench mark*	*Total*	*Met Bench mark*	*Partially Met Bench-mark*	*Poor Datal Bench mark*	*No Datal Bench mark*	*Total*	*Met Bench mark*	*Partially Met Bench-mark*	*Poor Datal Bench mark*	*No Datal Bench mark*	*Total*	*Met Bench mark*	*Partially Met Bench-mark*	*Poor Datal Bench mark*	*No Datal Bench mark*	*Total*
Opened 1997	Ancestors	n	3	4	8	7	22	4	5	1	2	12	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	9	9	10	9	37
		%	14%	18%	36%	32%	100%	33%	42%	8%	17%	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%	24%	24%	27%	24%	100%
	Bridge Academy	n	0	3	0	0	3	2	2	0	0	4	3	0	1	0	4	0	3	1	1	5	5	8	2	1	16
		%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	50%	50%	0%	0%	100%	75%	0%	25%	0%	100%	0%	60%	20%	20%	100%	31%	50%	13%	6%	100%
	Common Ground	n	1	3	6	1	11	11	4	6	0	21	2	1	0	0	3	4	0	0	0	4	18	8	12	1	39
		%	9%	27%	55%	9%	100%	52%	19%	29%	0%	100%	67%	33%	0%	0%	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%	46%	21%	31%	3%	100%
	Explorations	n	3	1	0	0	4	1	3	0	0	4	2	0	2	0	4	0	2	1	0	3	6	6	3	0	15
		%	75%	25%	0%	0%	100%	25%	75%	0%	0%	100%	50%	0%	50%	0%	100%	0%	67%	33%	0%	100%	40%	40%	20%	0%	100%
	Integrated Day	n	2	6	0	0	8	15	18	0	0	33	2	0	0	0	2	0	3	0	0	3	19	27	0	0	46
		%	25%	75%	0%	0%	100%	45%	55%	0%	0%	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	41%	59%	0%	0%	100%
	ISAAC	n	4	1	4	0	9	2	0	2	0	4	0	0	2	0	2	1	0	0	3	4	7	1	8	3	19
		%	44%	11%	44%	0%	100%	50%	0%	50%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%	25%	0%	0%	75%	100%	37%	5%	42%	16%	100%
	Jumoke Academy	n	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	4	0	5
		%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	20%	80%	0%	100%
	Odyssey	n	0	1	1	0	2	5	0	0	0	5	1	1	0	0	2	3	0	0	0	3	9	2	1	0	12
		%	0%	50%	50%	0%	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%	50%	50%	0%	0%	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%	75%	17%	8%	0%	100%
	Side By Side	n	3	0	2	0	5	7	2	0	0	9	2	0	0	0	2	2	1	0	0	3	14	3	2	0	19
		%	60%	0%	40%	0%	100%	78%	22%	0%	0%	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%	67%	33%	0%	0%	100%	74%	16%	11%	0%	100%
	Sports Sciences	n	7	1	2	0	10	8	3	0	0	11	1	0	2	0	3	2	1	0	1	4	18	5	4	1	28
		%	70%	10%	20%	0%	100%	73%	27%	0%	0%	100%	33%	0%	67%	0%	100%	50%	25%	0%	25%	100%	64%	18%	14%	4%	100%
Opened 1998	Breakthrough	n	8	3	0	0	11	12	1	0	0	13	1	0	0	0	1	7	5	0	0	12	28	9	0	0	37
		%	73%	27%	0%	0%	100%	92%	8%	0%	0%	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%	58%	42%	0%	0%	100%	76%	24%	0%	0%	100%
	Brooklawn	n	3	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	3	2	2	0	0	4	0	1	1	0	2	8	3	1	0	12
		%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%	50%	50%	0%	0%	100%	0%	50%	50%	0%	100%	67%	25%	8%	0%	100%
	Charter Oak Prep	n	0	0	0	1	1	3	3	0	0	6	0	0	0	4	4	0	0	2	0	2	3	3	2	5	13
		%	0%	0%	0%	100%	100%	50%	50%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%	23%	23%	15%	38%	100%
	Highville	n	0	0	0	2	2	1	1	2	0	4	0	1	0	0	1	2	1	1	0	4	3	3	3	2	11
		%	0%	0%	0%	100%	100%	25%	25%	50%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	50%	25%	25%	0%	100%	27%	27%	27%	18%	100%
Opened 1999	Amistad	n	5	1	0	2	8	2	3	1	0	6	2	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	2	11	4	1	2	18
		%	63%	13%	0%	25%	100%	33%	50%	17%	0%	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%	61%	22%	6%	11%	100%
	Trailblazers	n	2	0	0	2	4	6	0	0	0	6	2	0	1	0	3	4	0	0	0	4	14	0	1	2	17
		%	50%	0%	0%	50%	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%	67%	0%	33%	0%	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%	82%	0%	6%	12%	100%
TOTALS		**n**	**41**	**25**	**23**	**15**	**104**	**82**	**45**	**14**	**2**	**143**	**22**	**5**	**9**	**4**	**40**	**27**	**17**	**8**	**5**	**57**	**172**	**92**	**54**	**26**	**344**
		%	**39%**	**24%**	**22%**	**14%**	**100%**	**57%**	**31%**	**10%**	**1%**	**100%**	**55%**	**13%**	**23%**	**10%**	**100%**	**47%**	**30%**	**14%**	**9%**	**100%**	**50%**	**27%**	**16%**	**8%**	**100%**

As noted above, however, success rates are a function of both the percentage of objectives reached and the types of objectives identified by the schools. One might hypothesize that schools that are less ambitious and identify fewer measurable objectives will have higher success rates than schools that identify many benchmarks.[2] In order to test this proposition, we computed the correlation between the number of goals set out by a given school and the success rates for those schools. The analysis suggested that there was a very weak and statistically nonsignificant relationship between the two factors ($r = 0.15$; $p = 0.57$). Moreover, one might hypothesize that schools might seek to improve their pass rates by failing to fully represent their mission statements in measurable objectives. To test this proposition we computed the correlation between success rate and the extent to which the objectives cover the school's mission statements. Once again, there appeared to be little relationship between these two factors ($r=-0.11$, $p=0.66$). In short, there is no clear statistical evidence that charter schools attempt to inflate their success rates by restricting the range and number of measurable objectives.

7.4 The Quality of Evidence Offered

In order to evaluate the quality of evidence offered in the annual reports, we assigned a qualitative rating to each objective/benchmark and data associated with it. Objectives/benchmarks were considered "fully sufficient" if the benchmark was clear and the evidence associated with it offered a wholly persuasive case that the school had met or had not met the benchmark. Benchmarks/objectives were considered "barely sufficient" if the benchmark was not completely clear and/or the evidence associated with the benchmark was on point but flawed. Benchmarks/objectives were considered "not sufficient" if the benchmark was vague and/or the evidence provided did not provide an adequate representation of the benchmark. Finally, a small number of objectives were presented without any concomitant data (see Table 7:5).

Table 7:5 Evaluation of Evidence Associated with Objectives, 1999-00

Rating	*Number of benchmarks*	*Percentage of benchmarks*
Fully sufficient	196	57%
Barely sufficient	67	20%
Not sufficient	59	17%
No data offered	22	6%
Totals	344	100%

Source: Compiled from charter school annual reports by The Evaluation Center

As Table 7:5 demonstrates, more than half (57 percent) of the objectives and associated evidence were fully sufficient to determine whether or not the school had met the objective. Another 20

[2] Indeed, there was considerable variation among schools in the number of measurable objectives and benchmarks, with some schools offering as few as 5 and other schools as many as 46 (STD=12.0).

percent were barely sufficient. In 17 percent of the cases the annual reports articulated benchmarks, but provided data that were insufficient to determine whether the school had met the benchmark. Six percent of the benchmarks were reported with no accompanying data.

There was considerable variation among the charter schools. One school's percentage was only 20 percent. The standard deviation among all schools was 23 percent. Figure 7:3 illustrates the degree of variation among schools with a histogram.

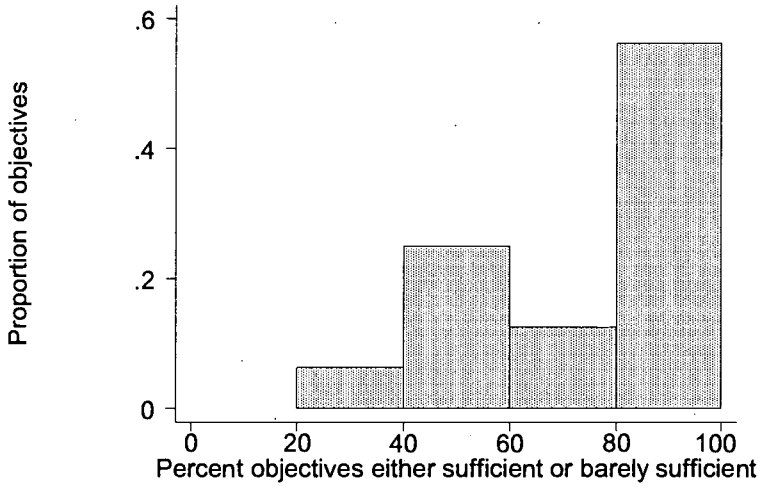


Figure 7:3 Variation in Quality of Objectives and Supporting Evidence Across All Charter Schools

Objectives/benchmarks receiving low grades exhibited a wide variety of problems. However, the following three generalizations and examples serve to illustrate some typical weaknesses.

- In several instances, the evidence provided in support of a objective did not directly address the goals set out in the objective. For instance, one measurable objective stated that 85 percent of the students in the school would perform at least 20 hours of community service annually. As evidence that the school had met the benchmark, the report stated that 700 hours of community service were completed during a 10-month period by 90 percent of the students. While this evidence is promising, it did not directly address whether 85 percent of the students met the goal of 20 hours per year. Indeed, it is possible that a substantial proportion of the 90 percent of students mentioned did far less than 20 hours of service, while others did far more than 20 hours.
- Other objectives failed to fully define and measure the relevant criterion of success. One objective, for instance, stated that 60 percent of students would show an improvement in writing skills. As evidence that the school had met the benchmark, the report stated that 90 percent of students successfully completed a written summary of community service participation. While certainly a positive indicator, this statement provides no evidence about whether the written summaries represent an "improvement." It is possible, however, than any completed writing task represented an "improvement"; if this is the case, it should have been clearly stated in the report.
- The data associated with several output/outcome-oriented objectives provided data only about inputs and processes and thus failed to fully address the content of the benchmark. One benchmark, for instance, stated that 100 percent of students would complete at least one writing assignment before graduation—25 percent each year. The data presented, however, demonstrated only the percentage of students who took a writing class and indicate nothing about what percentage actually completed the task.

Below, Table 7:6 provides a school-by-school breakdown of quality ratings of the objective and benchmarks.

Table 7:6 School-by-School Quality Ratings for Measurable Objectives/Benchmarks, 1999-00

	School	Sufficient	Barely sufficient	Not sufficient	No data	Total	% Sufficient or barely sufficient
Opened 1997	Ancestors	11	7	10	9	37	49%
	Bridge	8	5	2	1	16	81%
	Common Ground	14	12	12	1	39	67%
	Explorations	8	4	3	0	15	80%
	Integrated Day	43	3	0	0	46	100%
	ISAAC	3	5	11	0	19	42%
	Jumoke Academy	1	0	4	0	5	20%
	Odyssey	8	3	1	0	12	92%
	Side By Side	14	3	2	0	19	89%
	Sports Sciences	20	3	4	1	28	82%
1998	Breakthrough	37	0	0	0	37	100%
	Brooklawn	0	11	1	0	12	92%
	Charter Oak Prep	6	0	2	5	13	46%
	Highville	6	0	5	0	11	55%
1999	Amistad	10	5	0	3	18	83%
	Trailblazers	7	6	2	2	17	76%
	TOTALS	196	67	59	22	344	76%

7.5 Improvements in 2000-01 Annual Reports

We also conducted a brief analysis of the 2000-01 annual reports, comparing them to the annual reports from the previous year. Because different raters were used for each year, direct comparisons between quality of reports from each year must be made with caution. General trends are the primary focus.

We received an annual report from each of the charter schools that were in operation during 2000-01, except for Ancestors, which closed after the end of that school year. There was an average of around 7 goals and 15 measurable objectives for each of the schools that submitted an annual report in 2000-01.

The proportions of the mission statements that were covered by the schools' corresponding goals and objectives improved substantially from the previous year. Nevertheless, we still found some unique aspects of some of the mission statements that were not addressed in the goals and objectives.

The schools had improved in their ability to identify measurement tools to provide evidence related to the measurable objectives. However, some schools still used tools that do not correspond to the objectives that they are supposed to measure. For example, one school listed "increase of the number of persons of different racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds than those currently represented in our student body" as their progress indicator for their objective of increasing student diversity, and "number of times marketing strategies employed" as their measurement tool.

Approximately 14 percent of all the schools' measurable objectives did not have corresponding evidence reported. This was a notable improvement over the annual reports from the 1999-00 school year, when 24 percent of the measurable objectives lacked corresponding evidence. In some cases, this was simply because the needed data was not yet available to the schools at the time of reporting. In other cases, the schools used insufficient progress indicators, measurement tools, and/or evidence of achievement. A common error was using processes aimed towards attaining the objectives as measurement tools or as evidence of the status of attainment. However, this phenomenon was far less common than in Connecticut's past years and in other states that we have studied.

As comparisons between Tables 7:3 and 7:7 demonstrate, the total proportion of benchmarks that were fully met increased slightly from 50 percent in 1999-00 to 53 percent in 2000-01. Success in meeting benchmarks increased in all areas except educational progress, which decreased somewhat. When excluding the objectives that did not include sufficient data and/or benchmarks, the proportions of fully met objectives actually decreased slightly from 65 percent to 61 percent during the same period. However, this probably reflects higher and/or more relevant standards, particularly in regard to academic objectives, rather than a decrease in achievement.

Table 7:7 Percentage of Objectives Met By Charter Schools, 2000-01

Area	Number of Objectives Achieved	Total Number of Objectives	Percent of Objectives Achieved
Educational progress of students	19	61	31%
Accomplishment of mission, purpose, and specialized focus	58	89	65%
Organizational viability: financial status and governance	21	33	64%
Efforts to reduce racial, ethnic, and economic isolation	20	40	50%
Totals	118	223	53%

Source: Compiled from 2000-01 charter school annual reports by The Evaluation Center.

While in years past, a larger proportion of the goals and objectives referred to processes rather than outcomes, over half of the goals and objectives in the 2000-01 annual reports were clearly linked to outcomes. One paradox is that the more outcome-oriented the school's objectives are, the greater the chances that a school would fail to meet them. A school could list primarily process-oriented objectives, such as initiating a particular curriculum or hiring a new staff member. These objectives are very easy to measure (did they do them or not?) and they are generally easier to achieve than outcome goals, but they are far less relevant to assessing a school's overall success. On the other

hand, a school that lists numerous outcome-oriented objectives with high standards is likely to have a greater proportion of partially met rather than fully met benchmarks. Partially meeting high standards on student outcome-based criteria may be preferable to fully meeting process-oriented objectives.

Very high or unreasonable benchmarks were another reason why some schools failed to meet all of their intended objectives. For example, one school listed specific percentages of students of each race as its benchmarks for the goal of racial balance. Because charter schools must be open to all students and cannot utilize racial quotas, expecting to attain such specific benchmarks is not reasonable nor easily controllable. A more practical goal may be to increase the enrollment of students from a currently under-represented group by 5 percent. Some schools listed multiple progress indicators for measuring a single objective. Often, some of these benchmarks for a particular objective were met while others were missed. Using our rubric, we would score such an objective as "partially met."

Despite these issues, with each passing year the goals and objectives that the schools report on in their annual reports demonstrate a maturing process. While initially many of the goals and objectives were not necessarily realistic, measurable, nor even relevant, they appear to improve each year.

7.6 Summary

An analysis of charter school annual reports suggests that during both 1999-00 and 2000-01 academic years, Connecticut charter schools achieved approximately half of their self-identified goals. Moreover, all charter schools have educationally meaningful goals (as articulated in their mission statements) and most have adequately represented their missions in goals and measurable objectives. There is little evidence that schools have sought to inflate their success rates by choosing meaningless goals or by measuring only a small portion of their core activities. However, there is still considerable school-to-school variation in the quality of objectives and accompanying data. The overall strength of the charter schools' accountability plans has improved with each passing year. Likewise, the quality of the annual reports submitted by the charter schools has improved noticeably over the past five years. While these improvements are apparent, and while a few schools have developed exceptional accountability plans, there is still room for improvement.

The Connecticut State Department of Education has provided assistance and guidance to the schools in terms of their annual reports, and continues to provide feedback and assistance to help the charter schools strengthen and improve their accountability plans and annual reports. Relative to other states, Connecticut has succeeded in turning the charter school annual reports into an effective accountability tool. In earlier years, these annual reports were posted on the state's department of education Web site, which insured that a wide variety of stakeholders, including parents, could easily access the reports.

Chapter Eight
Performance on State Achievement Tests

While charter schools have been in operation for a limited number of years, one question on the minds of policymakers and the general public concerns whether or not charter schools can raise student performance on standardized tests. Gradually, results are accumulating from the various states that have charter schools.[3] Unfortunately, these initial studies of student achievement in charter schools are limited by a number of factors, many of which are also apparent in our analysis of student achievement on the state criterion-referenced tests in Connecticut's charter schools.

One evaluation question we were asked to address in this statewide evaluation concerns "the long-term (positive and negative) effects on students and parents that are associated with attending or sending children to a charter school." While charter schools may have a wide range of potential impacts on students and parents, surely one of the most important is on the academic achievement of students. Accordingly, this chapter presents an analysis of scores from the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT), administered to students in grades 4, 6, and 8, and scores from the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT), which is administered to students in grade 10.

The first section of this chapter outlines the design and methods employed in analyzing the CMT and CAPT test scores as well as the limitations of our analysis. We emphasize that, given the nature of the data and the limitations in our analysis, the findings should be regarded as suggestive and in no way conclusive. The next two sections summarize the results from the CMT and CAPT tests, respectively. A final section summarizes the findings, while Appendix I presents complete school-by-school results both in terms of index scores and the percent meeting state goals.

8.1 Description of Our Analyses

Any analysis of student achievement in charter schools must address two core methodological issues: (a) the measurement of student achievement and (b) the choice of comparison groups. This section of the chapter address each of these in turn.

Measuring Student Achievement

The task of assessing student achievement in charter schools is made easier if there are convenient ways to compare charter students' performance with the performance of students in noncharter

[3] Miron and Nelson (forthcoming) note that only 12 states plus the District of Columbia had evaluations or studies of charter schools that considered student achievement. The meta-analysis they conducted of existing research found an overall mixed picture in terms of charter school impact on student achievement.

public schools. Thus, the most important requirement for measuring student achievement is that it facilitates comparisons across a broad range of schools. This evaluation study focuses on the CMT and CAPT examinations since, to our knowledge, they are the only such instruments administered to students in all charter and noncharter public schools.

The Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) is a criterion-referenced test that assesses students' knowledge and skills. The contents of the test reflect the state curriculum standards and are determined by experts and practicing educators as important for students entering the grade to have mastered. The CMT includes three subjects—reading, writing, and mathematics—and is administered in the fall of each year in grades 4, 6, and 8. The Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT), by contrast, is administered to students in grade 10 and yields results in four subject areas: language arts, mathematics, science, and an interdisciplinary subject area. The CAPT is administered in the spring of each year, which explains why we did not receive the 2001-02 results in time for our analysis.

For both tests we have relied primarily on "index" scores[4] provided by the Connecticut Department of Education. The use of the index scores (which are essentially scaled scores) was motivated by our desire to simplify the analysis by reducing assessments of student achievement in schools to a single number. An alternative approach would be to examine the percentage of students from a given school falling into each of the three performance categories (passed, level A, and level B). Using all three would create unnecessary complexity, while looking at the percentage of students falling into any one of these categories would omit too much important information (for instance, pass rates might stay constant over time even as the proportion of students moving from the lowest to the middle category increased). Appendix I contains the results for all charter schools and compares these with each school's host district. The tables in this appendix present index scores as well as the percentage of students that met state goals by school and year. In our analyses we also used the "overall index" provided by the state. This is simply the average of the scaled index scores across all of the subject tests.

As discussed below, the evaluation team elected to examine CMT and CAPT scores over time. One problem with this strategy, however, is that some schools have been open longer than others, giving them more opportunity to improve their test scores. In order to facilitate fairer[5] comparisons among newer and older schools, we calculated average annual change scores (i.e., gains scores) for each school.

Comparisons

Simply knowing the direction and magnitude of a charter school's growth trend on the CMT and CAPT, however, does not by itself allow evaluators to assess charter schools' *impact* on student

[4] The CMT Index and the CAPT Index are both calculated from the percentages of students scoring in each of the four score ranges, giving credit for students who have reached the state goals, and giving partial credit for students who are approaching the state goal. An index is calculated for each subject area, and an overall index is calculated for each grade across subject areas.

[5] The fairness of these comparisons, however, is limited by the fact that this technique assumes that the "natural" growth curve for each school is linear.

achievement. Assessing impact requires us to try to estimate what student outcomes might have been like if they had continued to attend traditional public schools. This task is severely complicated by the fact that scores on achievement tests reflect two sets of influences. First, the fact that students and families tend to sort themselves into schools and school districts according to income and other factors means that achievement scores reflect students' economic and social endowments. Indeed, more than a generation of scholarly research, beginning with the Coleman Report (Coleman, 1966), has shown that a large proportion of within- and between-school variations in test scores can be explained by student and family socioeconomic status. This fact usually makes it difficult to isolate the second major influence on achievement scores—the educational value added by schools' inputs and processes. The second, "value-added," component of achievement test scores is that part of the variation among scores that can be explained by what the school is doing. The job of a charter school evaluation is to distinguish the value added by charter schools from the various economic, social, and cultural resources that students bring with them to the school.

Generally, the best way to isolate charter schools' impacts is to randomly assign students to charter and noncharter schools. Given that randomization is very likely to produce groups of students that are alike in all relevant respects except charter status, any observed difference between the two groups would very likely be due to the influence of the charter schools. For a variety of ethical, logistical, and political reasons, such a randomized experiment is impossible to undertake. Thus, we were forced to turn to weaker designs, one that compares trends (trends study) in charter school scores with those of their host districts. The other design compares cohorts in charter school scores with those of their host districts (cohort study). These designs allow us to distinguish trends that are unique to charter schools from those that are common to all schools. They also allow us to examine the relative progress made by charter schools over time. The report also makes comparisons with state aggregate scores. While state comparisons are not useful in assessing charter school effectiveness, they do provide a sense of how charter school students are performing in comparison with the state norm. This might be useful inasmuch as charter school students ultimately compete with all students in the labor market, for college admissions, and so on.

Weighted averages. We use weighted [6] index scores to calculate average annual change scores or differences in test scores over time for both the trend and cohort analyses. Because the size of the charter schools varies extensively, and because our aim was to estimate the overall impact of charter schools on student achievement (i.e., our focus is on charter schools as a whole rather than impact of individual schools), we have weighted the data according to the size of the schools, as measured by the number of test takers. Therefore, schools with more students taking the test carry more weight in the weighted average. Likewise, we aimed to aggregate results across host districts so we

[6] For all tests, the weighted average score (WA_i) for a given school *i* is given by:

$$WA_i = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n} x_i w_i}{\sum_{i=1}^{n} w_i}$$

where x_i is the score for school *i* and w_i is the number of students tested in school *i*.

weighted them in a similar fashion. If two charter schools have the same host district, we still only counted the host district once in the weighted average for host districts.

Average annual change scores. We calculated average annual change scores for each trend analysis This involves calculating the difference between the most recent year of data and the first year of data. This difference is then divided by the number of years that change scores could be calculated. For example, if there are three years of data and the difference between the most recent and the first year of data was 6 points, we would divide this number by two, which results in an average annual change score of 3 points. If the difference was -6 (the most recent year of test data was 6 points lower than the first year), the average annual change score would be -3.

We calculated average annual change scores for both the aggregate of charter schools in any given trend or cohort as well as the aggregate for the host districts. Finally, we subtracted the charter school average annual change score from the host district average annual change score to come up with what we call the "difference in change scores." If the difference in change scores is positive, it means the charter schools are gaining relative to host districts. If it is negative, it means that charter schools are losing ground relative to host districts. In other words, the difference between average annual change scores in charter schools and their host districts allows us to examine the relative progress made by charter schools over the years.

Designs for comparisons. We used two separate designs for comparisons. Both use average change scores and both utilized weighted averages that take into consideration the size of the individual schools in the aggregates. Trends analysis was the first design we used for comparisons. With this design, we compared consecutive groups of different students at the same grade level (e.g., this year's fourth graders compared with last year's fourth graders). The second design was cohort analysis, which examined test score data for the same groups of students twice over time. For example, this means we compared fourth grade students in reading in 1997-98 with sixth grade students in reading two years later in 1999-00. The next two sections of this chapter considers the results from the *trend* and *cohort* analyses, respectively. We have included more details about each of these designs at the beginning of each section before describing the findings.

Limitations

A number of limitations were associated with our analyses. The first such limitation is that the CMT and CAPT data available to us provided no way to track the performance of individual students as they moved from one school to the next. This left the evaluation team with no way to observe students' precharter school achievement levels. This severely limits the evaluators' ability to distinguish the value added by charter schools from the influence of other factors.

Second, some of Connecticut's charter schools are still quite new, and there are many reasons to expect that it might take more time for the effects of the reform to show up in measures of student achievement. New schools, like most organizations, often face a number of start-up issues that can hinder their ability to produce their intended results. Recent experimental evidence from the Tennessee class size experiment suggests that the effects of poor schooling in early years can persist for many years to come (see, e.g., Grissmer et al., 2000). Hence, even the most effective schools

might find it difficult to counteract the effects of years of schooling in ineffective schools. While its important to recognize this limitation, it is also noteworthy that our analysis consider the longest trends or most years of data of any charter school study to date.

Third, the fact that Connecticut does not test students in each grade limited any genuine longitudinal analysis of student cohorts. Thus, instead of comparing how the same group of students performed in years one, two, and three, we were restricted to comparing consecutive groups of students at the same grade level (e.g., this year's fourth graders with last year's) or cohorts of students taking the same subject level test every other year (e.g., fourth graders taking the CMT fourth grade test in 1997-98 compared with sixth grade students two years later). As a consequence, it is difficult to separate changes in aggregate scores that result from school efforts from changes that may reflect changes in the composition of the student body.

Fourth, because Connecticut has a relatively small number of charter schools, any characterization of charter school students' current performance now, may change with the passage of time.

Finally, inferences about charter school impact presented in this chapter are no stronger than the assumption that host districts provide a group of comparable students. Unfortunately, no education reference groups can be used to compare charter schools with similar schools across the state. In many cases, charter school students have characteristics similar to students in the host districts. For a few schools, however, this is not the case (see Appendix H).

Description of the CMT and CAPT

The Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) is a criterion-referenced test that assesses students' performance on those skills identified by content experts and practicing educators as important for students entering the grade to have mastered. The CMT includes three subjects—reading, writing, and mathematics—and is administered in grade 4, grade 6, and grade 8. The CMT Index is calculated from the percentages of students scoring in each of the four score ranges, giving credit for students who have reached the state goals, and giving partial credit for student who are approaching the state goal. An index is calculated for each subject area, and an overall index is calculated for each grade across subject areas.

Because of new state and federal regulations, the 2001-02 administration of the CMT included more students that were excluded from taking the test in previous years. This includes students with disabilities, bilingual students, and students with English as a second language (ESL). In total, the participation rate increased by 2 percent between 2000 and 2001 (Connecticut Department of Education, 2002). In order to have comparable data from year to year, the data we used for the 2001-02 school year on the CMT excluded students with disabilities, bilingual and ESL students.

The Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) is administered to students in grade 10 and yields results in four subject areas: mathematics, language arts, science, and interdisciplinary. An overall index score that averages the results in the four subject area tests is also reported. The results are reported as the percentage of students meeting state standards and as an index score. The index score for the CAPT is calculated in the same way as for the CMT (see previous paragraph).

The most recent year of results available at the time of our analysis was the 2000-01 school year, the first year that the second generation of the CAPT was administered. This yielded results that are not easily comparable to previous years, since there were changes in content, reporting, and standards between the first and second generation CAPT. There was, however, a bridge study that estimated how the students taking the CAPT-2 in 2001 would have performed had they taken the CAPT-1, and applied the CAPT-1 standards. We downloaded the results of the bridge study from the Web site of the Connecticut State Department of Education for each charter schools and its host district and used this data to extend the trends we had already followed using the CAPT-1 from 1997 to 1999. Just as with the CMT, the most recent administration of the CAPT also included students that previously had been excluded. Unfortunately, the results from the bridge study were not broken out so that we could calculate the results with similar groups of students from previous years.

Table 8:1 Years of Available CMT and CAPT Results for Connecticut Charter Schools

Opened in 1997 (5 years of CMT Results)	Opened in 1998 (4 years of CMT Results)	Opened in 1999 (3 years of CMT Results)	Opened in 1997 (4 years of CAPT Results)
▸ Integrated Day Charter School	▸ Breakthrough	▸ Amistad	▸ Ancestors Community
▸ ISAAC	▸ Brooklawn	▸ Trailblazers	▸ Bridge Academy
▸ Jumoke*	▸ Charter Oak**		▸ Common Ground
▸ Odyssey	▸ Highville Mustardseed Charter School		▸ Explorations
▸ Side by Side			▸ Sports Sciences***

* Jumoke opened in 1997, but did not have fourth grade students enrolled until 1998. Therefore, only four years of data are available for this school.

** Since the CMT is administered in the autumn we have included 2001-02 CMT scores for Charter Oak, even though this school closed in February 2002..

*** Because Sports Science did not have 10th grade students enrolled until 1998, only three years of results are available for this school.

As of this writing, 11 of the 16 charter schools that were in operation during the 2001-02 school year have reported CMT results. The remaining 5 schools cater to high school students, who take the CAPT instead of the CMT. Among the 11 charter schools considered in our analysis of CMT results, 4 were opened in 1997 and have 5 years of CMT results, while 4 schools have 4 years of results and 2 have 3 years of results (see Table 8:1). Among the 5 high schools considered in our analysis of CAPT results, all were opened in 1997 and have either 3 or 4 years of CAPT results. The most recent CAPT results that were available at the time we conducted this analysis were for the 2000-01 school year. At that time all 5 charter high schools were still in operation so they are all included in our analysis. One of the schools, Ancestors, did close before the start of the 2001-02 school year.

8.2 Trend Analysis: A Comparison Between Charter Schools, Host Districts, and the State

The trend analysis required that we collect individual school data on different groups of students over three or more years. In other words, we compare consecutive groups of different students at the same grade level (e.g., this year's fourth graders compared with last year's fourth graders).[7] If we aggregated all grade level data into one trend, changes over time may be due to the addition of new schools to the aggregate. Therefore, the trends follow the same group of schools over time based on their year of start-up. For example, the first trend for fourth grade students includes only 2 schools that opened in 1997-98. The second trend includes all the schools that opened or were in operation in 1998-99 (i.e., 5 schools). Because each trend has the same schools included over time, we can control for changes that could occur with the addition of new schools to the aggregate. We decided to include only the longest two trends per grade. In the case of the sixth grade trends, it would also have been possible to trace a third trend of a few schools that opened later. However, these schools are relatively new and have fewer years of data, so we decided not to include them.

As discussed in Section 8.1, we used weighted index scores to calculate average annual change scores or differences over time. We calculated the average annual change score for groups of charter schools in each trend as well as for their respective host districts. Next we examined the difference between average annual change scores in charter schools and their host districts, which illustrates the relative progress made by charter schools over the years. The difference in average annual change scores used in this chapter do not indicate only the charter schools' progress over time; they also provide a way to gauge that progress. The results below first describe highlights in individual school performance, then examine weighted averages for all charter schools in comparison with their host districts and the state average.

Again, readers should be cautioned that the numbers of students taking the test in each charter school during any one year is small, and it is possible that there are differences in background characteristics of the consecutive groups of students taking the test each year. Host districts have been in operation for many years prior to 1997-98, whereas charter schools are at most only five years old. Finally, the trend study is limited because it cannot filter out whether changes in student scores are due to changes in students or changes in a school program.

The line charts at the top of Exhibits 8:1 to 8:17 provide comparisons over time for the individual charter schools while the charts at the bottom of these exhibits compare the performance of the charter schools and their host districts using weighted averages for all grade and subject area tests.

---

[7] This assumes that the group of students taking a particular grade level test each year has one more year of exposure to the charter school than the group of students that took the same grade level test the year before. For example, the students taking the grade 4 CMT in 1997 had been enrolled at their charter school for only a few months before taking the test. The students taking the grade 4 CMT in 1998 had just over a year of exposure, while the grade 4 CMT test takers in 1999 had just over two years of exposure to the charter school. The rationale for this analysis assumes that there is limited student mobility, although in a few schools the mobility rates are believed to be high.

The charter schools and their host districts were weighted by the number of students who took the test (see Section 8.1 for more details about the weighting procedure). Host districts are the districts in which the charter schools lie or the districts from which a charter school attracts the most students. The charter schools and their host districts are listed in Appendix H as well as in Appendix I.

Summary of Trends

In these trend study comparisons, we collected data over three or more years from different groups of students (from both charter schools and host districts) taking the same subject and grade level tests. For example, we collected and compared CMT results for fourth graders in 1997-98 with fourth graders in each subsequent year up to the 2001-02 school year.

- The fourth grade CMT had 2 trend groups that we could follow. Integrated Day and Side by Side opened in 1997-98, so we could compare them with their two host districts over four years (from 1997-98 to 2001-02) on their weighted CMT for the first trend. For the second trend, we compared three new charter schools that opened in 1998-99 and the two that opened in 1997-98 with their four host districts over three years (from 1998-99 to 2000-01). These five charter schools include Integrated Day, Side by Side, Jumoke, Breakthrough, and Highville. This trend analysis compared charter schools as a whole to host districts as a whole. Although Jumoke and Breakthrough had the same host district (Hartford) we only counted it once. (See Exhibits 8:1-8:3.)
- Two trends were traced for grade 6. For the first trend, we compared three charter schools—Integrated Day, ISAAC, and Odyssey—opened in 1997-98 with their three host districts over four years (from 1997-98 to 2001-02) on their weighted CMT. For the second trend we compared seven charter schools with their host districts starting with 1998-99. This second trend included three schools that opened in 1997 plus four new charter schools that opened in 1998: Side-by-Side, Breakthrough, Brooklawn, and Charter Oak. (See Exhibits 8:4-8:6.)
- There were two trends in eighth grade. In the first trend, we compared two charter schools, Odyssey and Brooklawn, opened since 1998-99, with their two host districts over four years (from 1998-99 to 2001-02) on their weighted CMT. In the second trend, three new charter schools (Integrated Day, ISAAC, and Charter Oak) that opened in 1999-00 and the two that opened in 1998-99 (Odyssey and Brooklawn) were compared with their five host districts over three years (from 1999-00 to 2001-02) on their weighted CMT. (See Exhibits 8:7-8:9.)
- Two trends were traced for grade 10. In the first trend, we compared four charter schools that opened in 1997-98 with their four host districts over four years (from 1997-98 to 2000-01). The four schools are Ancestors, Bridge, Common Ground, and Explorations. Weighted average CAPT results were used rather than average CAPT scores across all schools in the group. In this way the results more closely reflect the group of students in the four schools. Large schools have more weight and small schools have less weight. Even though Ancestors had relatively low scores, the fact that this school had few test takers meant that the results from this school did not have much effect on the weighted average across all four schools.[8] Only three of these four charter schools had scores in science. The second trend compared five schools with their host districts over three years (from 1998-99 to 2000-01). The five charter schools included the four schools in the first trend plus Sports Sciences Academy. Sports Sciences opened in 1997-

[8] Ancestors charter school closed at the end of the 2000-01 school year.

98, like the other schools, although they did not have tenth grade students until 1998-99. (See Exhibits 8:10-8:13.)

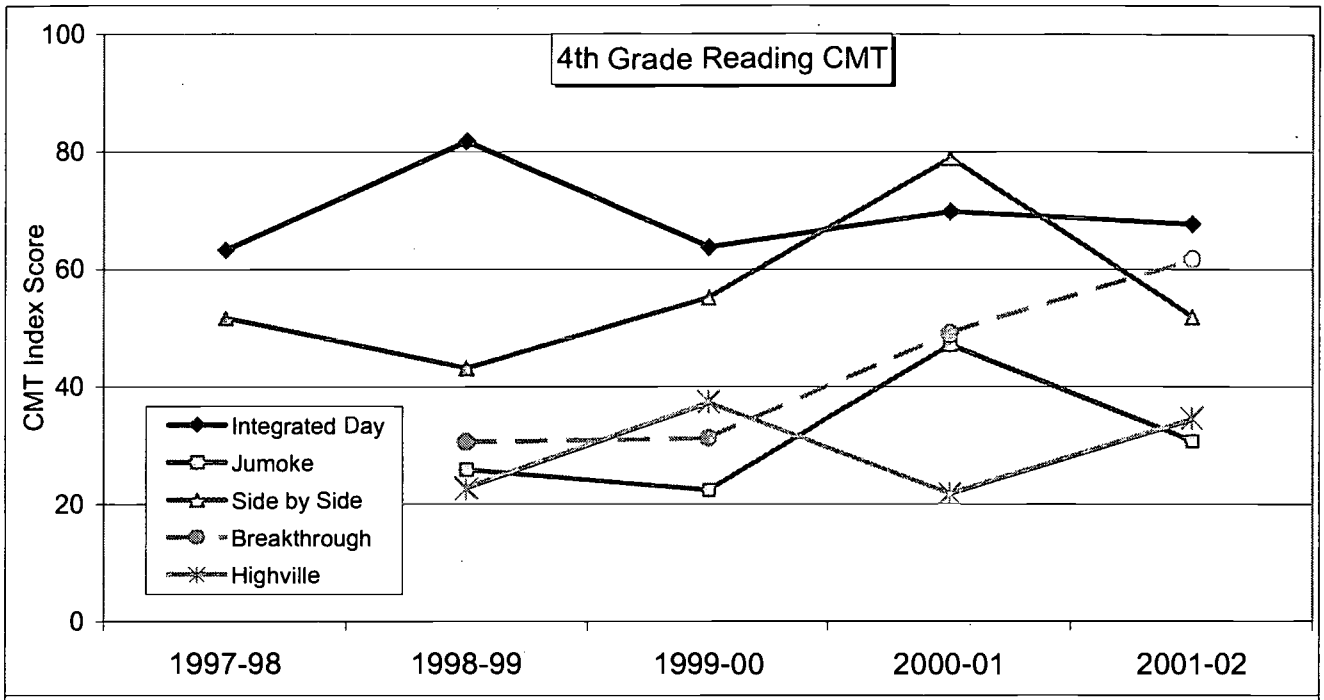
Comparison of Average Change Scores Between Charter Schools and Host Districts

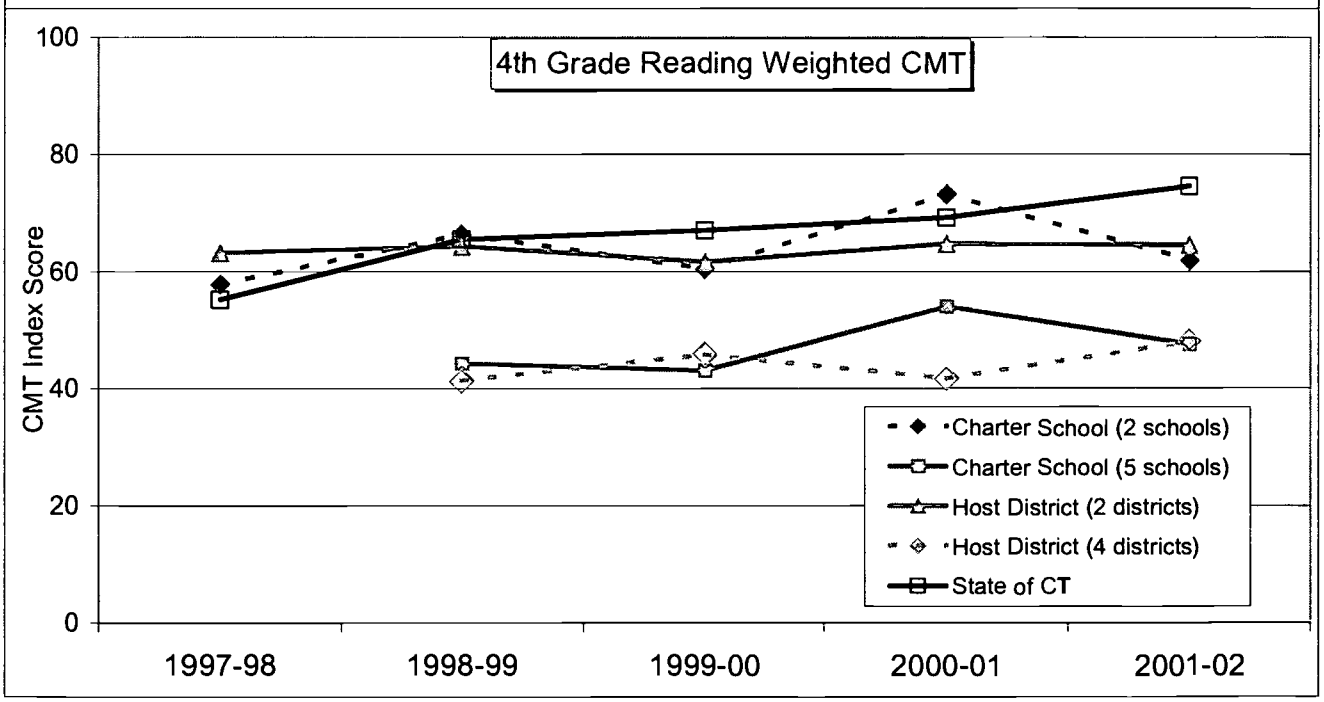
We used index scores to calculate average annual change scores over time. The difference between average annual change scores in charter schools and their host districts allows us to examine the relative progress made by charter schools over the years. We compared the difference in change scores with charter schools and their host districts in each trend. We calculated the difference in change scores by subtracting the average annual change score for the host districts from the average annual change score of the charter schools (CS-HD). The tables at the bottom of Exhibits 8:1 to 8:17 illustrate the scores over time as well as the average annual change scores. A positive difference in average annual change scores means that charter schools not only made positive progress over the years, but also made more headway than their host districts. Some examples to explain how to interpret the average annual change scores are included below:

- In the fourth grade CMT math results (see Exhibit 8:3), the average annual change score for charter schools was 4.56 for the second trend, indicating progress. Their host districts made slight progress with an average annual change score of 1.18. The difference of 3.38 between the average annual change score for charter school students and their host districts means that the change in average CMT index score for the second trend of charter school students who took the fourth grade reading test from 1997 to 2001 increased 3.38 points more than the change in average index scores for the fourth grade students in the host districts.
- In the second trend for eighth grade students taking the reading component of the test (see Exhibit 8:7), the CMT weighted index for charter schools was -1.73, and for their host districts it was -4.47. Therefore, the difference in average annual change scores was +2.74. This means that although the average CMT index scores for grade 8 reading declined, the decline was less severe than the decline in the average annual change scores for eighth grade students in their host districts.
- A negative number in difference in average annual change scores indicates that charter schools did not progress over the years relative to the host districts. For example, average annual change for the first trend of charter schools on the tenth grade language arts test was 0.78 and for the host district was 4.03 (see Exhibit 8:10). The difference in average annual change scores was -3.25. This means that the average grade 10 CAPT scores in language arts increased slightly for charter schools, but increased more for their host districts.

There are a total of 26 trends for grade and subject level tests for which we could compare the average annual change scores between charter schools and host districts. A summary of the differences in average annual change scores is discussed in the concluding section of this chapter. Table 8:3 and the top chart in Exhibit 8:21 illustrate the results from our analysis of the differences in average annual change scores. In the end we rated only 1 of these comparisons as negative, 17 as no difference and 8 as positive. This clearly illustrates that the charter schools are making positive progress in student achievement over the years, and the extent of progress is greater than their host districts.

Exhibit 8:1 Grade 4 Reading Results on the CMT, 1997-98 to 2001-02

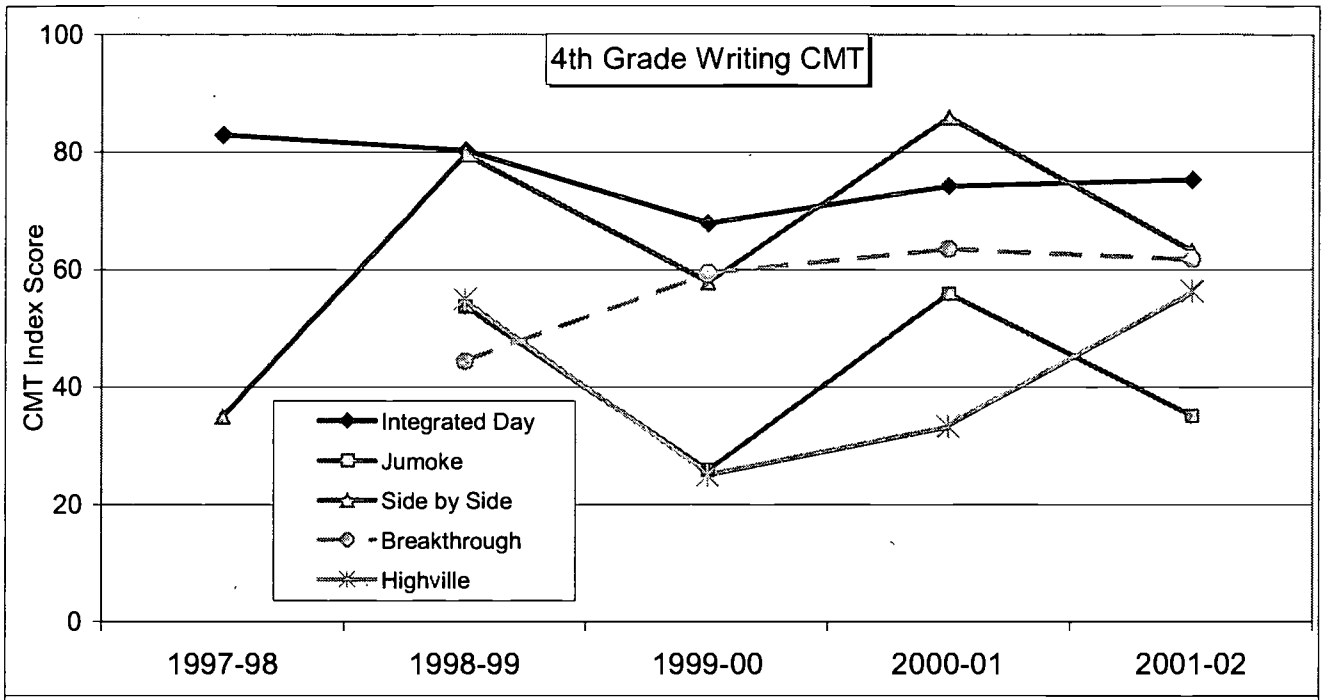


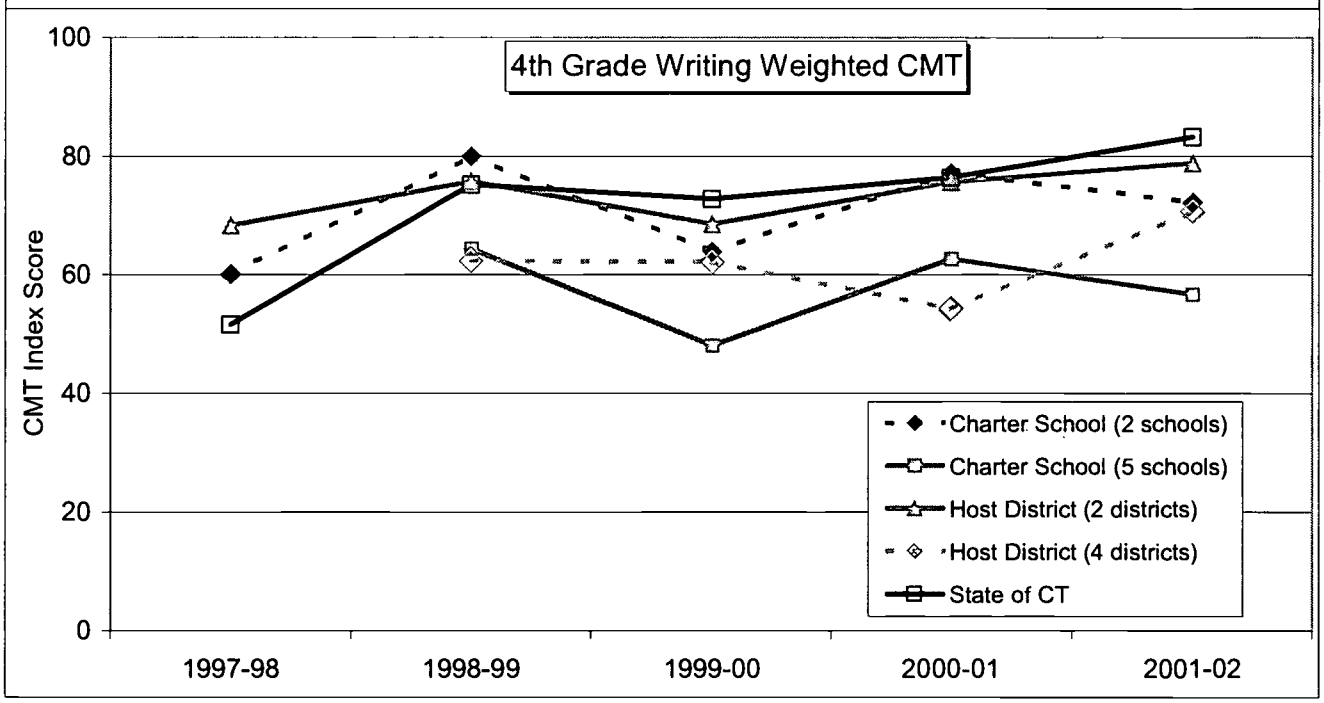


4th Grade Reading Weighted CMT

	First Trend						Second Trend					
	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	Average difference	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	Average difference
CS	57.78	66.36	60.40	73.19	61.90	1.03	44.26	43.04	53.98	47.62		1.12
HD	63.17	64.29	61.60	64.71	64.57	0.35	41.33	45.84	41.70	48.09		2.25
Difference of average difference (CS-HD)						0.68	Difference of average difference (CS-HD)					-1.13

Exhibit 8:2 Grade 4 Writing Results on the CMT, 1997-98 to 2001-02

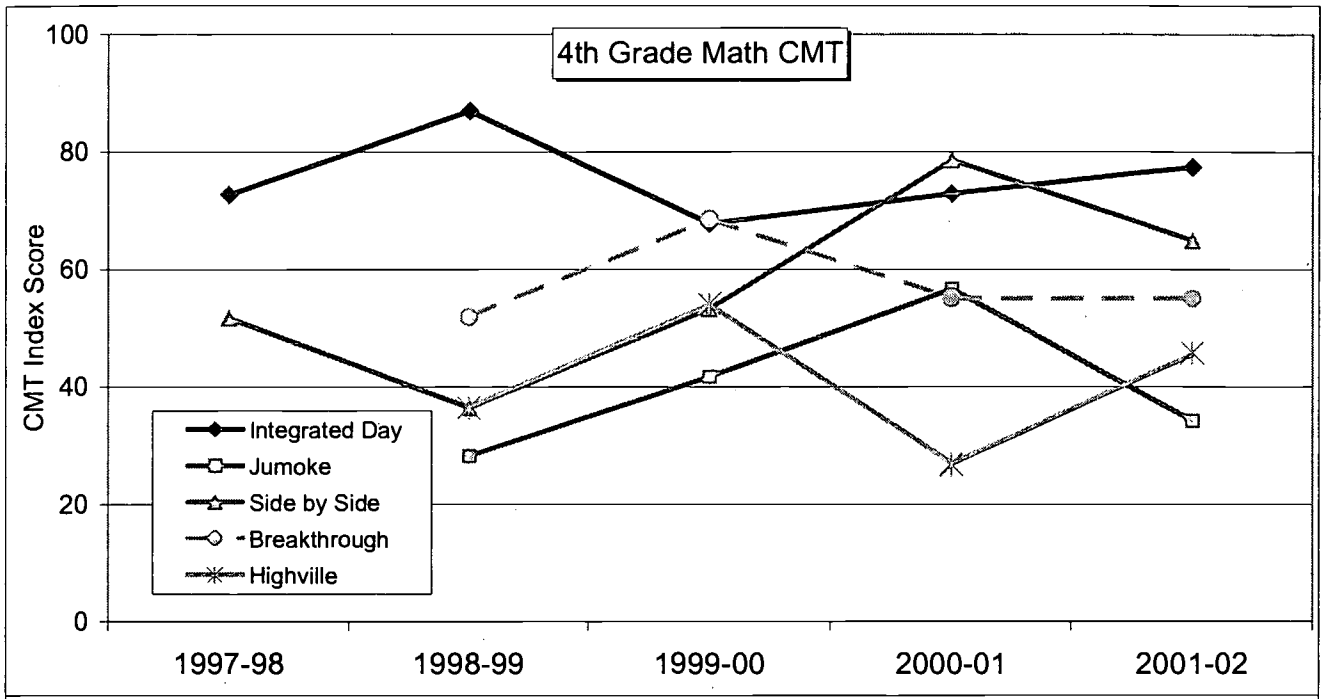


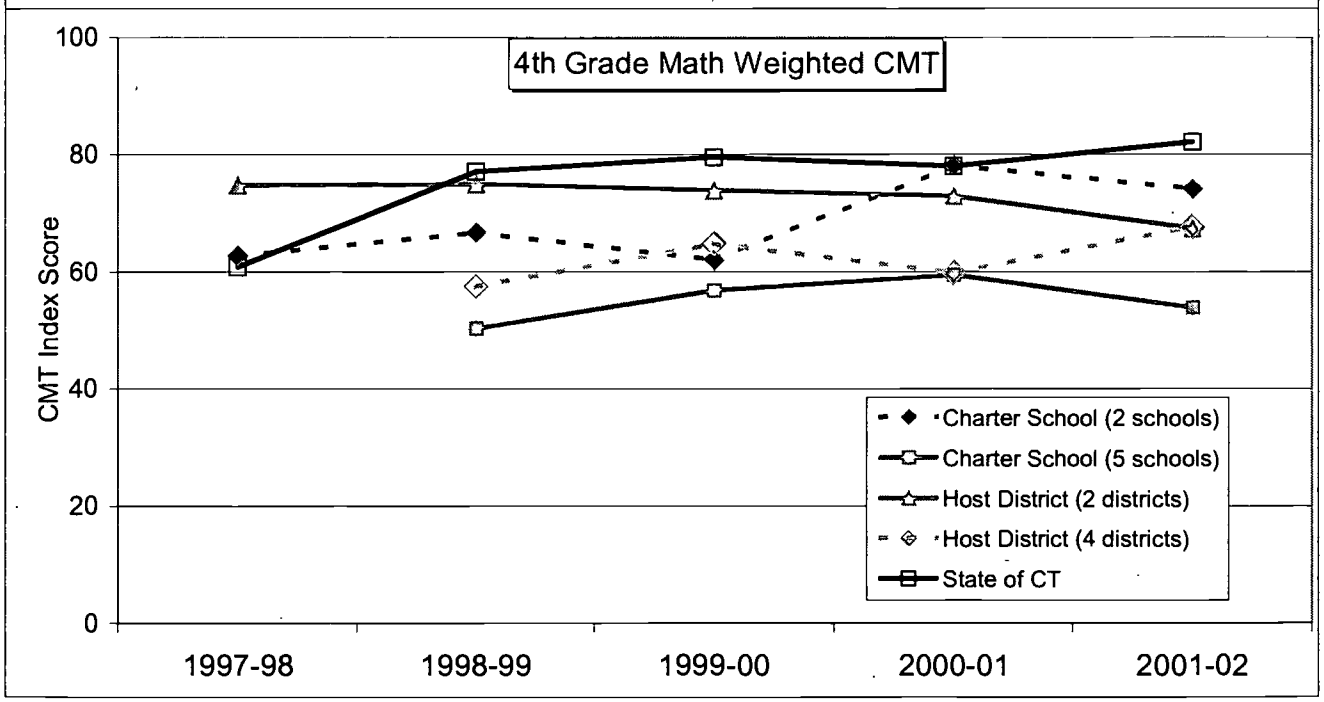


4th Grade Writing Weighted CMT

	First Trend						Second Trend					
	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	Average difference	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	Average difference
CS	60.09	80.02	63.90	77.14	72.14	3.01	64.43	48.02	62.67	56.65		-2.59
HD	68.359	75.72	68.534	75.6	78.81	2.61	62.35	62.15	54.22	70.65		2.77
Difference of average difference (CS-HD)						0.40	Difference of average difference (CS-HD)					-5.36

Exhibit 8:3 Grade 4 Math Results on the CMT, 1997-98 to 2001-02

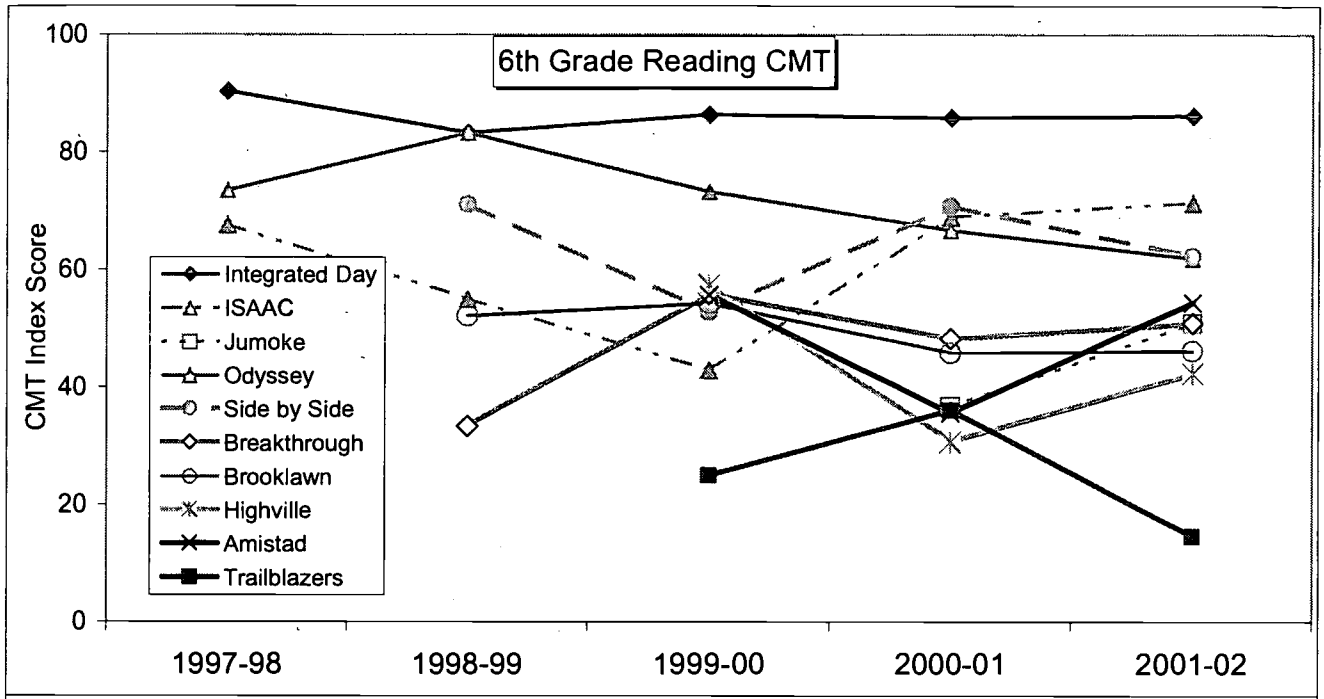


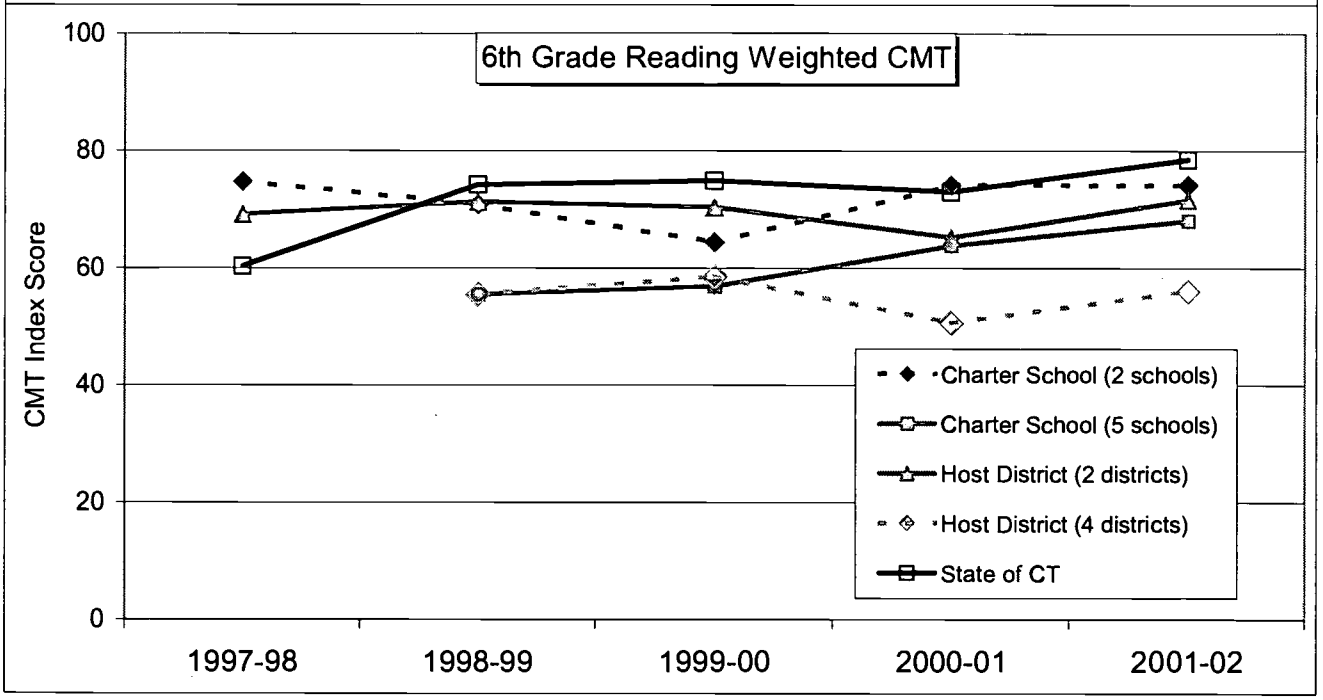


4th Grade Math Weighted CMT

	First Trend						Second Trend					
	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	Average difference	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	Average difference
CS	62.70	66.70	62.00	78.11	74.13	5.14	50.30	56.77	59.41	53.82		4.56
HD	74.80	74.97	73.85	72.92	67.39	-0.63	57.43	64.76	59.79	67.69		1.18
Difference of average difference (CS-HD)						5.77	Difference of average difference (CS-HD)					3.38

Exhibit 8:4 Grade 6 Reading Results on the CMT, 1997-98 to 2001-02

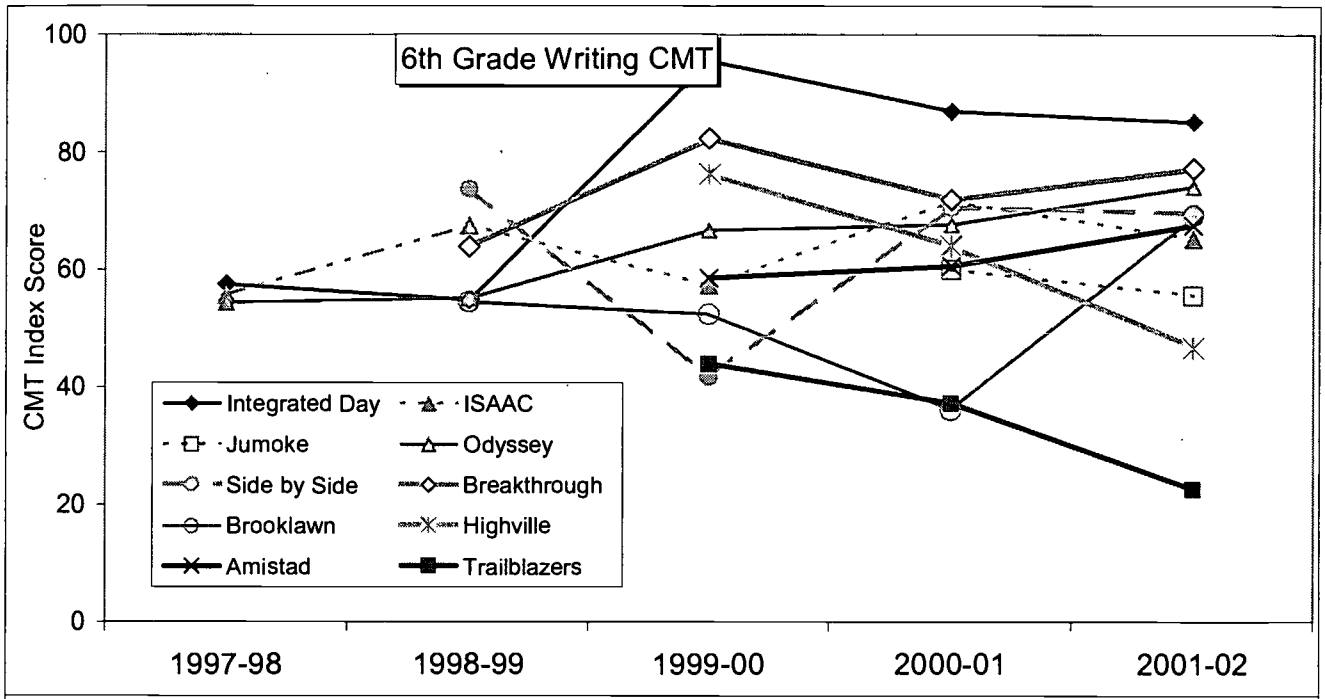


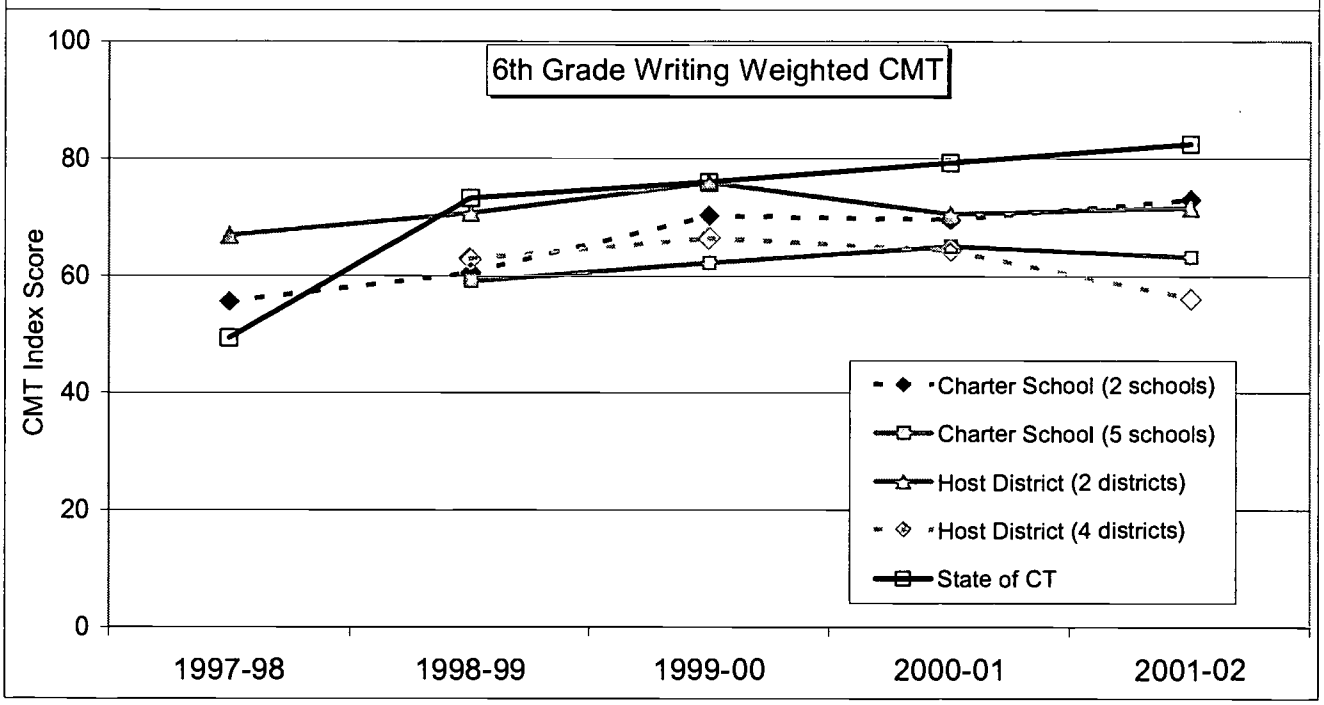


6th Grade Reading Weighted CMT

	First Trend						Second Trend					
	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	Average difference	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	Average difference
CS	74.72	70.86	64.38	74.15	74.11	-0.15	55.43	56.88	63.81	68.04		4.20
HD	69.22	71.27	70.37	65.20	71.59	0.59	55.48	58.52	50.61	56.06		0.19
Difference of average difference (CS-HD)						-0.74	Difference of average difference (CS-HD)					4.01

Exhibit 8:5 Grade 6 Writing Results on the CMT, 1997-98 to 2001-02

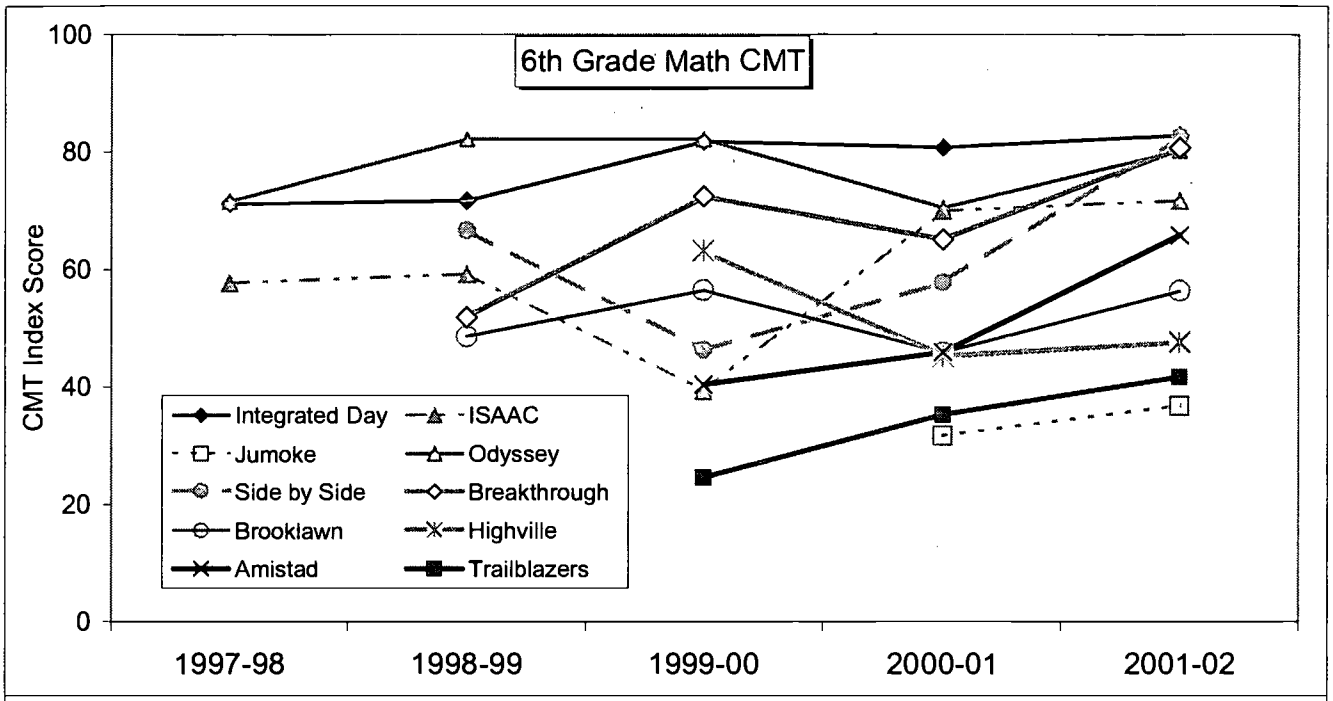


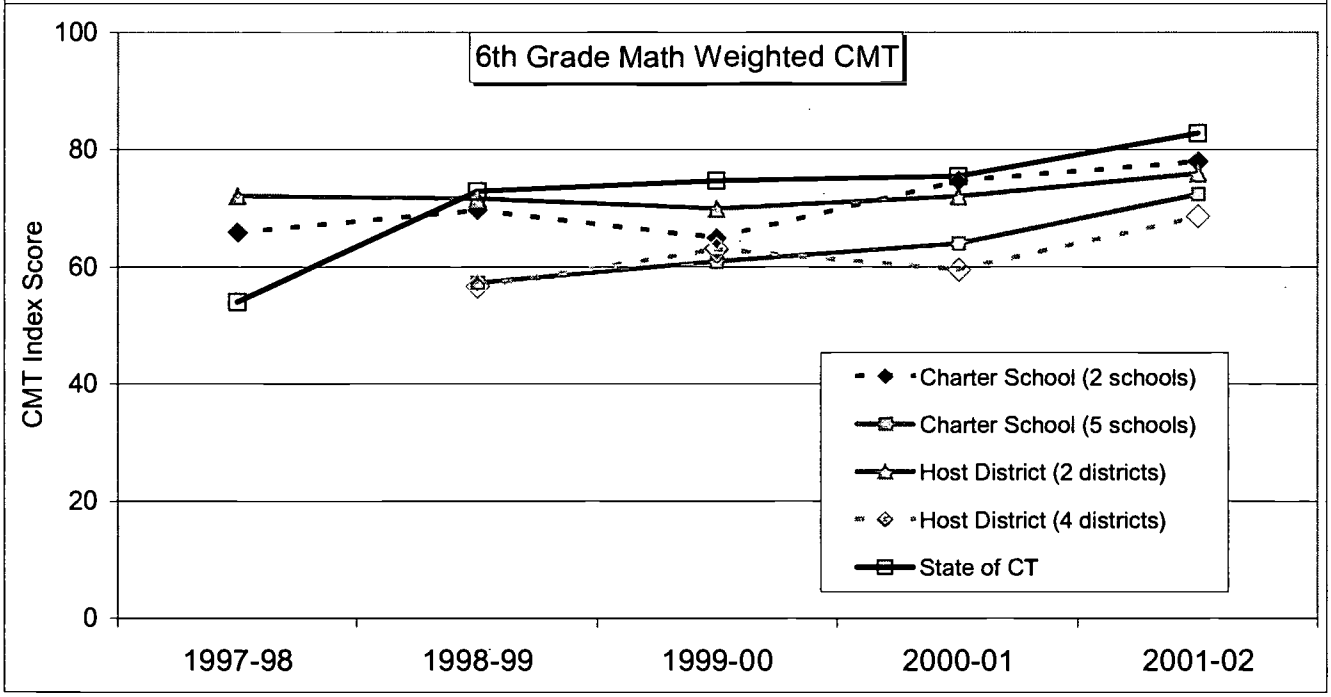


6th Grade Writing Weighted CMT

	First Trend						Second Trend					
	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	Average difference	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	Average difference
CS	55.60	60.51	70.24	69.56	72.94	4.33	59.04	62.18	65.00	63.17		1.38
HD	66.94	70.73	75.85	70.49	71.59	1.16	62.86	66.44	64.32	56.06		-2.27
Difference of average difference (CS-HD)						3.17	Difference of average difference (CS-HD)					3.65

Exhibit 8:6 Grade 6 Math Results on the CMT, 1997-98 to 2001-02

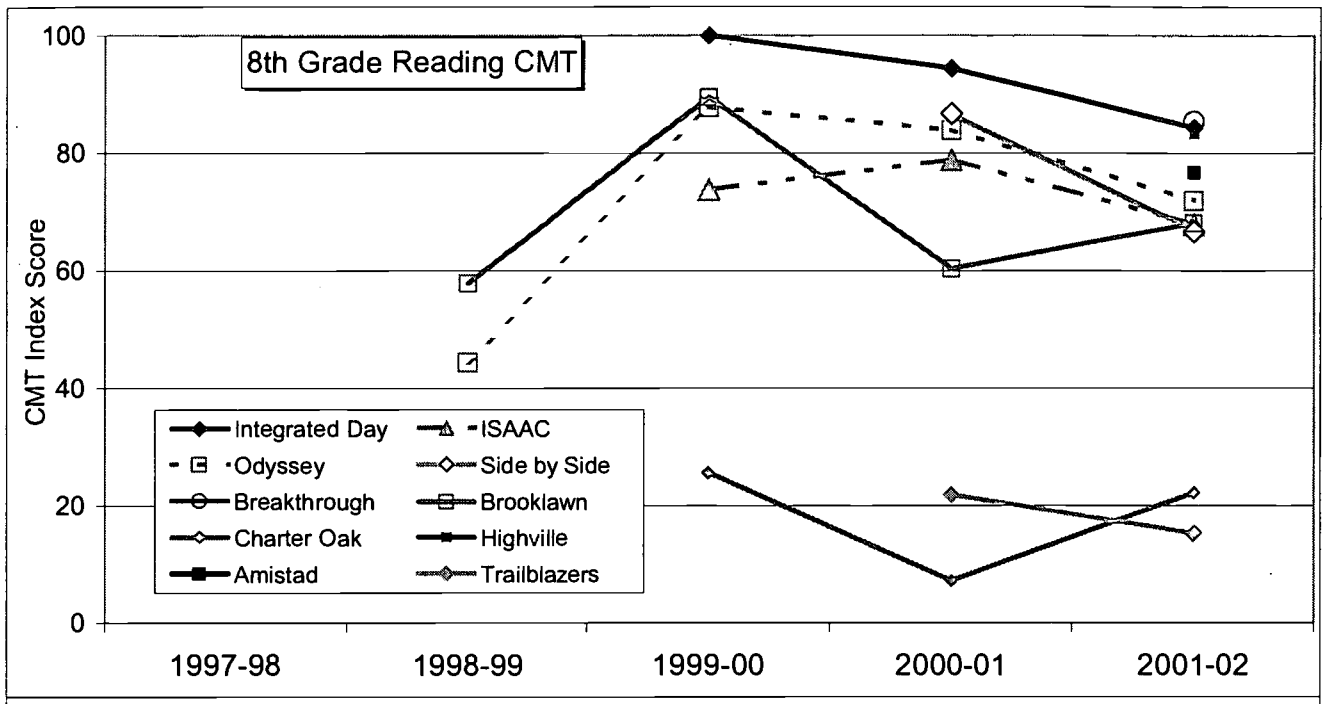


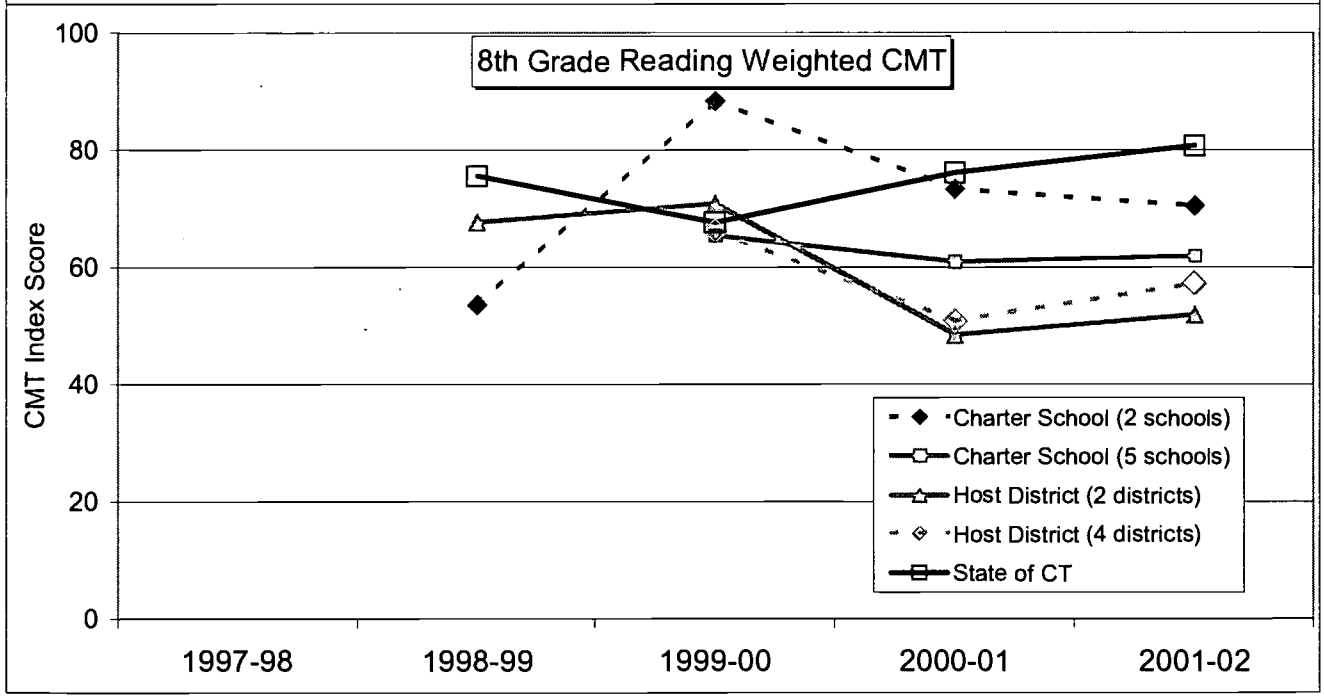


6th Grade Math Weighted CMT

	First Trend						Second Trend					
	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	Average difference	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	Average difference
CS	65.83	69.67	64.88	74.71	77.98	3.04	57.28	60.90	63.96	72.37		5.03
HD	72.09	71.68	69.90	72.00	75.94	0.96	56.62	63.03	59.45	68.58		3.99
Difference of average difference (CS-HD)						2.08	Difference of average difference (CS-HD)					1.04

Exhibit 8:7 Grade 8 Reading Results on the CMT, 1997-98 to 2001-02

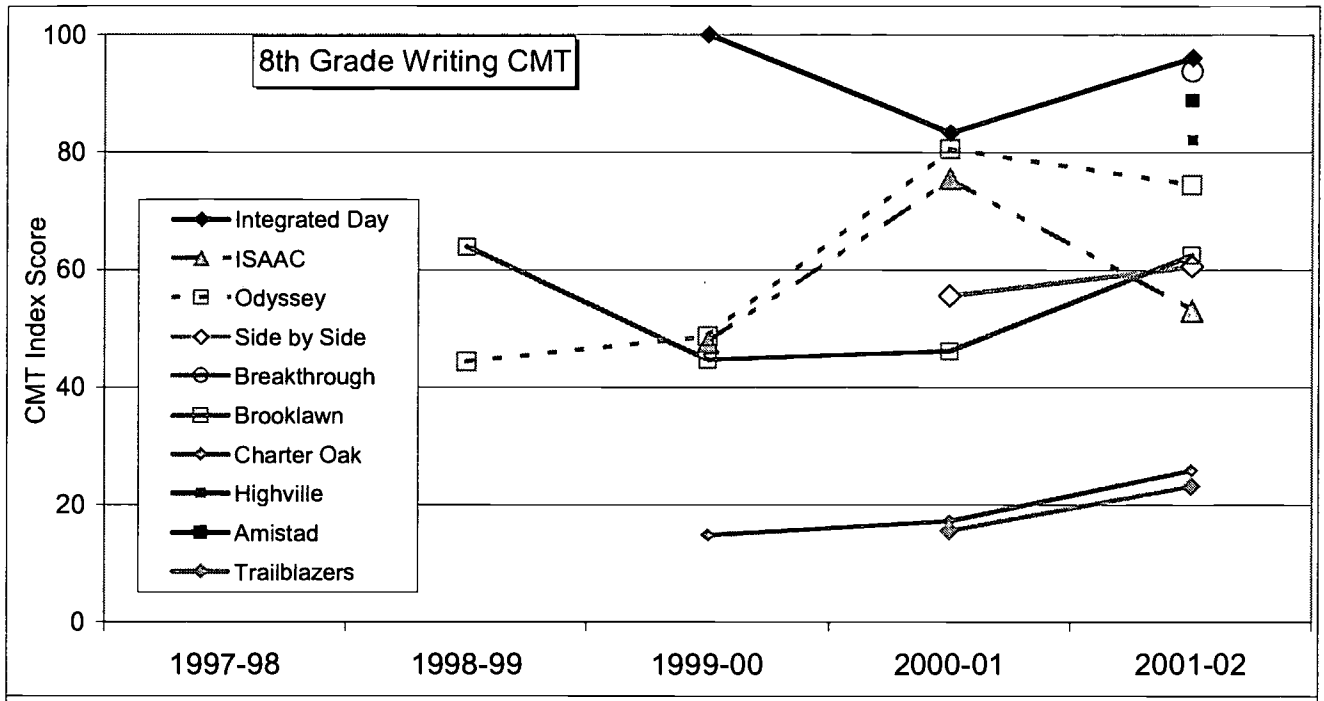


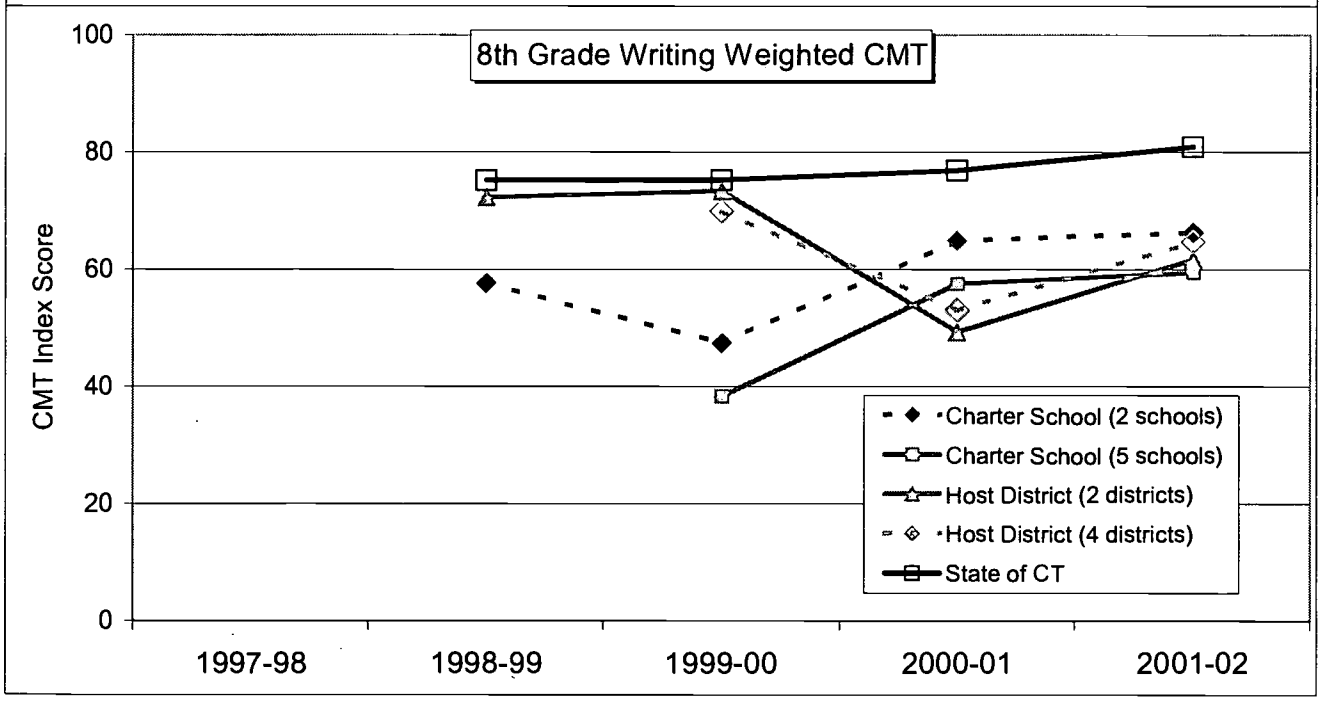


8th Grade Reading Weighted CMT

	First Trend						Second Trend					
	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	Average difference	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	Average difference
CS		53.56	88.36	73.32	70.43	5.62		65.36	60.86	61.90		-1.73
HD		67.69	70.79	48.43	51.87	-5.27		66.19	50.77	57.25		-4.47
Difference of average difference (CS-HD)						10.90	Difference of average difference (CS-HD)					2.74

Exhibit 8:8 Grade 8 Writing Results on the CMT, 1997-98 to 2001-02

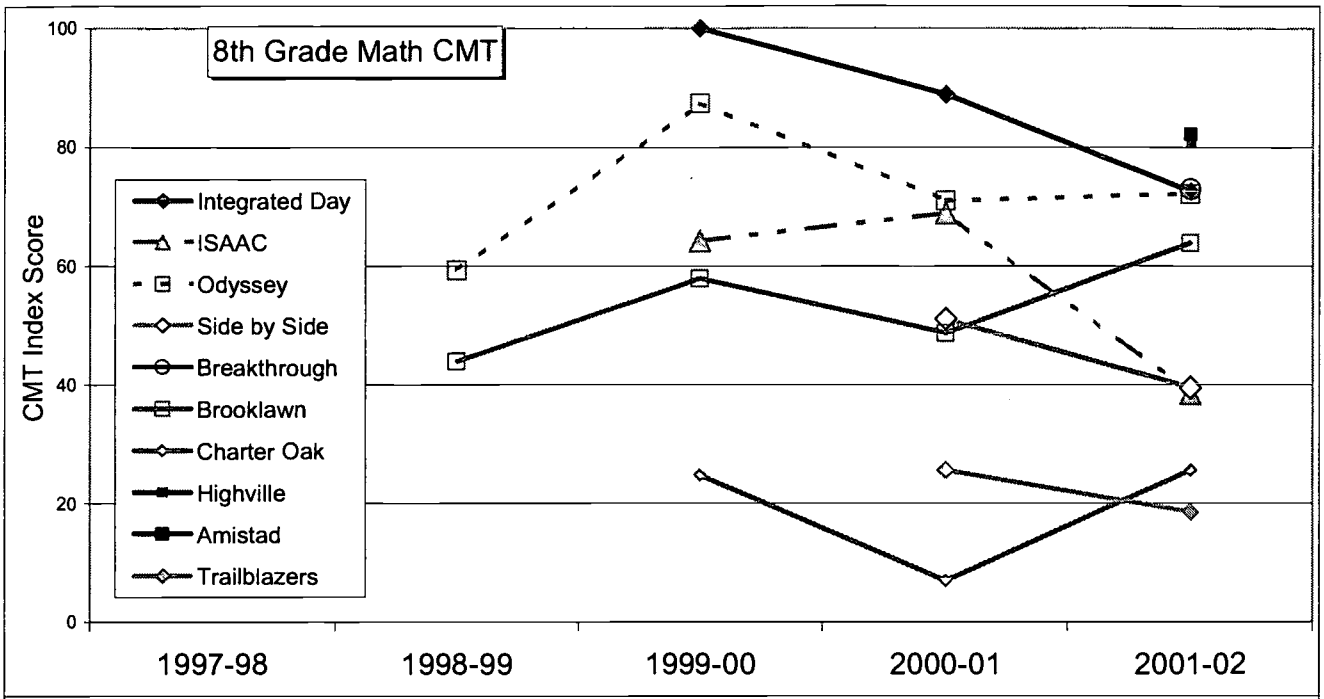


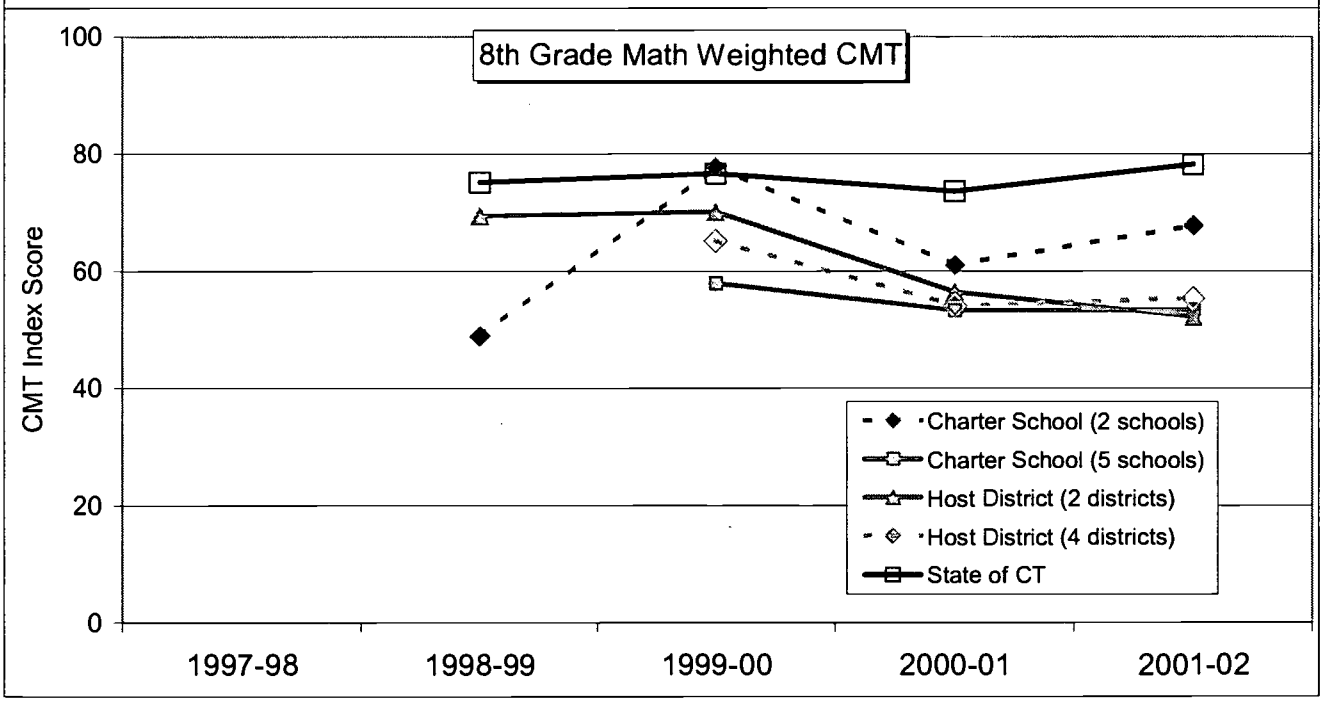


8th Grade Writing Weighted CMT

	First Trend						Second Trend					
	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	Average difference	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	Average difference
CS	57.63	47.39	64.91	66.25		2.87	38.29	57.52	59.40			10.56
HD	72.27	73.35	49.31	61.69		-3.53	69.90	52.97	64.69			-2.61
Difference of average difference (CS-HD)						6.40	Difference of average difference (CS-HD)					13.17

Exhibit 8:9 Grade 8 Math Results on the CMT, 1997-98 to 2001-02

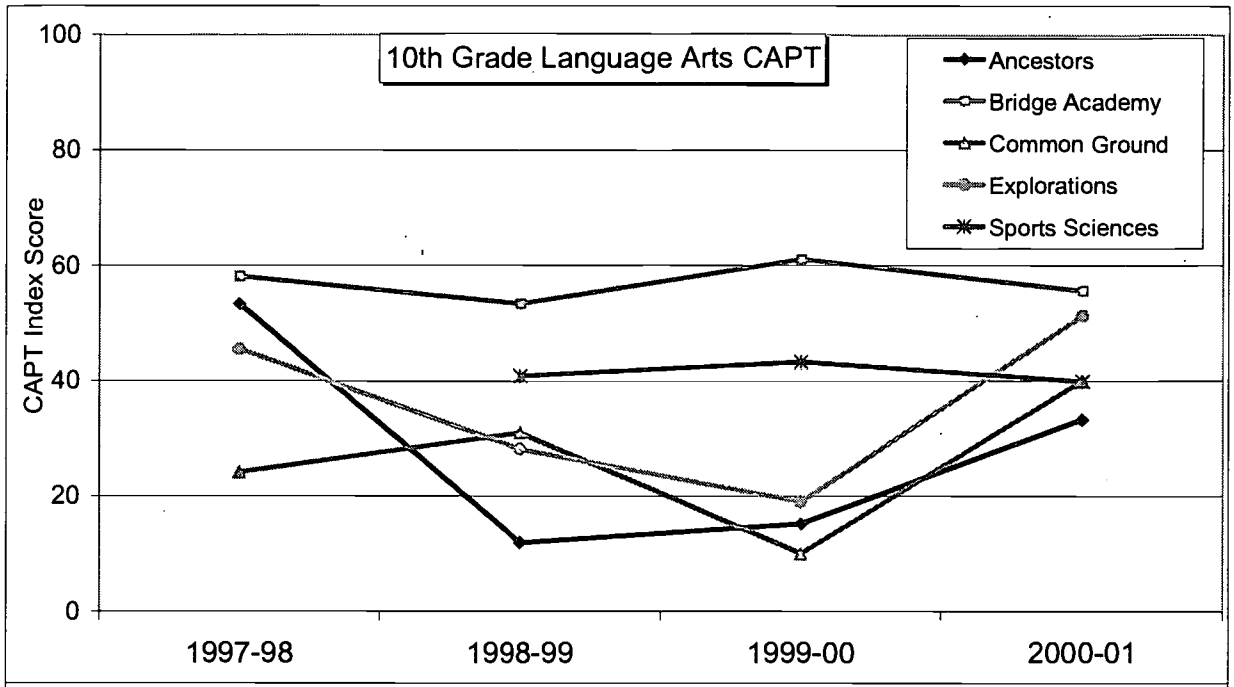


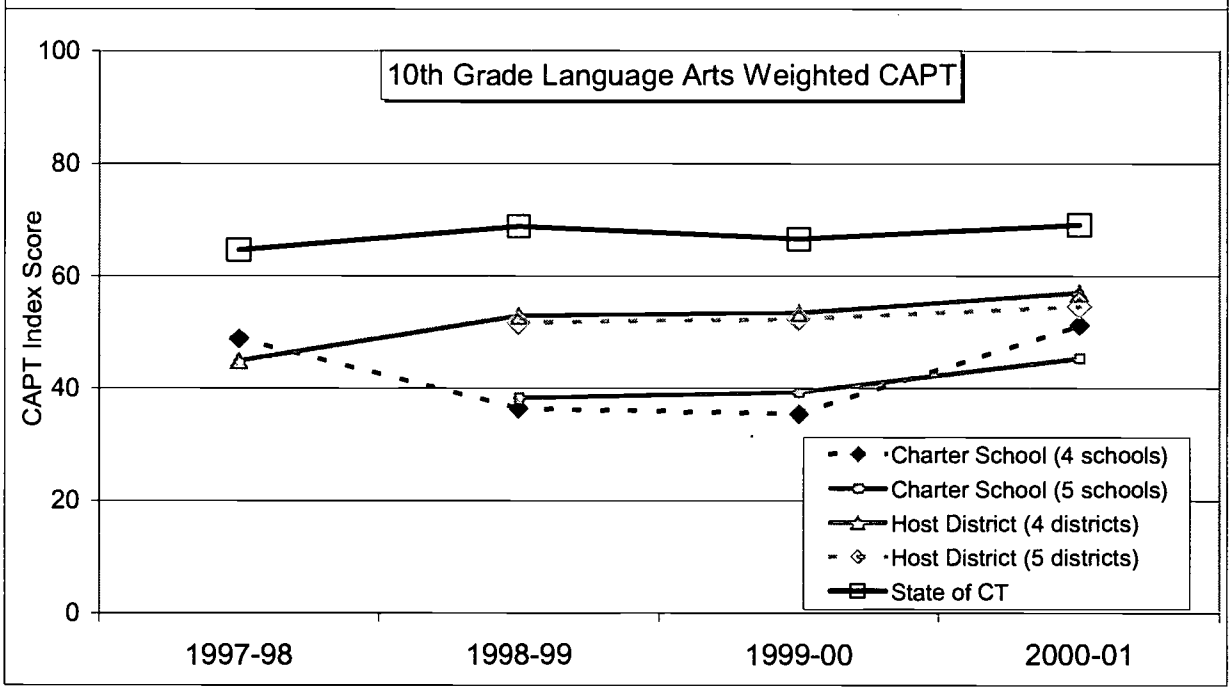


8th Grade Math Weighted CMT

	First Trend						Second Trend					
	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	Average difference	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	Average difference
CS	48.85	77.74	61.00	67.76		6.30	57.91	53.27	53.39			-2.26
HD	69.40	70.08	56.39	52.18		-5.74	65.21	54.08	55.37			-4.92
Difference of average difference (CS-HD)						12.04	Difference of average difference (CS-HD)					2.66

Exhibit 8:10 Grade 10 Language Arts Results on the CAPT, 1997-98 to 2000-01

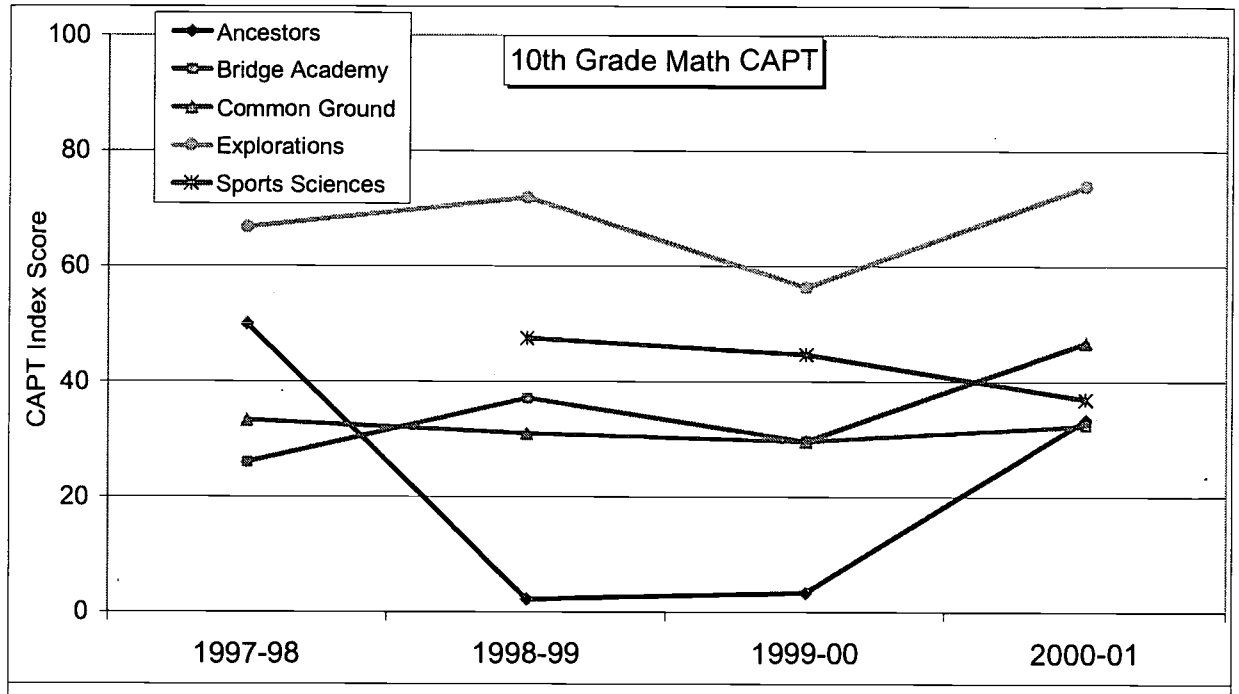


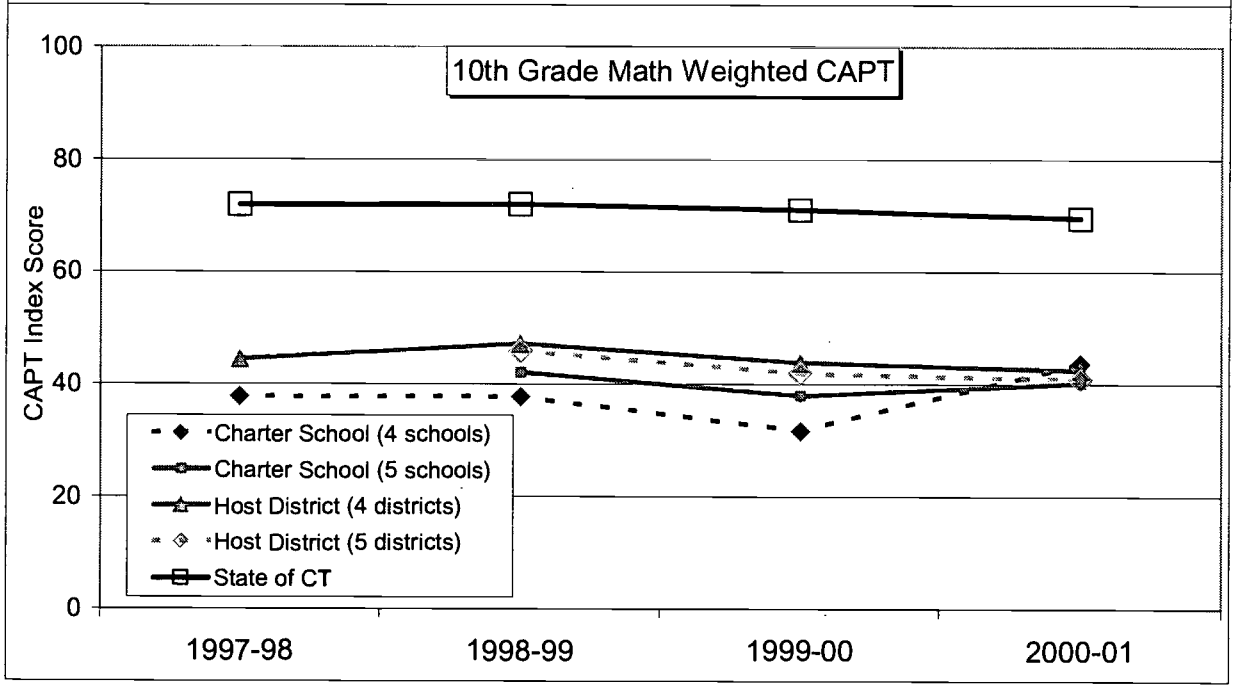


10th Grade Language Arts Weighted CAPT

	First Trend					Second Trend				
	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	2000-01	Average difference	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	Average difference
CS	48.84	36.29	35.45	51.18	0.78	38.30	39.25	45.30		3.50
HD	44.91	54.35	53.44	56.99	4.03	51.67	52.35	54.55		1.44
Difference of average difference (CS-HD)					-3.25	Difference of average difference (CS-HD)				2.06

Exhibit 8:11 Grade 10 Math Results on the CAPT, 1997-98 to 2000-01

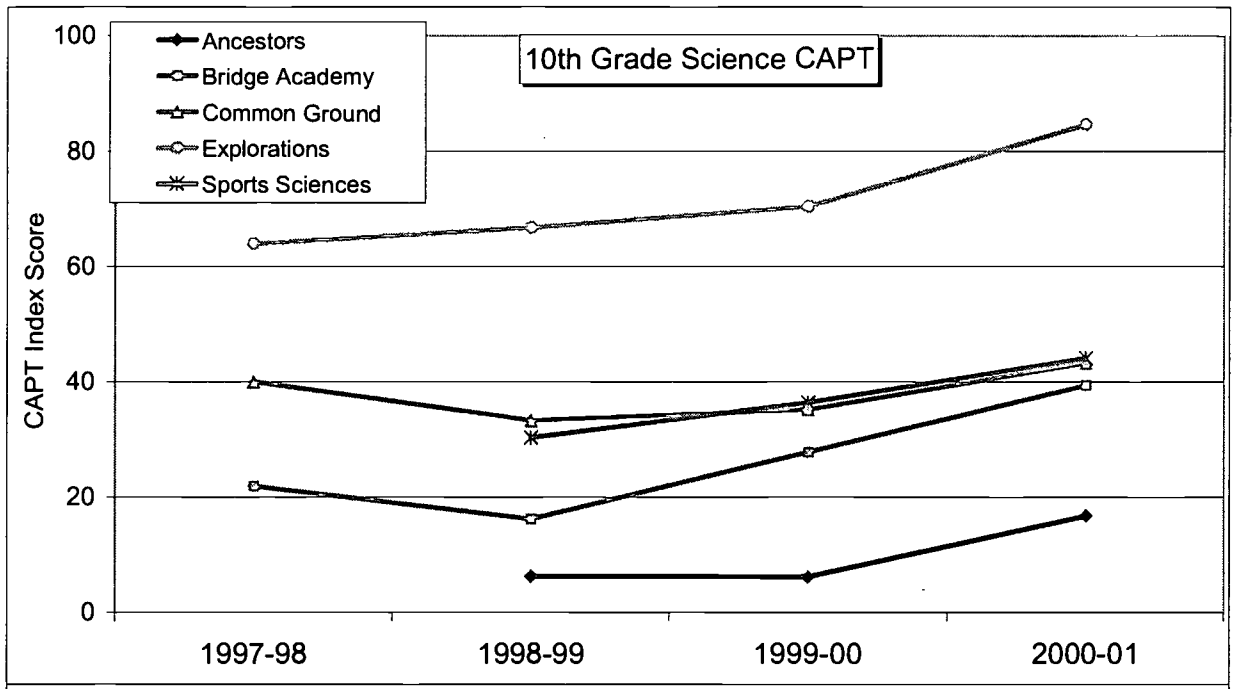


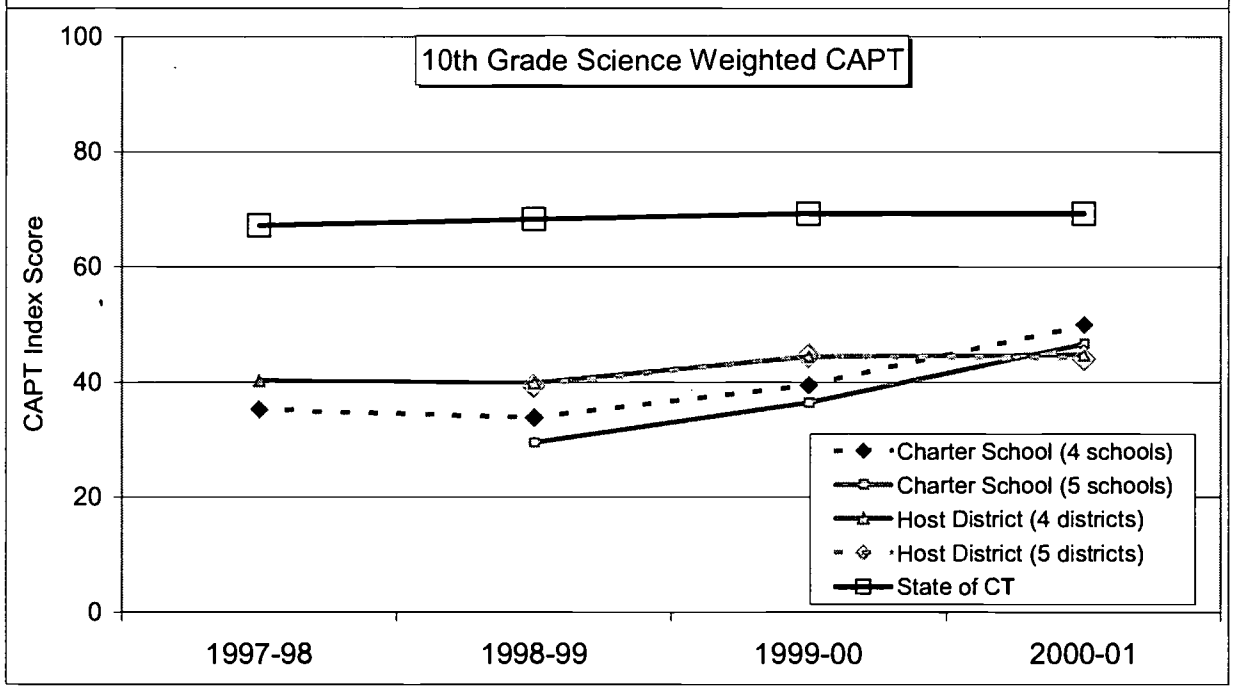


10th Grade Math Weighted CAPT

	First Trend					Second Trend				
	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	Average difference	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	Average difference
CS	37.76	37.73	31.65	43.60	1.95	42.09	37.97	40.11		-0.99
HD	44.41	47.14	43.85	42.48	-0.65	45.94	41.94	40.77		-2.58
Difference of average difference (CS-HD)					2.60	Difference of average difference (CS-HD)				1.59

Exhibit 8:12 Grade 10 Science Results on the CAPT, 1997-98 to 2000-01

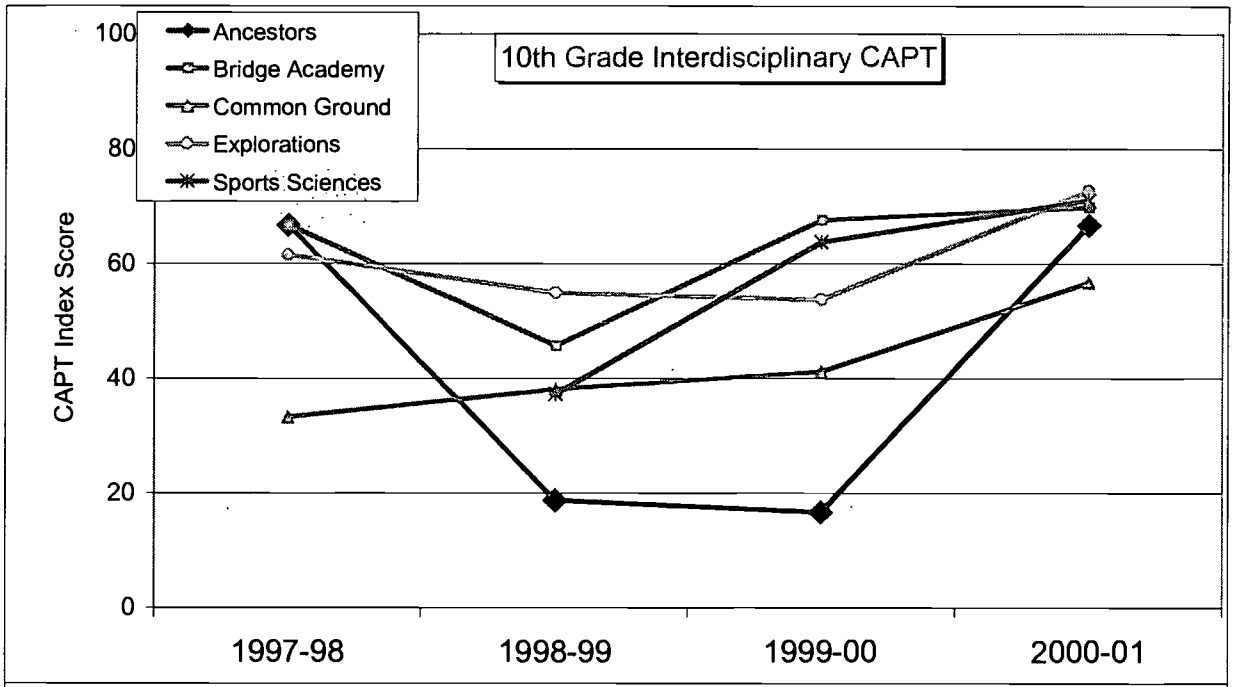


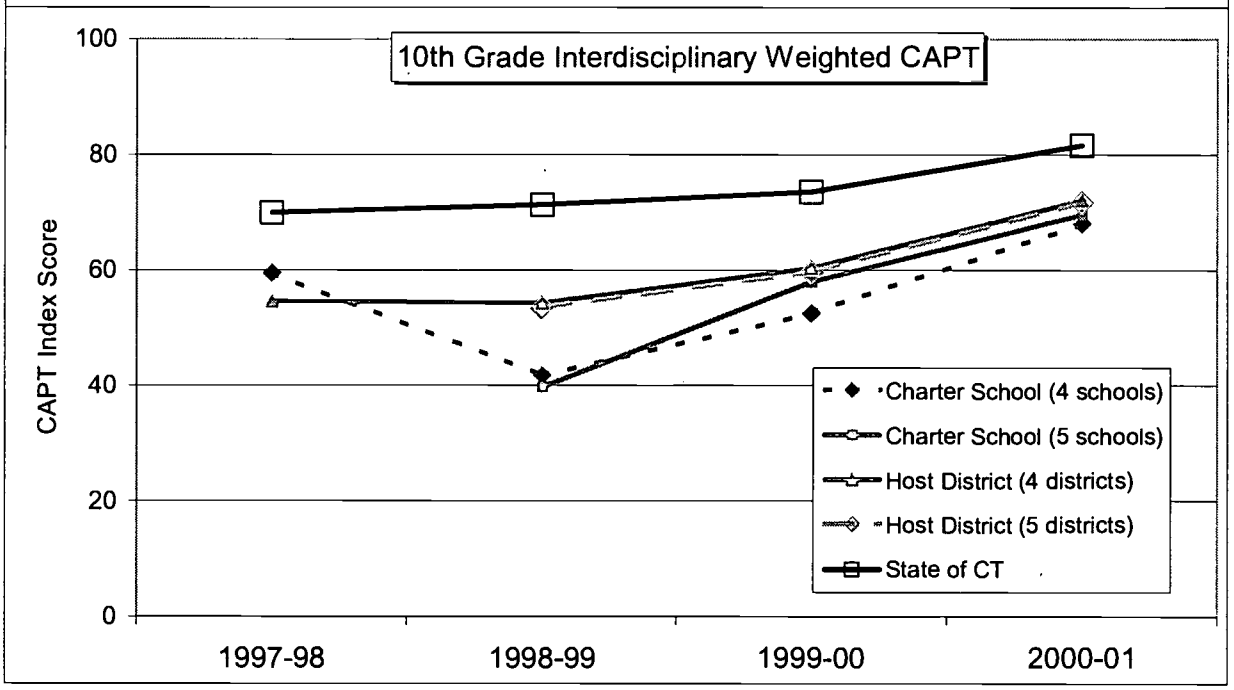


10th Grade Science Weighted CAPT

	First Trend					Second Trend				
	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	Average difference	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	Average difference
CS	35.21	33.83	39.44	49.97	4.92	29.50	36.41	46.63		8.57
HD	40.28	39.88	44.41	44.73	1.48	39.35	44.49	44.09		2.37
Difference of average difference (CS-HD)					3.44	Difference of average difference (CS-HD)				6.20

Exhibit 8:13 Grade 10 Interdisciplinary Results on the CAPT, 1997-98 to 2000-01

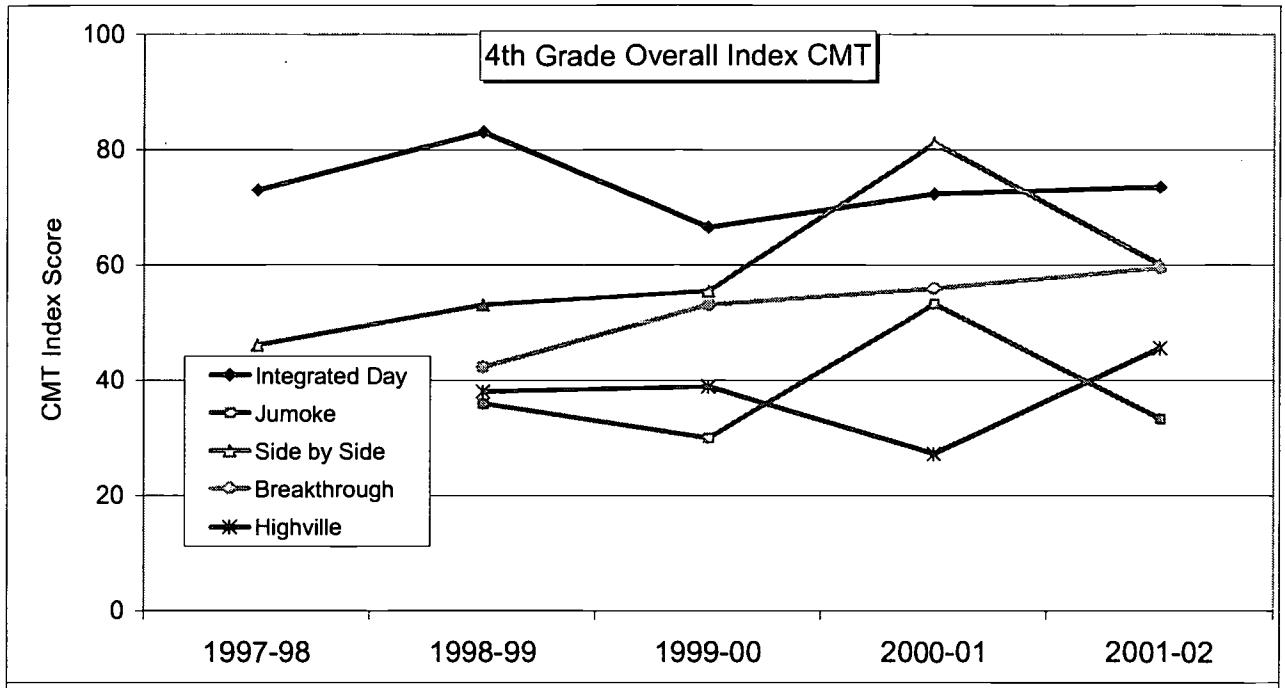


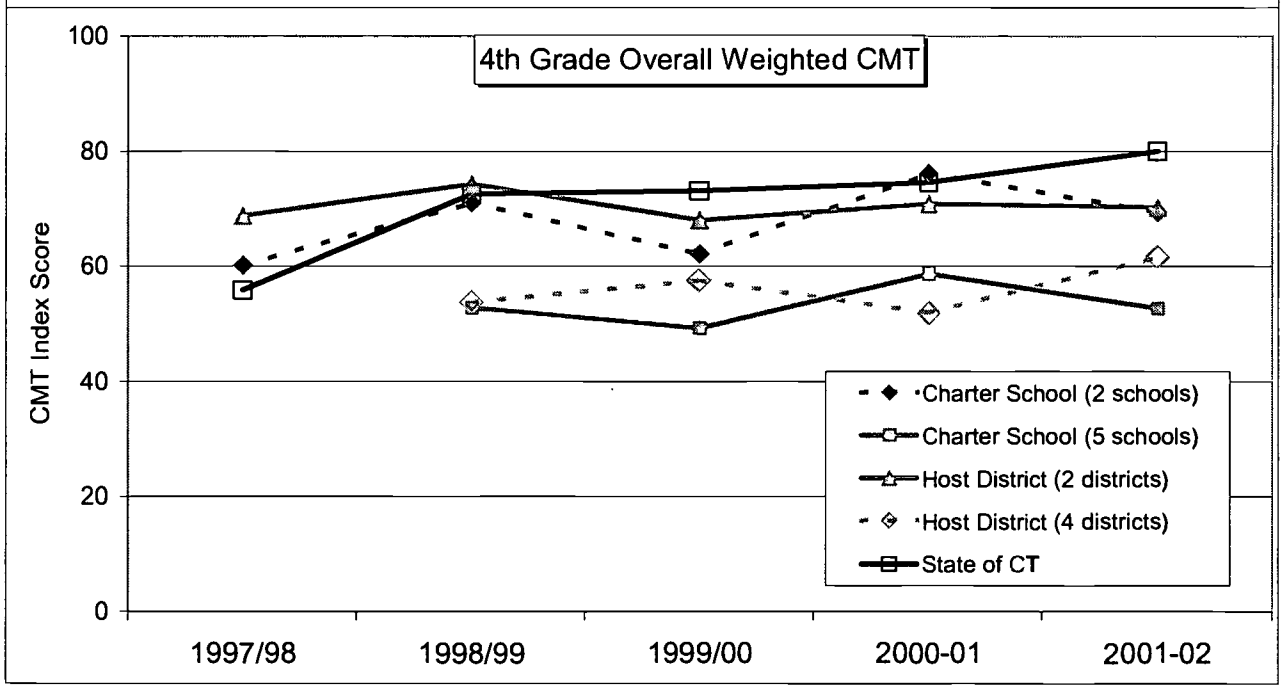


10th Grade Interdisciplinary Weighted CAPT

	First Trend					Second Trend				
	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	Average difference	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	Average difference
CS	59.45	41.64	52.52	68.00	2.85	39.70	57.93	69.56		14.93
HD	54.55	54.30	60.27	72.07	5.84	53.54	59.66	71.70		9.08
Difference of average difference (CS-HD)					-2.99	Difference of average difference (CS-HD)				5.85

Exhibit 8:14 Grade 4 Overall Index Results on the CMT, 1997-98 to 2001-02

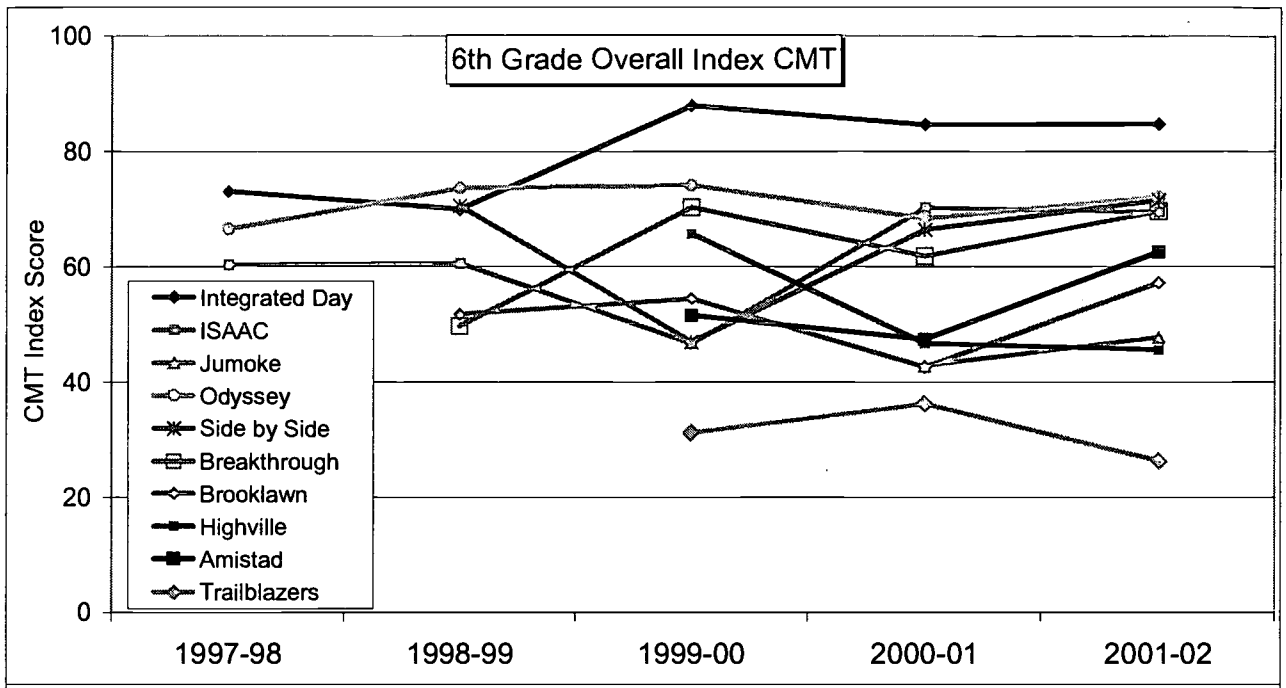


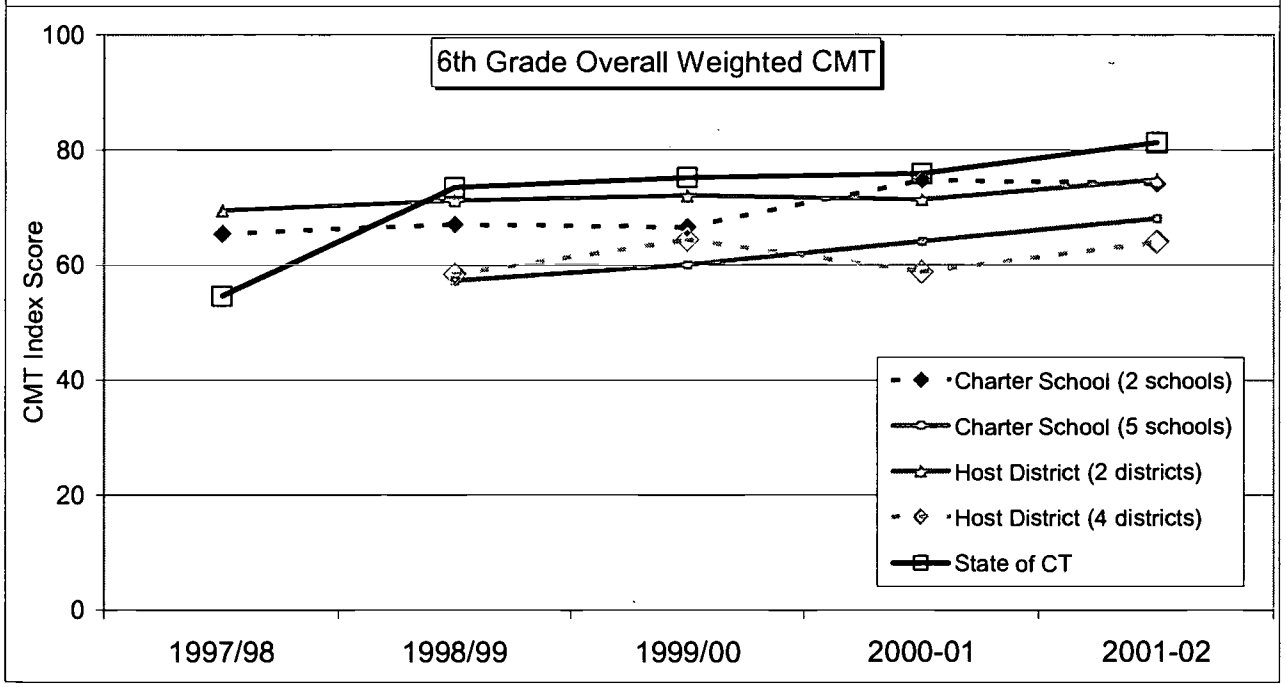


4th Grade Overall Weighted CMT

	First Trend						Second Trend					
	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	Average difference	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	Average difference
CS	60.19	71.03	62.10	76.19	69.34	2.29	52.78	49.28	58.70	52.67		-0.04
HD	68.78	74.27	68.00	70.81	70.22	0.36	53.71	57.58	51.93	61.64		2.64
Difference of average difference (CS-HD)						1.93	Difference of average difference (CS-HD)					-2.68

Exhibit 8:15 Grade 6 Overall Index Results on the CMT, 1997-98 to 2001-02

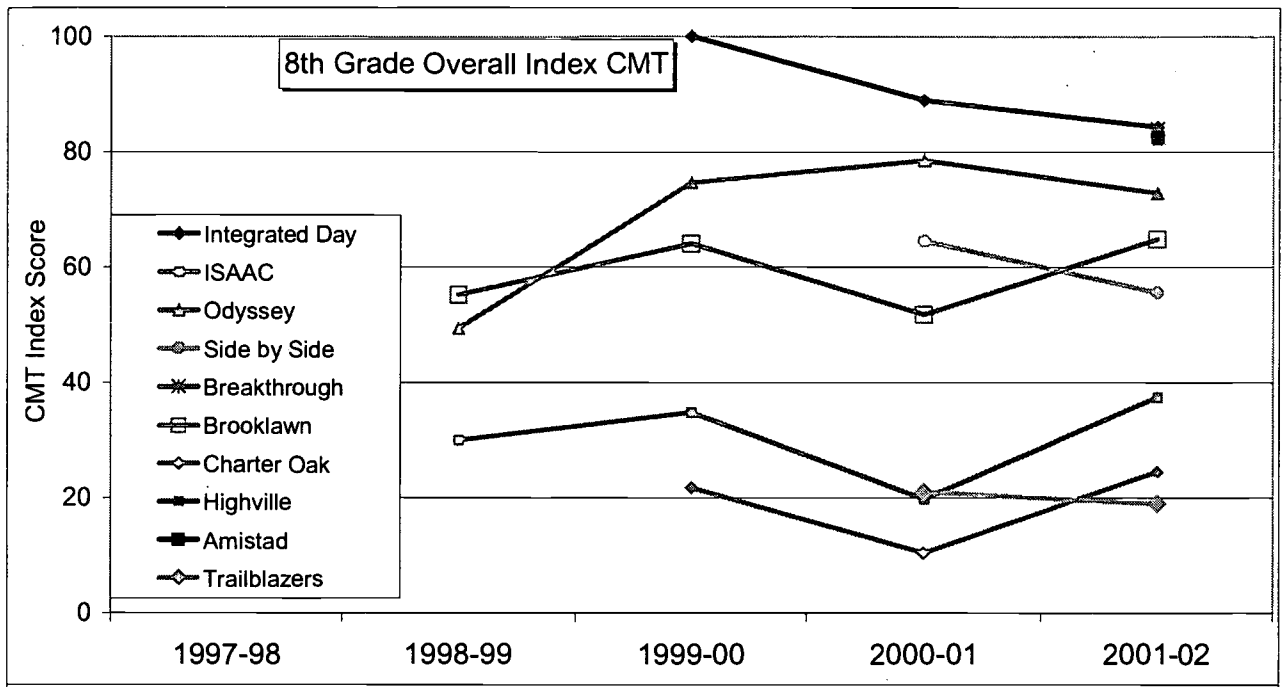


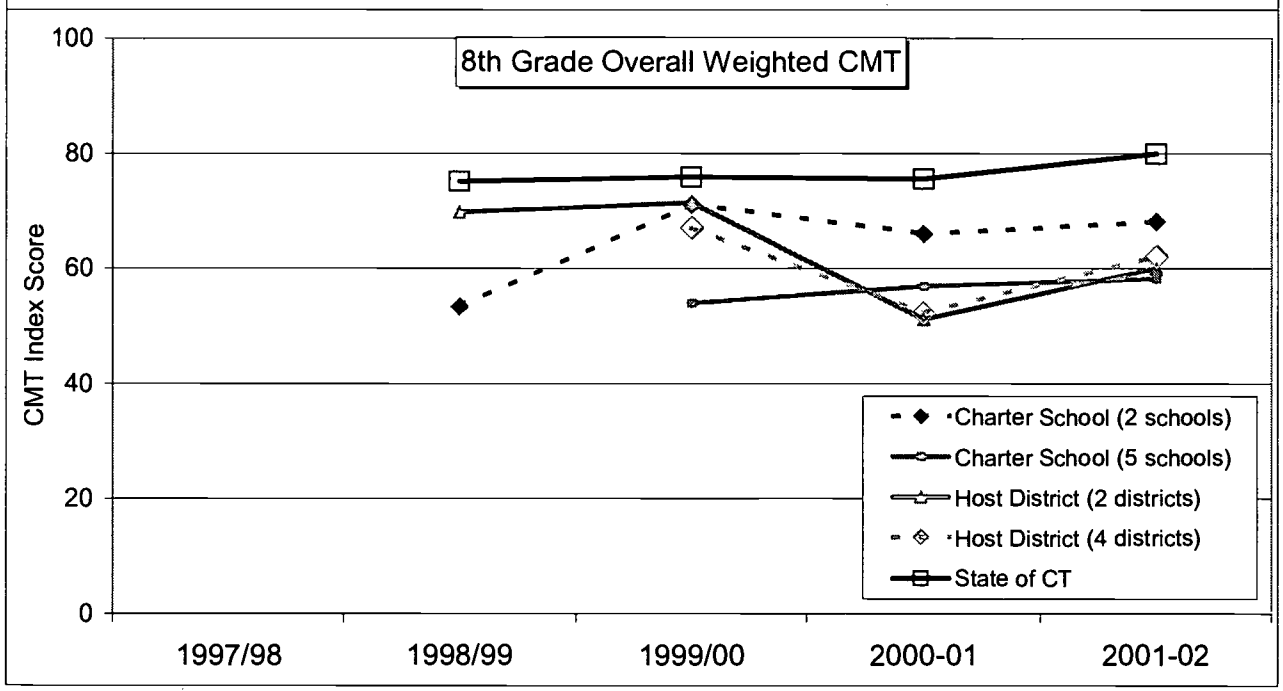


6th Grade Overall Weighted CMT

	First Trend						Second Trend					
	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	Average difference	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	Average difference
CS	65.39	67.02	66.50	74.83	74.11	2.18	57.26	59.99	64.12	68.04		3.60
HD	69.42	71.21	72.04	71.38	74.82	1.35	58.32	64.44	58.78	63.99		1.89
Difference of average difference (CS-HD)						0.83	Difference of average difference (CS-HD)					1.70

Exhibit 8:16 Grade 8 Overall Index Results on the CMT, 1997-98 to 2001-02





8th Grade Overall Weighted CMT

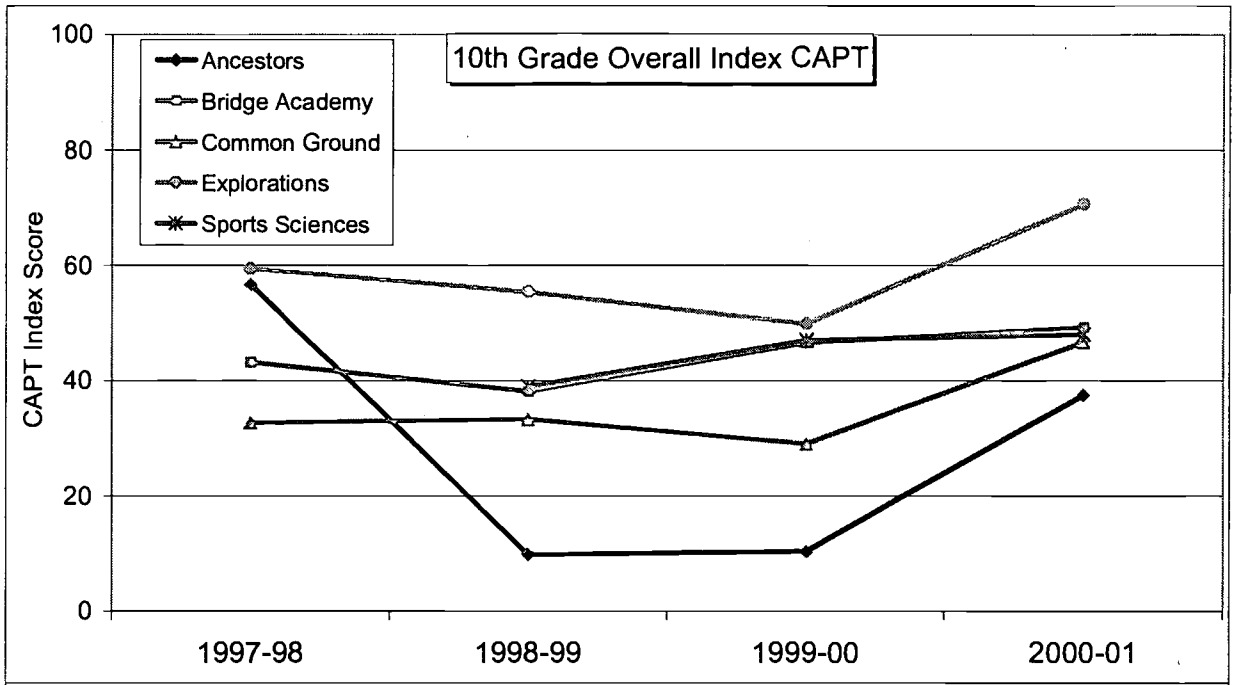
First Trend

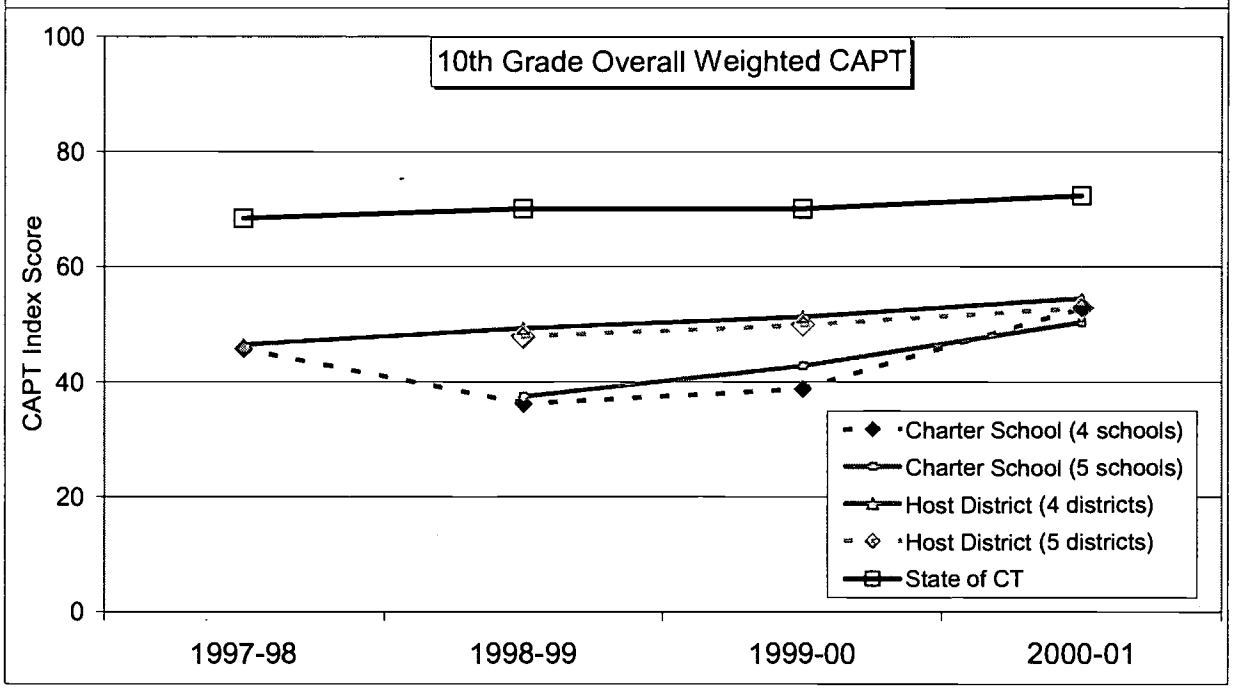
	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	Average difference
CS	53.35	71.16	66.05	68.17		4.94
HD	69.79	71.41	51.18	60.02		-3.26
Difference of average difference (CS-HD)						8.20

Second Trend

	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	Average difference
CS	53.93	56.90	58.20			2.13
HD	67.10	52.30	62.15			-2.48
Difference of average difference (CS-HD)						4.61

Exhibit 8:17 Grade 10 Overall Index Results on the CAPT, 1997-98 to 2000-01





10th Grade Overall Weighted CAPT

	First Trend					Second Trend				
	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	Average difference	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	Average difference
CS	45.68	36.14	38.72	52.90	2.40	37.42	42.74	50.33		6.46
HD	47.03	49.30	51.26	54.48	2.48	47.90	49.86	52.87		2.49
Difference of average difference (CS-HD)					-0.08					3.97

8.3 Cohort Analysis: A Comparison Between Charter Schools and Host Districts

The cohort study collects student achievement scores from approximately the same group of students at two points over time. For example, this means we compare fourth grade students in reading in 1997-98 with sixth grader students in reading, two years later in, 1999-00. Table 8:2 describes each of the 6 cohorts. While it is true that there is some change in the composition of the student groups with some students leaving and others joining the group, this is clearly a preferred design to the trend analyses that compares totally different groups of students at the same grade level in consecutive years. While the cohort design is usually preferable to the trend design, it is important to point out that it is was not possible for us to determine how much the group of students changes over time due to attrition. If attrition is high, then the change in results may be due in part to the change in students rather than the impact of the educational program.

Table 8:2 Comparison of Six Cohorts in Charter Schools and Their Host Districts on the CMT

	Cohort Study by CMT Results			
Cohort Number	First Testing Period (grade/year)	Second Testing Period (grade/year)	Participating Charter Schools	Participating Host Districts*
1	4th graders in 1997-98	6th graders in 1999-00	Integrated Day, Side by Side	Norwich, Norwalk
2	6th graders in 1997-98	8th graders in 1999-00	Integrated Day, ISAAC, Odyssey	Norwich, New London, Manchester
3	4th graders in 1998-99	6th graders in 2000-01	Integrated Day, Jumoke, Side by Side, Breakthrough, Highville	Norwich, Hartford, Norwalk, New Haven
4	6th graders in 1998-99	8th graders in 2000-01	Integrated Day, ISAAC, Odyssey, Side by Side, Brooklawn, Charter Oak	Norwich, New London, Manchester, Norwalk, Bridgeport, New Britain
5	4th graders in 1999-00	6th graders in 2001-02	Integrated Day, Jumoke, Side by Side, Breakthrough, Highville	Norwich, Hartford, Norwalk, New Haven
6	6th graders in 1999-00	8th graders in 2001-02	Integrated Day, ISAAC, Odyssey, Side by Side, Brooklawn, Charter Oak, Amistad, Breakthrough, Brooklawn, Highville	Norwich, New London, Manchester, Norwalk, Bridgeport, New Britain, New Haven, Hartford, Bridgeport

* When two charter schools lie in a same host district, that host district is only counted once when we calculate the aggregate for host districts.

We were able to calculate change scores for 6 different cohorts of students taking the CMT tests. Two fourth grade to sixth grade cohorts were traced, longitudinally, for each of the first three years of the charter school reform. For each cohort we traced results in reading, writing, and mathematics, which provided a total of 18 different comparisons that could be measured. We also followed the changes on the overall index score for each of the six cohorts. We compared the aggregate of the weighted charter schools' index scores to the aggregate of their respective host districts. Comparing the change scores over time for the charter schools and their host districts allows us to examine the relative progress made by charter schools over time.

Again, readers should be cautioned that in many cases charter school students may have similar characteristics to students in the host district, but this assumption is not always true. Readers should also be cautioned that the numbers of students taking the test in each charter school during any one year is small, and cohorts within schools from year to year may be very different. It is important to emphasize again that host districts have been in operation for many years prior to 1997-98, whereas charter schools are less than five years old.

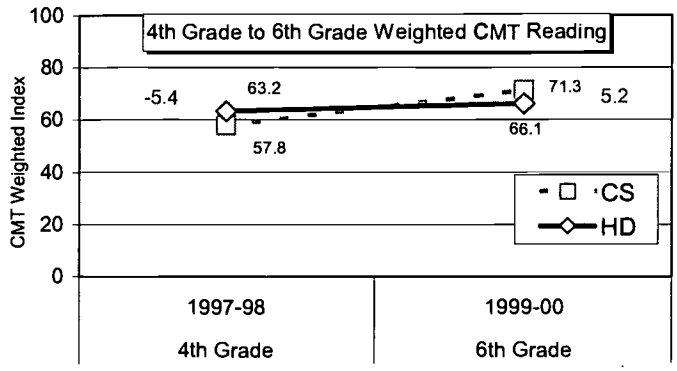
Exhibits 8:18 to 8:20 provide the comparisons over time between all charter school students and their host districts using weighted averages for all grade and subject area tests. The charter schools and their host districts were weighted by the number of students who took the test. Details on the weighting procedure are explained in the preceding section.

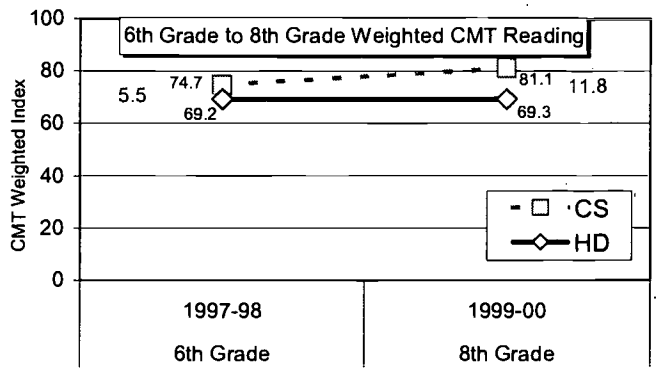
We used index scores to calculate the cohort group scores over time. Again, the difference between change scores in cohorts of charter schools and their host districts allows us to examine the relative progress made by charter schools over time. This is calculated by subtracting the charter schools' cohort group change scores from their host districts' cohort group change scores. A positive number indicates that charter schools gained more than their host districts, while a negative number indicates that charter schools gained less than their host districts. The bigger the number, the greater the degree of difference there is between charter schools and host districts.

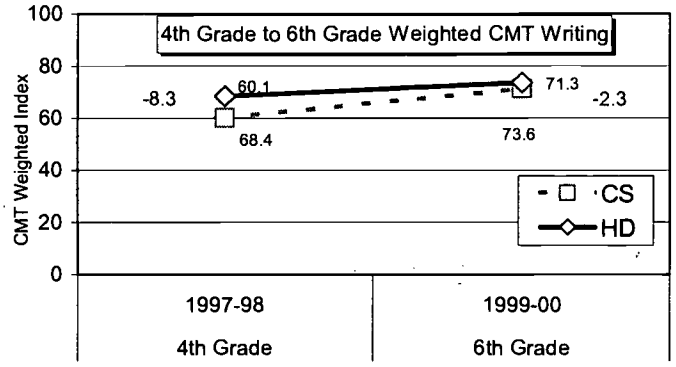
The results are illustrated in Exhibits 8:18 to 8:20. Exhibit 8:18 covers the cohorts that started in 1997-98, while the next two exhibits cover the cohorts starting in 1998-99 and 1999-00, respectively. Each chart in the exhibits contains lines that map out the progress of the charter school cohort compared with the host district cohorts. The values for the line charts are also included in the charts. Two numbers are highlighted in blue that illustrate the difference between the charter schools and host districts. The number to the left of the lines records the difference in aggregate scores the first time they were tested and the number to the right represents the difference in scores the second time the two groups were tested.

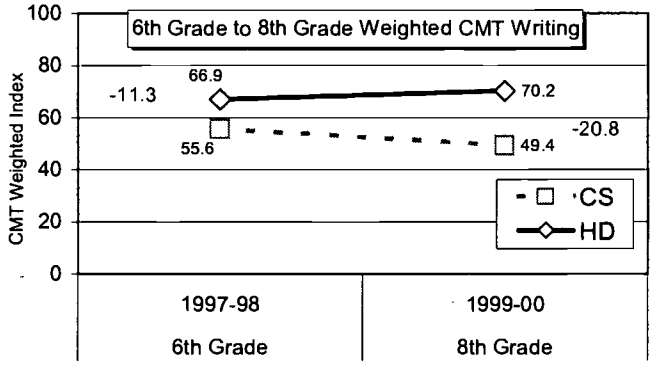
Overall, the charter school cohorts gained more than the host district cohorts. Also, the charter school gains are more substantial in the cohort analysis than in the trend analysis that was described in the previous section. In total, 72 percent of the 18 different comparisons received positive ratings in favor of charter schools. Eleven percent received "no difference" ratings, and 17 percent received negative ratings. Table 8:4 contains a summary of the comparisons that were made.

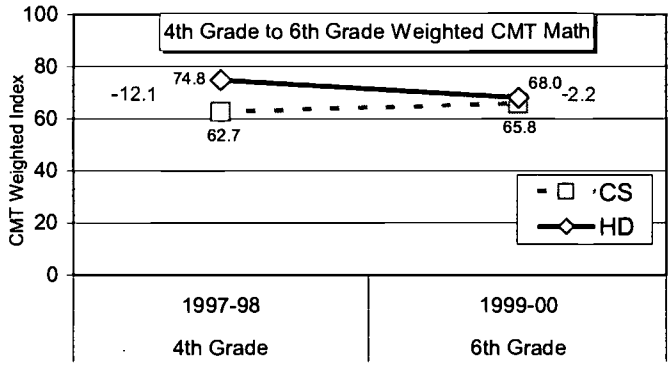
Exhibit 8:18 Same Class Cohorts Starting in the 1997-98 School Year Comparing Charter Schools and Host District Results on the CMT

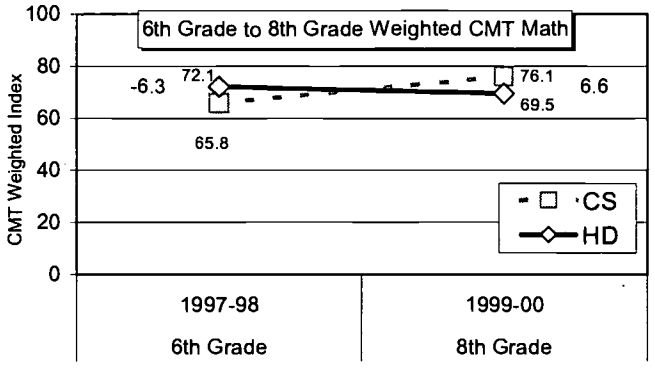


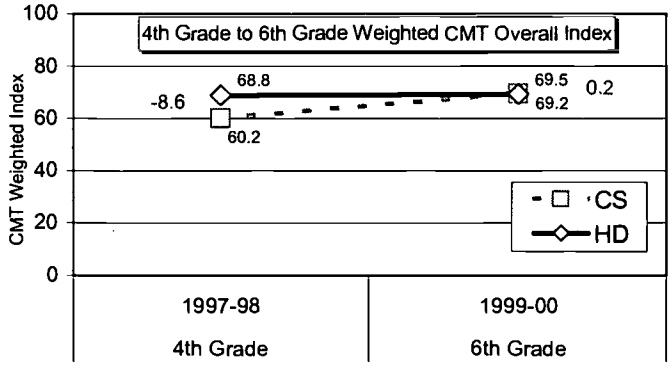


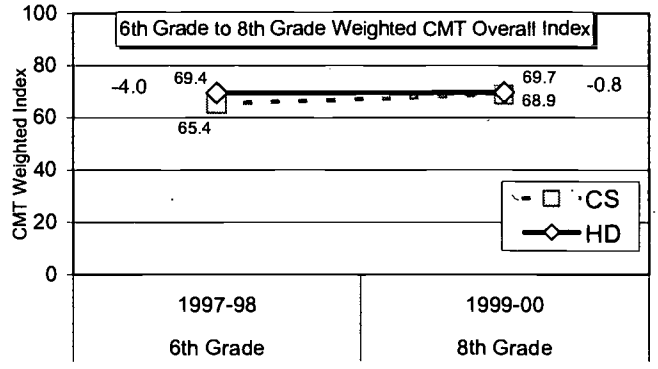






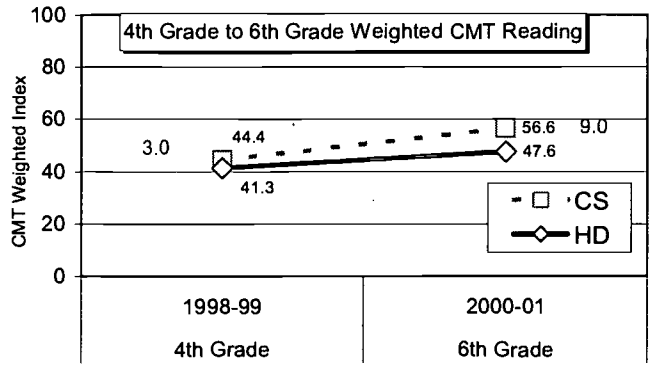


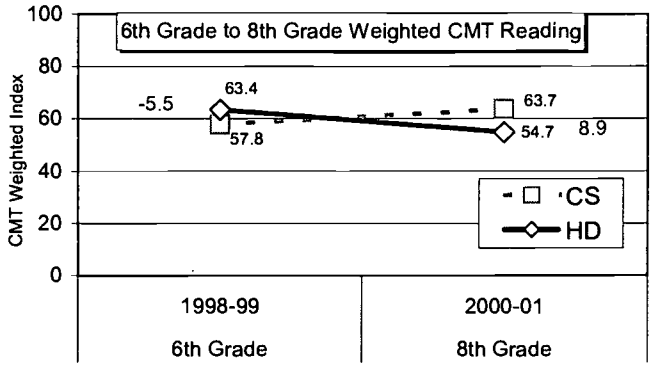


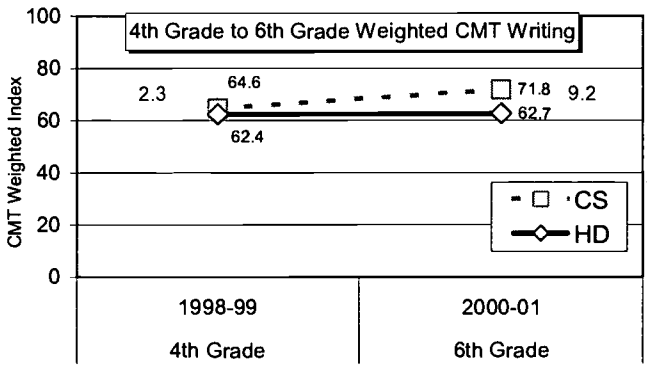


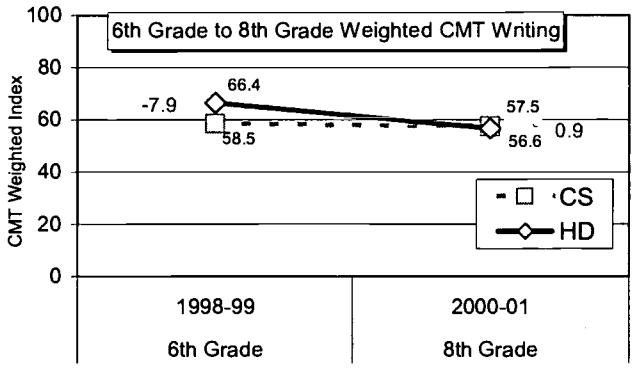
Two schools were considered in both the 4th to 6th grade and 6th to 8th grade cohorts (Integrated Day, Side by Side)
"-": Charter school (CS) has lower score than host district (HD)
"+": Charter School has higher score than host district
The bigger the value, the larger the distance between charter school and host district

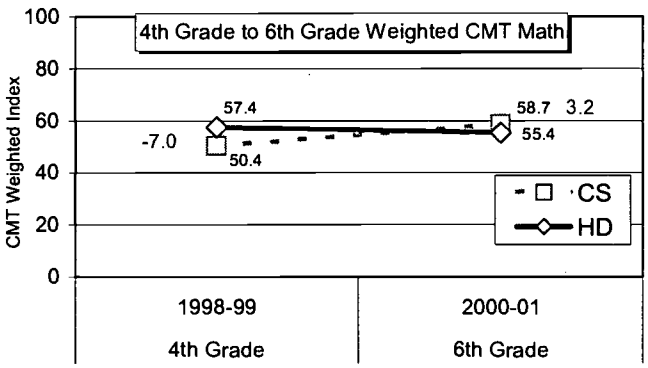
Exhibit 8:19 Same Class Cohorts Starting in the 1998-99 School Year
Comparing Charter Schools and Host District Results on the CMT

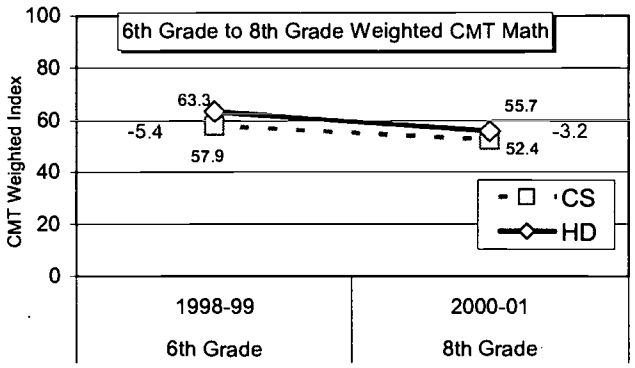


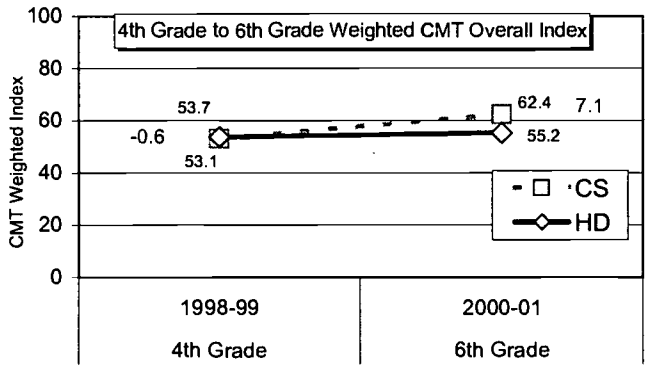


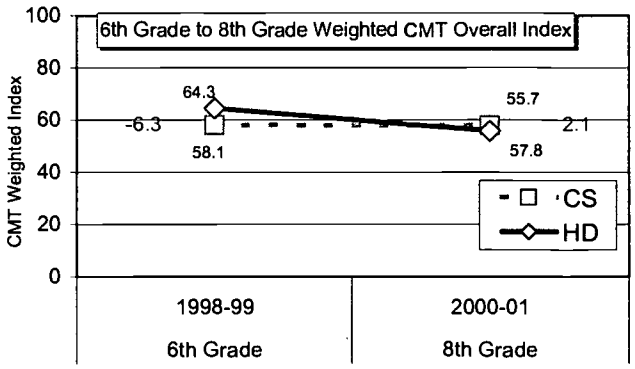






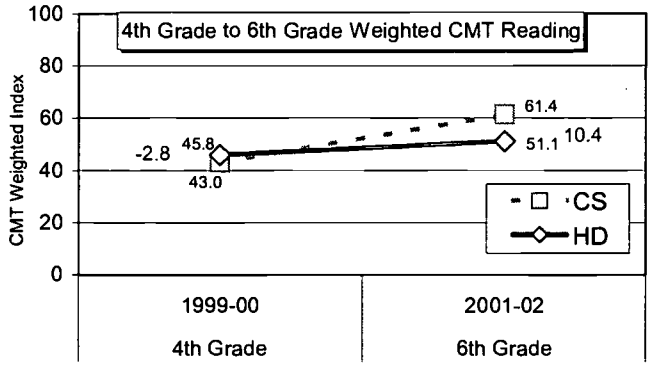


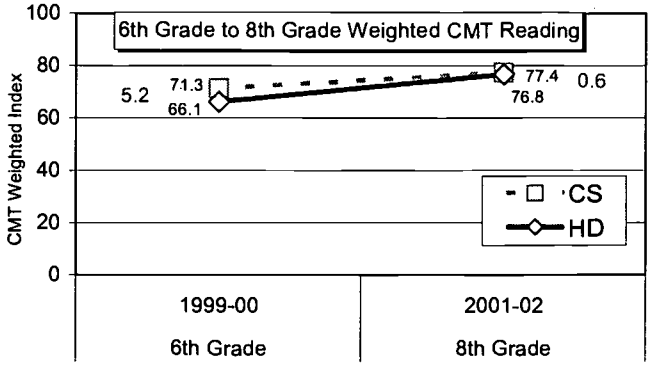


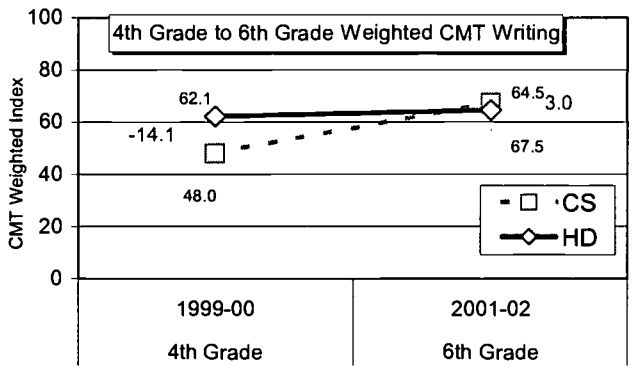


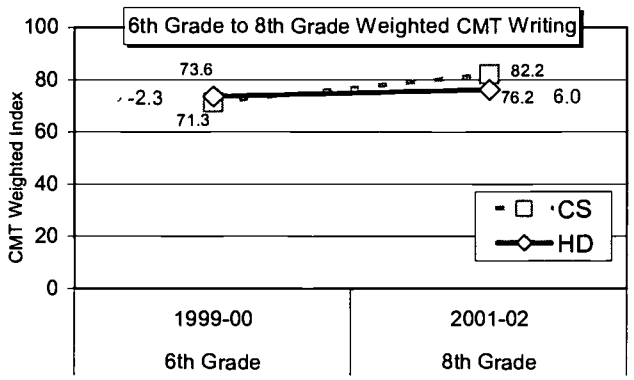
Two schools were considered in both the 4th-6th grade, and 6th to 8th grade cohorts (Integrated Day, Side by Side)
"-": Charter school (CS) has lower score than host district (HD)
"+": Charter School has higher score than host district
The bigger the value, the larger the distance between charter school and host district

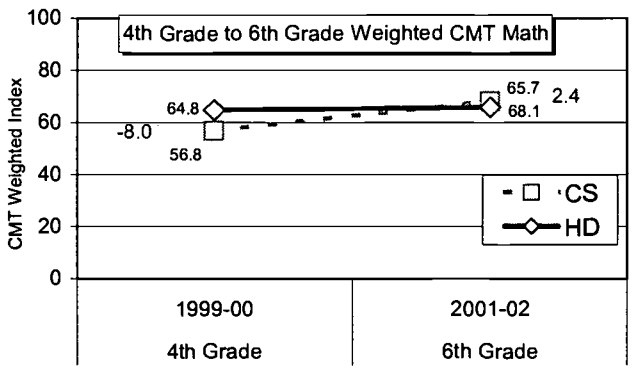
Exhibit 8:20 Same Class Cohorts Starting in the 1999-00 School Year
Comparing Charter Schools and Host District Results on the CMT

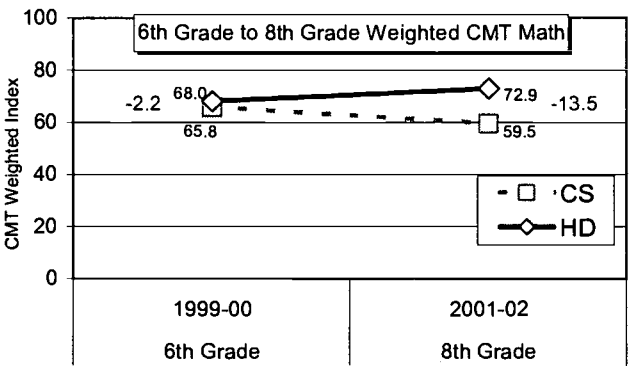


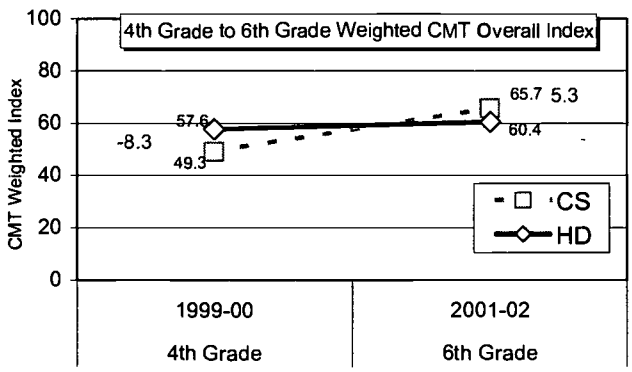


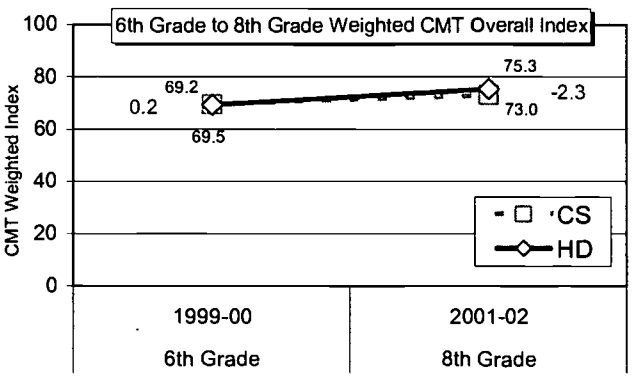












Two schools were considered in both the 4th-6th grade, and 6th to 8th grade cohorts (Integrated Day, Side by Side)
"-": Charter school (CS) has lower score than host district (HD)
"+": Charter School has higher score than host district
The bigger the value, the larger the distance between charter school and host district

In this cohort study, we observed that, relative to their host districts, those charter schools that began operation in 1997-98 or 1998-99 performed better than the schools that began operation in the 1999-00 school year. This observations would seem logical since the older schools have had more time to implement their programs. It should be pointed out, nevertheless, that there are only 2 schools in the 1999-00 cohort so one should understand that this is a very tentative finding. There was no clear pattern across the cohorts that would suggest that charter schools were performing better in one particular subject relative to the other subjects. Finally, it is important to note that while charter schools lagged behind their host districts during the first point in time when the cohorts were measures, they often matched or surpassed the host districts in terms of absolute index scores by the second time the cohorts were tested two years later. In only 3 of the 18 grade and subject level comparisons were charter schools' absolute scores lower than the host districts.

8.4 Summary of Results

The performance levels for charter schools relative to their host districts has clearly varied over time. This can be seen in the exhibits contained in this chapter. If we had analyzed the data with only two years of data, the findings would have been negative. If we had analyzed the data with only three years of results, the findings would have been mixed. However, after four and five years of test data, we can see that charter schools are outperforming their host districts. Unfortunately, because of the nature of the results, we have no test of significance that we can apply to determine whether or not the positive levels of performance may be occurring by chance. This fact, places an important limitation on one clear objective of our analyses which was to come up with a clear "bottom line" answer for policymakers.

In summarizing all the various comparisons we have made, we decided to rate and quantify the number of comparisons that were either negative, mixed, or positive. We used cutoffs to determine whether or not the comparisons were to be rated as negative (-1), no difference (0), or positive (+1). The cutoff we chose is +/- 4 points on index scores. That is, if the average annual change score for charter schools was more than 4 points greater than the change scores for the host districts, the comparison was rated as positive (+1). If the charter school had an average annual change score that was more than 4 points lower than the average annual change score for the host districts, the comparison was rated as negative (-1). If the difference in average annual change scores was less than 4 index scores, we rated the comparison as mixed. Selecting 4 as a cutoff was completely arbitrary. If we chose a smaller cutoff, the charter schools would have received even more positive ratings; but if we chose a larger number, the proportion of negative as opposed to positive ratings would largely be unchanged, although the number of "no difference" ratings would have increased. Using a cutoff allows us to separate the differences that are more substantial and likely to be the same in another year, whereas the comparisons that get rated as mixed or no difference are more likely to change in the next year or two.

Tables 8:3 and 8:4 contain summaries of the comparisons and the ratings we applied. Table 8:3 summarizes the trend comparisons, while Table 8:4 summarizes the cohort comparisons. Note that we have quantified the specific grade and subject area tests separately from the overall index scores. If we counted both subject tests and overall index we would—in a sense—be double counting since the overall index scores are simply an average of the three subject tests at each grade level.

Table 8:3 Summary of Comparison Ratings for the Trend Analysis

Trend Study									
Weighted Index	**5-year trend (1st trend)** Difference of average change scores (CS-HD)	Rating*	**4-year trend (2nd trend)** Difference of average change scores (CS-HD)	Rating*	**All trends by grade level**	Count	%	**Total (all grade levels & subjects)**	Count	%
4th grade					**4th grade**					
Reading	0.68	0	-1.13	0	Positive	1	17%	Positive	8	31%
Writing	0.40	0	-5.36	-1	No difference	4	67%	No difference	17	65%
Math	5.76	1	3.38	0	Negative	1	17%	Negative	1	4%
					Total Count	6	100%	*Total Count*	26	100%
6th grade					**6th grade**					
Reading	-0.75	0	4.01	1	Positive	1	17%			
Writing	3.17	0	3.65	0	No difference	5	83%			
Math	2.08	0	1.04	0	Negative	0	0%			
					Total Count	6	100%			
8th grade					**8th grade**					
Reading	10.90	1	2.74	0	Positive	4	67%			
Writing	6.40	1	13.16	1	No difference	2	33%			
Math	12.04	1	2.66	0	Negative	0	0%			
					Total Count	6	100%			
10th grade					**10th grade**					
Language Arts	-3.24	0	2.06	0	Positive	2	25%			
Math	2.59	0	1.59	0	No difference	6	75%			
Science	3.44	0	6.20	1	Negative	0	0%			
Interdisciplinary	-2.99	0	5.85	1	*Total Count*	8	100%			
Overall Index										
					All Trends by Overall Index					
4th grade	1.93	0	-2.68	0	Positive	2	25%			
6th grade	0.83	0	1.70	0	No difference	6	75%			
8th grade	8.20	1	4.61	1	Negative	0	0%			
10th grade	-0.08	0	3.97	0	*Total Count*	8	100%			

* The cut point is + / - 4.00

Note: When quantifying the ratings for trends (see top, righthand table in the exhibit), we did not include the ratings for the overall index since this is the average of the subject level scores for each grade.

Table 8:4 Summary of Comparison Ratings for the Cohort Analysis

Cohorts Starting in 1997-98

Weighted Index	4th Grade to 6th Grade				6th Grade to 8th Grade			
	4th (CS-HD)	6th (CS-HD)	6th - 4th	Rating*	6th (CS-HD)	8th (CS-HD)	8th - 6th	Rating*
Reading	-5.39	5.16	10.55	1	5.51	11.83	6.32	1
Writing	-8.27	-2.26	6.01	1	-11.35	-20.79	-9.44	-1
Math	-12.10	-2.18	9.92	1	-6.26	6.61	12.87	1

Total for 1997-98 Cohorts	Count	%
Positive	5	83%
No difference	0	0%
Negative	1	17%
Total	6	100%

Cohorts Starting in 1998-99

Weighted Index	4th Grade to 6th Grade				6th Grade to 8th Grade			
	4th (CS-HD)	6th (CS-HD)	6th - 4th	Rating*	6th (CS-HD)	8th (CS-HD)	8th - 6th	Rating*
Reading	3.05	8.98	5.93	1	-5.53	8.94	14.47	1
Writing	2.25	9.17	6.92	1	-7.93	0.86	8.79	1
Math	-6.99	3.24	10.23	1	-5.39	-3.24	2.15	0

Total for 1998-99 Cohorts	Count	%
Positive	5	83%
No difference	1	17%
Negative	0	0%
Total	6	100%

Cohorts Starting in 1999-00

Weighted Index	4th Grade to 6th Grade				6th Grade to 8th Grade			
	4th (CS-HD)	6th (CS-HD)	6th - 4th	Rating*	6th (CS-HD)	8th (CS-HD)	8th - 6th	Rating*
Reading	-2.8	10.38	13.18	1	5.16	0.62	-4.54	-1
Writing	-14.13	3.03	17.16	1	-2.26	5.97	8.23	0
Math	-7.99	2.36	10.35	1	-2.18	-13.45	-11.27	-1

Total for 1999-00 Cohorts	Count	%
Positive	3	50%
No difference	1	17%
Negative	2	33%
Total	6	100%

Total of All Cohorts Across Subjects	Count	%
Positive	13	72%
No difference	2	11%
Negative	3	17%
Total	18	100%

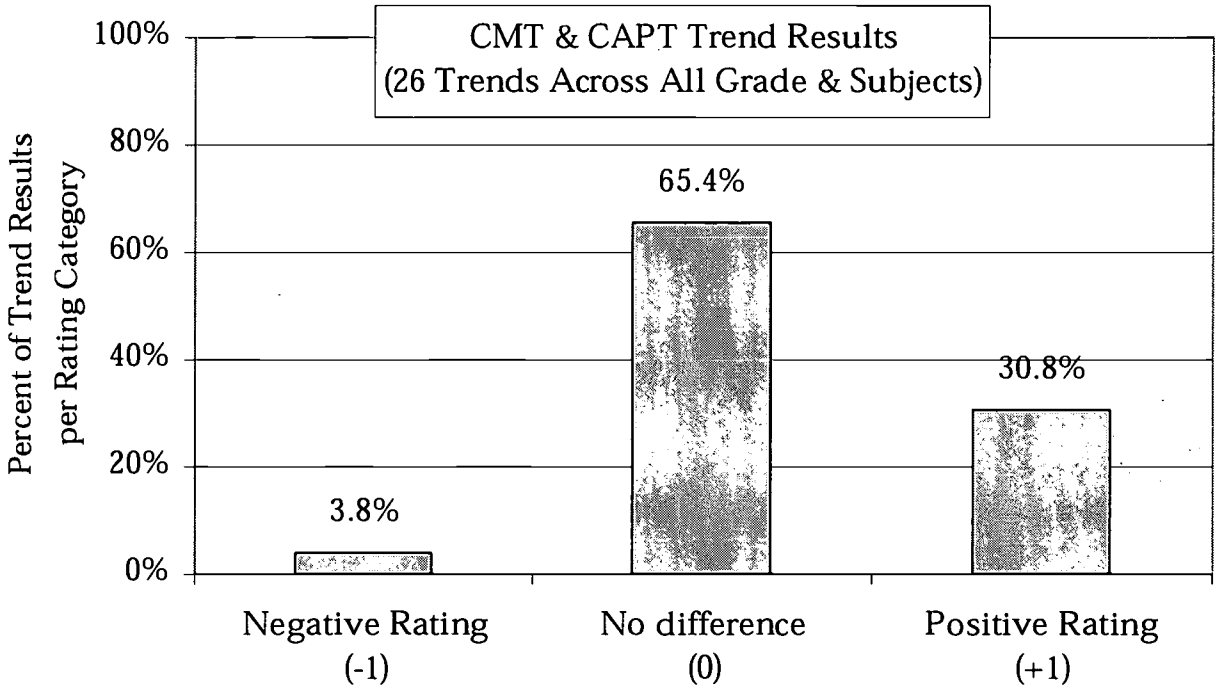
Cohorts Based on Overall Index For All Years

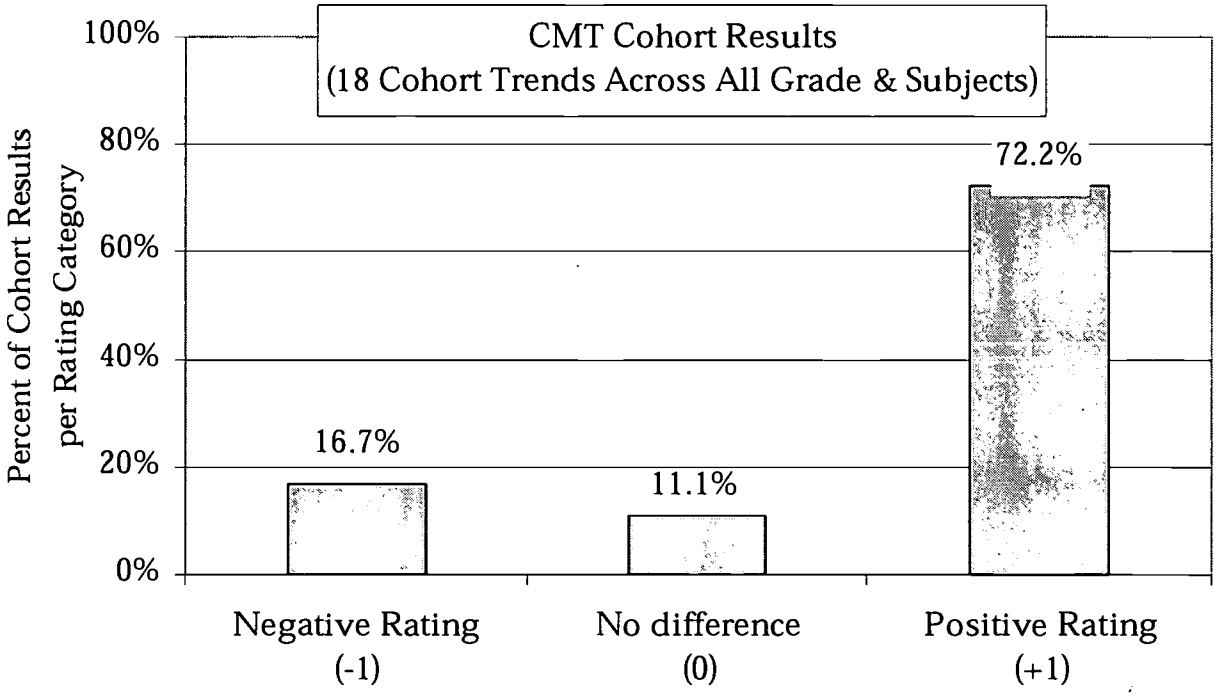
Weighted Index	4th Grade to 6th Grade				6th Grade to 8th Grade			
	4th (CS-HD)	6th (CS-HD)	8th - 4th	Rating*	6th (CS-HD)	8th (CS-HD)	8th - 6th	Rating*
1997-98 Cohorts								
Overall Inde	-8.59	0.24	8.83	1	-4.03	-0.78	3.25	0
1998-99 Cohorts								
Overall Inde	-0.6	7.14	7.74	1	-6.27	2.14	8.41	1
1999-00 Cohorts								
Overall Inde	-8.31	5.31	13.62	1	0.24	-2.28	-2.52	0

Totals for Overall Index	Count	%
Positive	4	67%
No difference	2	33%
Negative	0	0%
Total	6	100%

Note: The rating given each trend is based on a cut point of +/- 4.00. In other words, if the difference in change scores between charter schools and host districts was larger than 4, this is rated as a positive trend "+1". If the difference is negative and greater than -4 then this cohort receives a negative rating "-1." Differences between negative and positive 4 were rated as mixed, "0."

Exhibit 8:21 Distribution of Comparison Ratings for Trend Analysis and Cohort Analysis





The following items summarize the main findings from our analyses of CMT and CAPT data:

- In terms of absolute scores, charter schools initially were performing lower than the state average and lower than their host districts. This information suggests that the charter schools are attracting students whose performance levels are generally lower than students in the host districts. This could also imply that students in charter schools perform poorly in their initial years at the charter school due to the start-up nature of the school or other related factors. Currently, the charter schools are performing at levels similar to their host districts and slightly lower than the state average.
- In terms of gain scores or value added, the charter schools are outperforming their host districts.
- Charter schools do better on the CMT than on the CAPT. In other words, the charter schools catering to elementary and middle school students are showing more positive gains as measured by the state's standardized tests than are the charter schools at the high school level. In part, this can be explained by a larger proportion of the charter high schools catering to students at risk. Readers should be reminded that there are a finite set of charter high schools (one of those considered in our analyses has since been closed in the summer of 2001) and that the number of test takers varies extensively between the charter high schools and the district high schools.
- The results for both our trend analysis and cohort analysis indicated that charter schools were making larger gains than their host districts. The results on the cohort analysis—which we consider a stronger design—are more positive than the trend analysis.
- Thirty-one percent of the trend analyses were positive, while only 4 percent were negative and 65 percent were mixed. Among the stronger cohort analyses, 72 percent of the trends were positive compared with 17 percent that were negative and 11 percent that were mixed.
- Charter schools that have been in operation longer show larger gains on both trend and cohort analyses relative to their host districts.

Readers are encouraged to compare the results outlined in the tables and exhibits in this chapter with the data tables presented in Appendix I, which provide complete school-by-school results.

We have analyzed student achievement in charter schools in a number of states and are well aware of the variation in performance that occurs from year to year. We are also aware of the many limitations in the findings and have attempted to clearly spell them out in this chapter. Even though we now have five years of test data to examine in Connecticut, we think it still may be too early to make clear inferences about the causal impact of charter schools on student achievement. On the other hand, compared with the results in other states (see the meta-analysis of student achievement studies in Miron & Nelson, in press), the results we obtained for Connecticut are clearly the most substantial and the most positive that we have found in terms of student achievement gains made by charter schools. Also, given the strength and consistent direction of the trends over time, we conclude that charter schools in Connecticut are having a positive impact on students' achievement.

Chapter Nine
Indicators of School Quality

Chapter 7 examined the charter schools' accountability plans and summarized the degree to which they have fulfilled their objectives. One of the most common ways that schools are measured is in terms of student achievement, which was covered in detail in chapter 8. This chapter summarizes other indicators of school quality. The difference between chapters 8 and 9 is related to the definition of "pupil results." Whereas chapter 8 examined student achievement, this chapter assesses secondary indicators of student performance as well as other indicators of school quality.

The chapter begins by supplementing the view of student achievement provided by results on the CMT and CAPT with the assessments of charter school students, parents, and teachers. Next, the chapter turns to the "market accountability" viewpoint by examining the extent to which educational "consumers" have "voted with their feet" for or against charter schools. We do this by examining patterns of entry into and exit out of charter schools and of overall satisfaction with charter schools. Indeed, from the market accountability view, charter schools should be judged not only on their ability to realize certain publicly pronounced standards and goals, but also on their ability to satisfy consumer preferences. Finally, the chapter examines a number of intermediate or "nonachievement" outcomes, including attendance, discipline, and various elements of school culture and climate. These latter outcomes are significant in two respects. Some stakeholders consider them ends in themselves. Others, however, view them as necessary prerequisites to the ultimate goal of increasing student achievement. Accordingly, even if a charter school has not demonstrated gains in student achievement, its ability to improve student learning habits and school climate might augur well for future improvements in achievement. In short, such outcomes might serve as "leading education indicators" of potential educational performance, in much the same way that the Index of Leading Economic Indicators serves as a way to predict future economic performance.

9.1 Data and Methods

The data used in this chapter came primarily from surveys of charter school students, parents/guardians, and faculty/staff. Respondents from each group were sampled randomly (see chapter 2 for details). In order to facilitate comparisons among charter and noncharter schools, we used data from the National Association of Secondary School Principals' School Climate Survey (SCS). The SCS provides national norms on a number of constructs related to school culture and climate. Since the SCS was not designed specifically for charter schools, we devote much of the chapter to the other surveys, which were designed explicitly for charter schools. Complete survey results may be found in Appendix D. Additional data came from raw data files provided by CSDE and from archives of charter school documents generated and maintained by the evaluation team. These include annual reports submitted by the charter schools to CSDE.

These data, however, are subject to a number of limitations that readers should bear in mind when making decisions based on them. First, much of the information presented in this chapter is based on respondents' subjective judgments of their schools. In most cases, the evaluation team could not verify these assessments. The second limitation involves comparison groups. Many survey items invite respondents to compare their charter school experiences with experiences at other schools. Thus, the surveys attempt to simulate pre/post comparisons on a single cohort. However, such comparisons might be tainted by faulty recollections. Moreover, the fact that the sample included only participants in charter schools makes it impossible to gauge whether reported changes in opinion are unique to charter schools. Finally, given that the evaluation took place during the early stages of the Connecticut's charter school movement means that the findings are based on a relatively small number of schools. The surveys were administered only to schools enrolling grades 5 and higher due to ethical and technical issues surrounding gathering data from small children. Thus, readers should be cautious in generalizing these findings to the movement as a whole.

9.2 Subjective Ratings of Student Performance

The student survey instrument included two items that asked students to rate their own performance at the charter school and to compare it with their performance at their previous school. Of the 740 students surveyed during the 1999-00 academic year, 65 percent reported that their performance was either "excellent" or "good." This represents an increase from 1997-98 (61 percent). The survey also asked students to compare their performance in the charter school with their performance at their previous school on a scale that included "excellent," "good," "average," "poor," and "unsatisfactory." Results from this item are presented in Figure 9:1. Whereas 10 percent of surveyed students judged their performance as "poor" or "unsatisfactory" at their previous school, only 6 percent placed themselves into these categories at their charter schools, a difference of just under 4 percent. Moreover, while 65 percent of students judged themselves as "excellent" or "good" at their previous school, 73 percent placed themselves into these categories at their charter schools. In response to open-ended survey questions, students often offered comments such as, "My grades are coming up a bit. I learn more in the school."

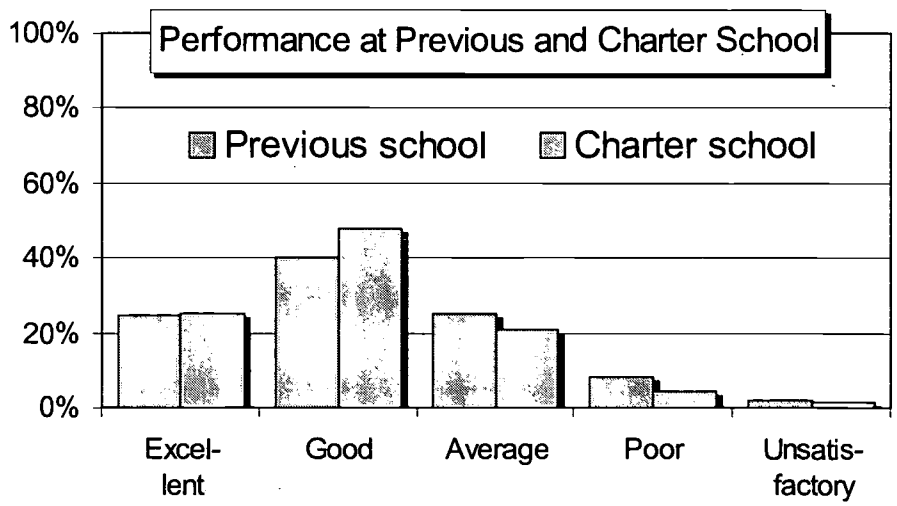


Figure 9:1 Student Self-Rated Performance at Previous School and Current Charter School

The teacher survey also included an item that asked teachers to assess the extent to which "the achievement levels of students are improving."

Teachers were asked to provide both their initial expectation and their current experience. In 1999-00, 55 percent of those teachers surveyed thought that student achievement was improving at their charter school—up slightly from 54 percent in 1998-99. However, the surveys also revealed that a higher percentage of teachers had expected students to show gains in achievement (70 percent in 1998-99 and 74 percent in 1999-00). We cannot determine whether the gap between expectations and reality is due to inflated expectations or genuine problems with student achievement.

As we pointed out earlier, many parents report enrolling their children in charter schools because these schools address student needs that could not be addressed at other local schools. The charter schools get especially high marks from parents who said that their students' special needs were not well served in other schools, which suggests that parents with students with special needs are generally satisfied with the progress their children are making in charter schools.

9.3 Market Accountability

Market accountability holds that charter school quality is best measured by whether its consumers are satisfied with the "product" offered by the school. Economists and others who study market behavior typically measure consumer satisfaction through their "revealed preferences," that is, through the choices they actually make. Thus, the decision to seek enrollment in a charter school might, other things equal, be an indicator of school quality. Conversely, the decision to leave a charter school might be, among other things, an indicator that the school is not performing well.

Waiting lists provide an indication of whether local educational consumers consider charter schools of sufficiently high quality to enroll their children. With the exceptions of siblings and the children of adults involved in the founding of a school, charter schools must select students randomly from their waiting lists in the event they are oversubscribed. Unfortunately, we could obtain information on waiting lists from only 11 of the 16 charter schools. Table 9:1 shows that the average charter school had 68 students on its waiting list as of the1999-2000 school year. Since the number of students on a school's waiting list must be understood in terms of the overall number of slots, we also present the average number of students on waiting lists as a percentage of current enrollment.

Table 9:1 Charter School Waiting Lists, Summer1999

	Mean	*Median*	*Minimum*	*Maximum*
# Students on Waiting List	68	50	0	298
# Students as Percentage of Total Enrollment	45	48	0	186

Source: Annual reports submitted by charter schools to CSDE.

Table 9:1 also indicates that the average waiting list is 45 percent of the total number of slots currently in the school. However, there was considerable variation around these values. Indeed, some schools report no students on their waiting lists, while others report waiting lists that exceed total current enrollment.

We also examined the number of students that returned to the charter schools, as reported in the schools' annual reports, in order to assess student turnover. Of the 14 schools open for more than 1 year, 12 provided student return rate information. While we cannot assess whether these schools constitute a representative sample of the others, they provide at least a preliminary view of student turnover. As a group, the 12 charter schools examined had a return rate of 75.5 percent, indicating that 24.5 percent of students who enrolled in the charter schools as of Spring 1999 were not enrolled in the same school as of Fall 1999. There was, however, tremendous variation among the charter schools, with a median of 86 percent, a minimum of 28 percent, and a maximum of 96 percent. The overall average rate is slightly lower than the most recently reported (1997-98) state "student stability" rate of 86 percent.

In interviews with school directors, we also inquired about return rates. This yielded a variety of responses from the schools. Most schools reported that 80 percent or more of their students were returning. In a few schools this figure was between 40 and 60, percent and in two schools the return rate over the summer was 35 percent or less. The low return rate was sometimes linked to upheaval in the school, with divisive splits between the board and the school staff or between the teachers and administration at the school.

Another way to assess customer satisfaction is simply to ask important stakeholders for their subjective assessments. Thus, we turn next to the subjective evaluations of charter schools' primary customers—parents and students. Parents indicated their level of overall satisfaction with their charter schools in three main areas: instruction, curriculum, and student performance. Approximately 72 percent of parents reported that the quality of instruction in their charter school is high, and 71 percent of parents reported that their child's achievement level is improved. Similarly, some 66 percent said that their child received sufficient attention. In order to gauge student perceptions of overall school quality, the student survey instrument asked students whether they would recommend their charter school to a friend. Approximately 57 percent of students surveyed indicated they would recommend the school to a friend, while 18 percent said they would not and another 25 percent were not sure (see Figure 9:2). Answers to the same questions in 1997-98 revealed that 61 percent of the students would recommend the school to a friend, while 9 percent would not and another 30 percent were not sure.

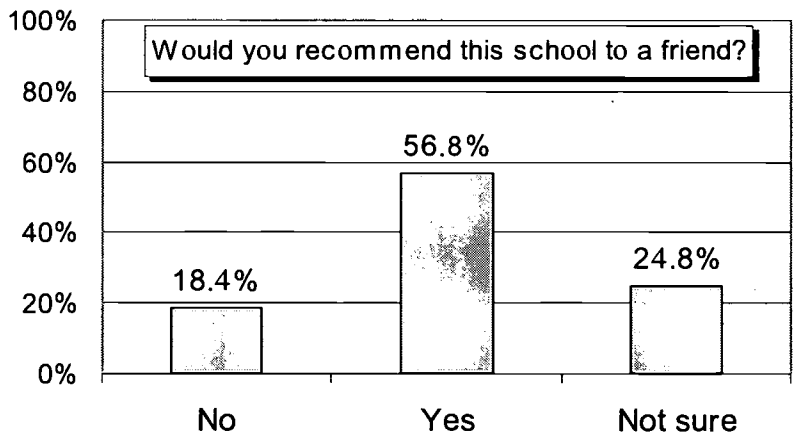


Figure 9:2 Students' Responses Regarding Whether or Not They Would Recommend Their School to Others

9.4 Discipline and School Safety

Discipline and school safety are closely related factors that can affect the overall climate and

quality of a school. Fifteen of the 16 charter schools provided information related to student discipline in their annual reports. Schools that provided information usually reported total number of suspensions. A total of 826 suspensions were reported with a minimum number of 8 and a maximum of 166, with a mean of 59. These figures refer to the number of incidences, not the number of students involved. One indication as to the level of severity of discipline problems is to also look at the number of "out-of-school" suspensions and expulsions, as opposed to in-school suspensions. Of the 826 reported suspensions, 447 (54 percent) were "in-school" and 379 (46 percent) were "out of school." The schools also reported 9 expulsions in 1998-99 and 12 expulsions in 1999-00, which would be indicative of students with extreme behavioral problems. One school indicated that the 2 students expelled were referred to "therapeutic" placements.

Data on student suspensions indicate that charter schools are experiencing the same challenges in establishing safe and orderly environments as traditional public schools. To get another view of the safety climate in charter schools, we analyzed responses to two survey items designed to elicit students' general appraisal of school safety. The first item asked students to express the extent to which they agreed with the statement, "students feel safe at this school." Of those students surveyed in Spring 2000, 47.8 percent either agreed or strongly agreed. This represents a noticeable decrease from 1997-98 (58 percent). The percentage of students who agreed with the second item, "students respect one another and their property," also declined between 1997-98 and 1999-00 (i.e., from 39.5 percent to 29.6 percent, respectively). Overall, it appears that students' perceptions of safety in charter schools have remained relatively stable, with perhaps a small decline over the years.

Interestingly, a much higher percentage of teachers and parents think that students feel safe at their charter schools than do the students. Some 81.6 percent of teachers and 85 percent of parents agreed with the statement that "students feel safe at school." In fact, parents' perceptions remained virtually the same over the years while there was a decrease in teachers' perceptions from 1997-98 (91.7 percent) to 1999-00 (81.6 percent). Figure 9:3 illustrates the discrepancy and changes in perceptions of school safety from 1997-98 to 1999-00.

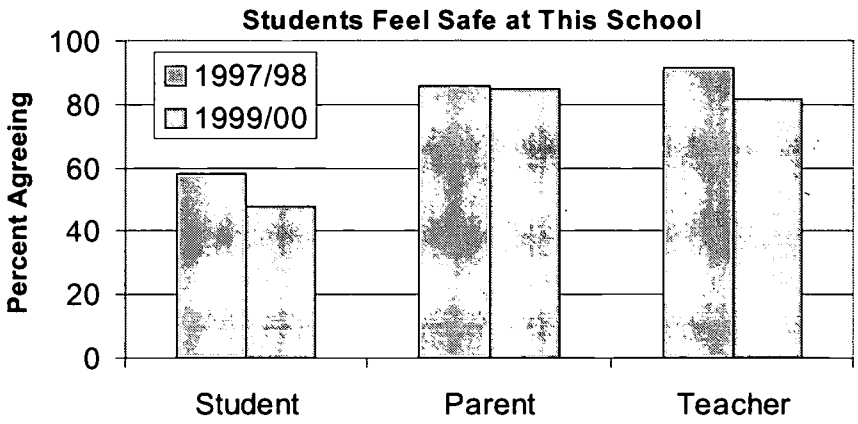


Figure 9:3 Comparisons of Perceived School Safety by Informant Groups and Years When Survey Was Administered

9.5 Other Attributes of the School Environment

The surveys asked respondents for their opinions on a wide range of school culture and climate issues beyond school safety. One set of questions dealt with whether charter school students are held to high expectations. Approximately 77.9 percent of parents surveyed in 1999-00 agreed with the statement that "This school has high standards and expectations for students." A similar percentage of teachers (73.2 percent) also agreed with this statement. The surveys also attempted to assess students' perceptions of expectations in less direct ways. Some 61.6 percent of students surveyed in 1999-00 agreed with the statement that "My teachers encourage me to think about my future," a slight increase from the previous year. More students (approximately 47 percent) in 1999-00 thought they had more homework at their charter school than the students surveyed in 1997-98 (34.4 percent). Students' open-ended responses also added information as to their perception of school climate. One wrote: "I like this school because you get the help you need and the teachers are nice." Another student suggested, "Teachers are always willing to help, and they make learning fun." Yet another student wrote that "Teachers really do care about us and they want us to succeed."

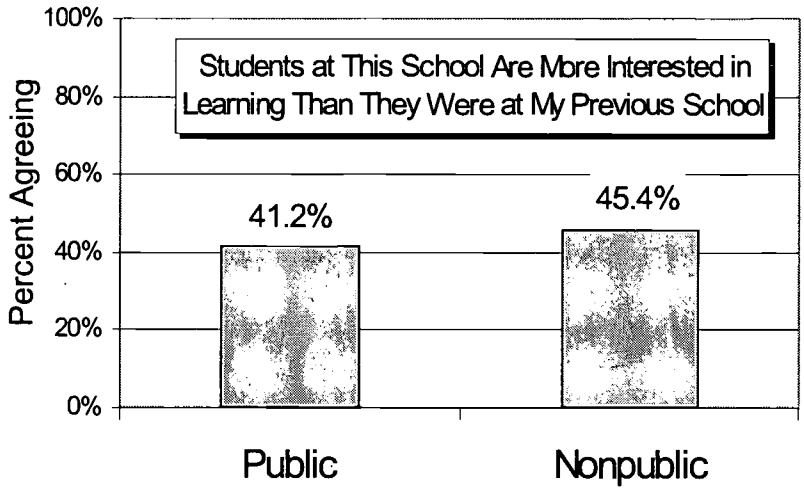


Figure 9:4 Perceived Levels of Interest Among Students Coming From Public and Nonpublic Schools

The surveys also sought to assess important aspects of charter schools' learning climates and student attitudes about learning. Approximately 40 percent of students sampled in 1999-00 agreed with the statement "Students at this school are more interested in learning than they were at my last school."

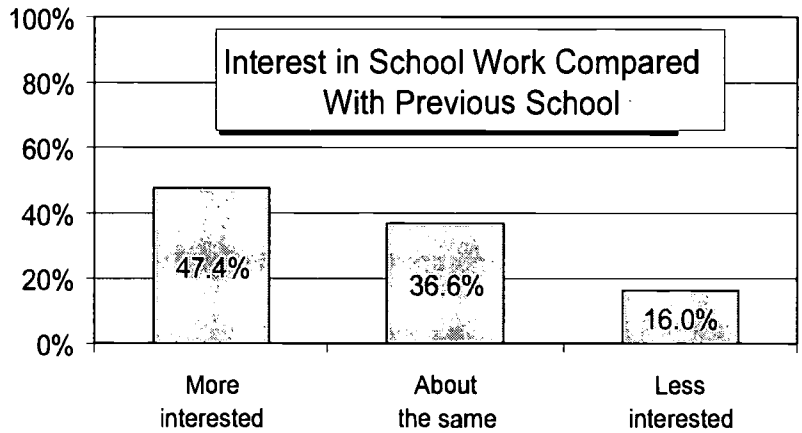


Figure 9:5 Student Self-Rated Interest in School Work at Current Charter School Compared With Previous School

Interestingly, 41.2 percent of students from public schools agreed with the statement, compared with 45.4 percent of students from nonpublic schools (see Figure 9:4). A statistical significance test (t-test) on the score means revealed that this difference was statistically discernible ($p=0.008$). Asked specifically about their own attitudes toward learning, even more students (47.4 percent) agreed that they were more interested in learning at their charter school (see Figure 9:5). Students cited that "the school work is more interesting," "the school has a good learning environment," and "the school has a better way of learning." There was a substantial decline (41.1 to 34.6 percent) from 1997-98 to 1999-00 in the percentage of students who thought that students would continue their studies even after the teacher left the room. This difference was statistically discernible at conventional levels ($p<0.00$). The parent and teacher surveys also asked for assessments of student attitudes toward learning. Approximately 78.7 percent of parents said that their child is "motivated to learn." Teachers, however, were much less sanguine, with approximately 33.8 percent agreeing with the statement.

Finally, the surveys sought to assess whether charter schools exhibit a community atmosphere. More than 59.4 percent of students sampled in 1999-00 agreed with the statement that "Teachers want me to be in school and ask me why I wasn't there when I have been absent," this had dropped slightly from 66 percent in 1997-98. Even more students (approximately 87.3 percent) indicated that teachers and administrators know them by name. Moreover, some 73.2 percent agreed with the statement "My teacher is available to talk to me about my classroom performance." Parents were similarly positive about the community atmosphere in charter schools, with approximately 74.9 percent agreeing with the statement, "This school reflects a community atmosphere."

9.6 School Climate

Measuring School Climate

The data presented above help to illuminate whether charter schools are successful in pursuing nonachievement outcomes. Without benchmarks or comparison groups, however, much of the data—especially those on school climate—are difficult to interpret. Unfortunately, administering the surveys to noncharter students, parents, and teachers was well beyond the scope of this evaluation. We were able to partially address this limitation by administering the National Association of Secondary School Principals' School Climate Survey (SCS) during the 1998-99 academic year. The SCS is unique in that it provides national norms on a number of constructs relating to school climate. Since many items on the SCS are similar to those on the surveys already discussed, we will not present a detailed review of findings from the SCS. Instead, we report summary indices of 10 subscales measured by the SCS, along with national norms on these same indices. We have not reported parents' responses to the SCS due to low response rates. Appendix D contains results from the teachers/staff and students on the School Climate Survey.

Findings from the administration of the SCS, along with the national norms, are summarized in two graphs. Figure 9:6 provides charter school scores and norms for students, teachers, and parents.

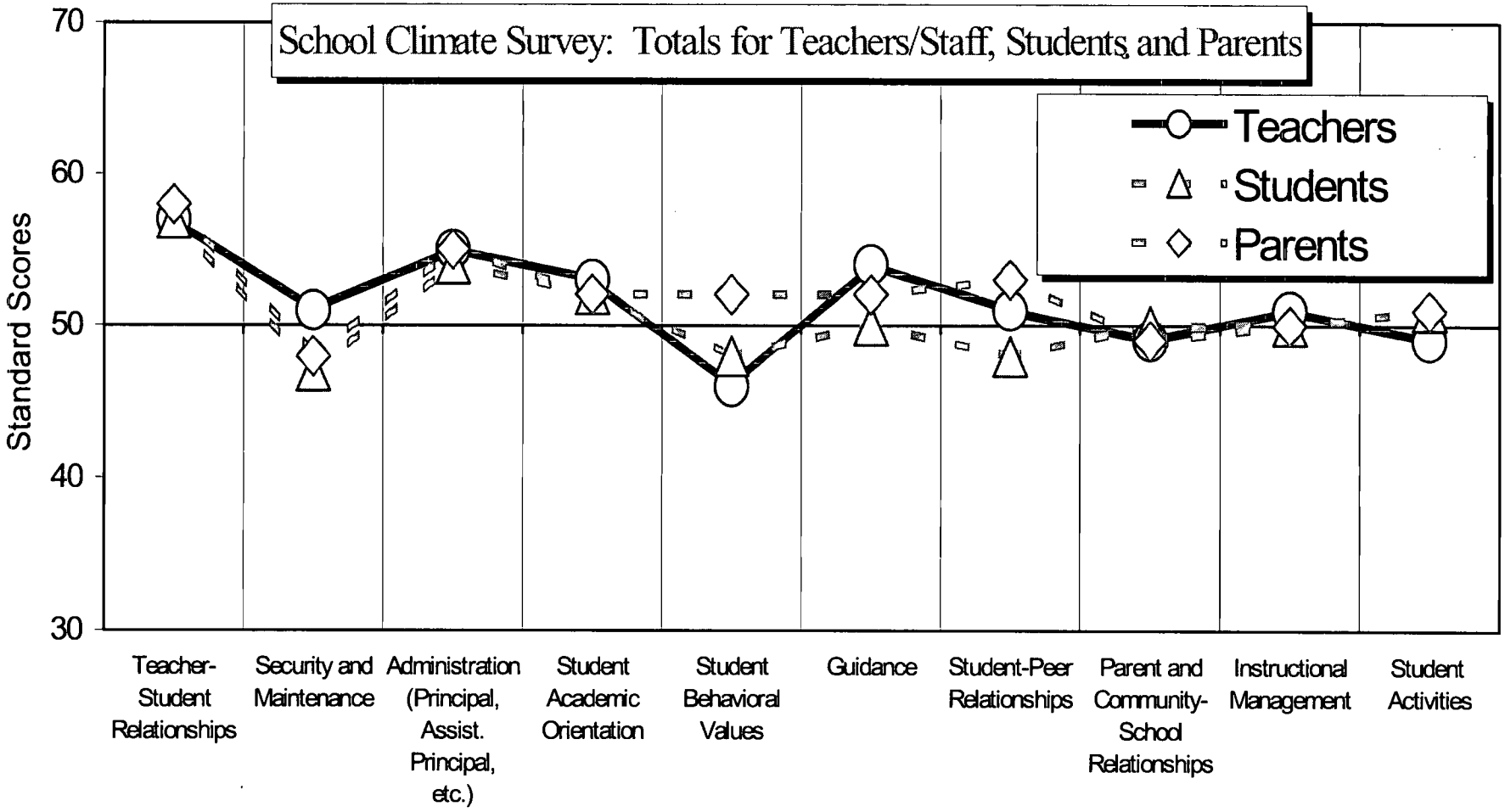


Figure 9:6 Total Results on the School Climate Survey for Teachers/Staff, Students, and Parents, 1998-99

The ten subscales are identified on the horizontal axis, while the aggregate scores for all Connecticut charter schools are shown on the vertical axis. For each subscale, the national norm is 50. Hence, points above the horizontal line at 50 indicate subscales on which sampled charter schools exceeded national norms, while points below the horizontal line indicate subscales on which sampled charter schools performed below national norms. Table 9:3 provides brief descriptions of each of the ten subscales.

Table 9:3 Descriptions of Subscales on the School Climate Survey

Subscale	*Description*
Teacher-student relationships	The quality of the interpersonal and professional relationships between teachers and students
Security and maintenance	The quality of maintenance and the degree of security people feel at the school
Administration (principal, assistant principal, etc.)	The degree to which school administrators are effective in communicating with different role groups and in setting high performance expectations for teachers and students
Student academic orientation	Student attention to tasks and concern for achievement at school
Student behavioral values	Student self-discipline and tolerance for others
Guidance	The quality of academic and career guidance and academic counseling services available to students
Student-peer relationships	Students' care and respect for one another and their mutual cooperation
Parent and community-school relationships	The amount and quality of involvement of parents and other community members in the school
Instructional management	The efficiency and effectiveness of teacher classroom organization and use of classroom time
Student activities	Opportunities for and actual participation of students in school-sponsored activities

Source: Examiner's Manual, School Climate Survey

Teachers' and Staff's Perception of School Climate

Figure 9:7 provides teacher/staff school climate results organized by all schools, schools that opened in 1997-98 (First year school), and schools that opened in 1998-99 (second year schools). In the past study, we found that the length of operation has an impact on teachers' perception of school climate. Owens (1998) defined school climate as the study of perceptions that individuals have of various aspects of the environment in the school. First year schools are those opened in 1997-98; Second year schools are those opened in 1998-99. Teachers/staff from the first year schools gave higher scores for school climate than those from the second year schools. The findings confirm our hunch that it takes time for new teachers to understand the characteristics of the environment in a school building before they have a total picture of school climate. Scores from teachers who were from second year schools were well below national norms on student behavioral values, student-peer relationships, and student activities.

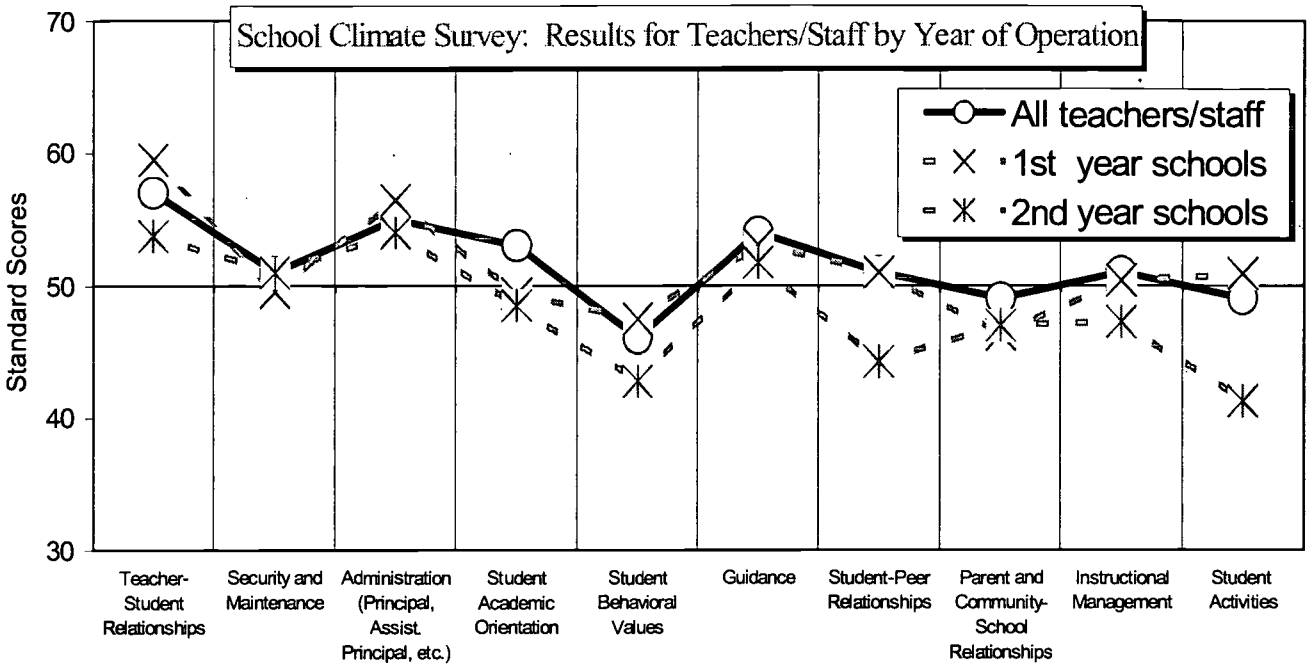


Figure 9:7 Results for Teachers/Staff by Year of Operation, 1998-99

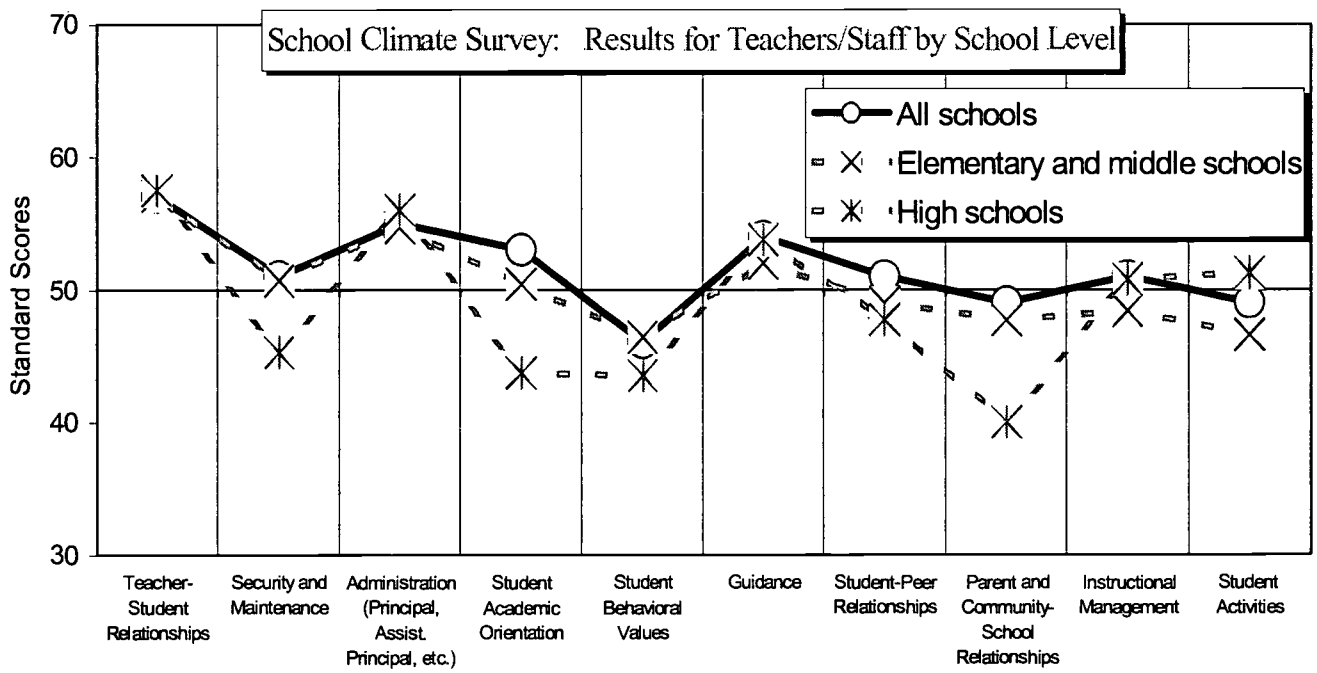


Figure 9:8 Results for Teachers/Staff by School Level, 1998-99

Figure 9:8 provides teachers/staff school climate results organized by school level. In the past study, we found that teachers at different school levels vary in their perceptions of their school climate, which is most likely related to structure and organization of the school building. Elementary and middle school teachers gave higher scores on school climate than high school teachers. Scores from high school teachers were well below national norms on security and maintenance, student academic orientation, student behavioral values, and parent and community-school relationships.

Students Perception of School Climate

Figure 9:9 provides student school climate results organized by all schools, schools that opened in 1997-98 (first year schools), and schools that opened in 1998-99 (Second year schools). Student results differed from those recorded for teachers/staff. There was not much difference in perceptions of students enrolled in first year schools and second year schools. However, the perception of school climate of students enrolled in second year schools (new schools) were still slightly lower than those of first year students. Three areas scored below national norms for second year school students: security and maintenance, student behavioral values, and student-peer relationships.

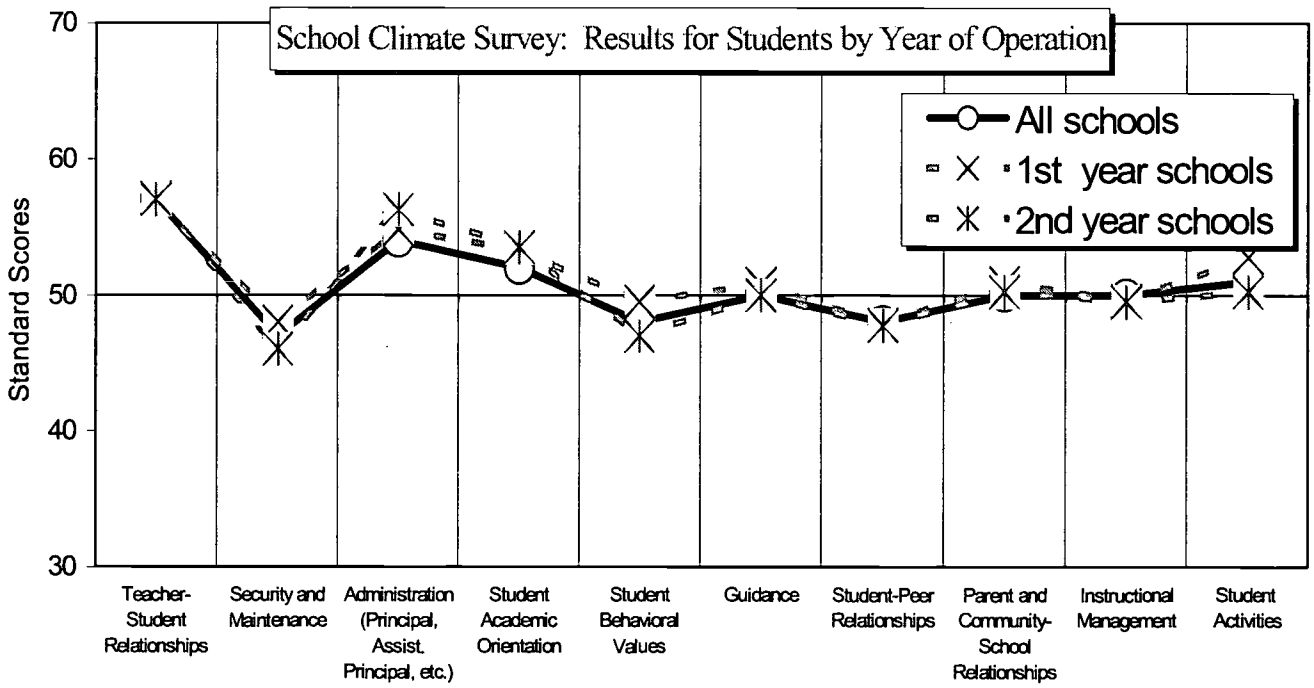


Figure 9:9 Results From Students by Year of Operation, 1998-99

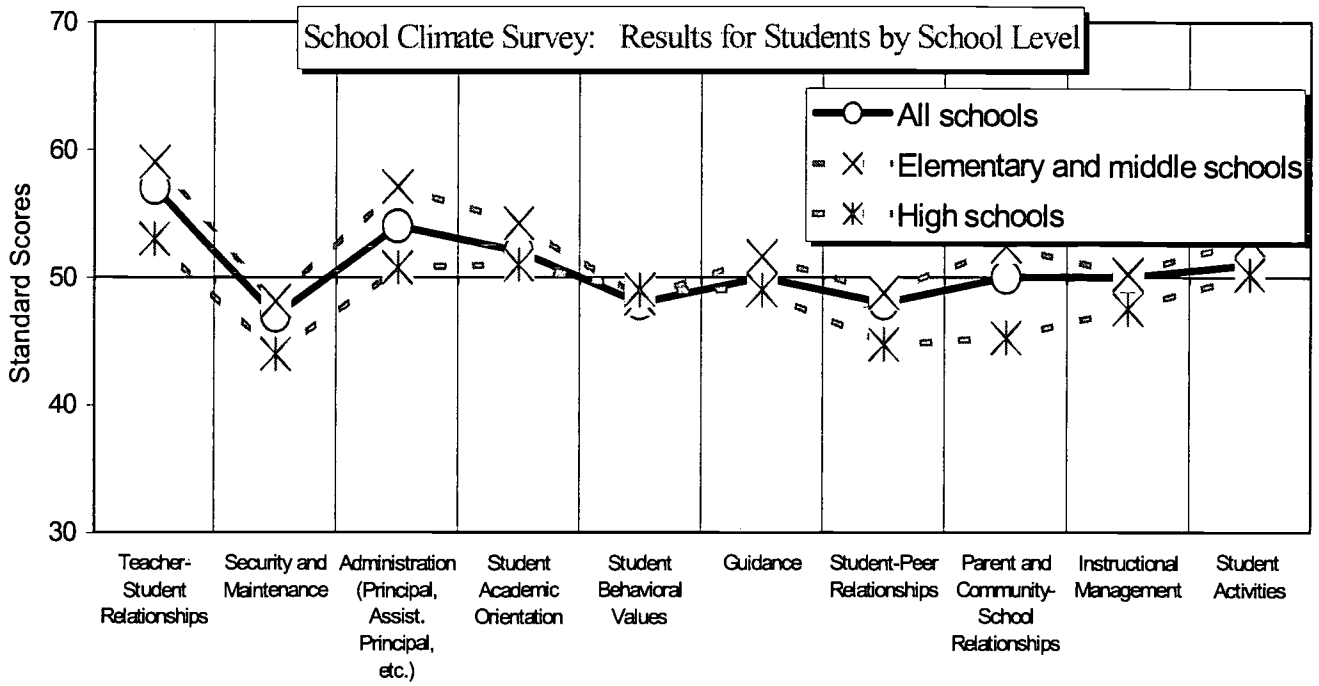


Figure 9:10 Results from Students by School Level, 1998-99

Figure 9:10 provides school climate results from students, organized by school level. In the past study, we also found that school levels had an impact on students' perceptions of their school climate due to structure and organization of the school building. Elementary and middle school students had higher scores on school climate than high school students. High school students' ratings were well below national norms on security and maintenance, student-peer relationships, and parent and community-school relationships.

Parents' Perception of School Climate

The parent sample on the school climate survey was relatively weak, with only 51 percent of the sampled parents responding, whereas close to 90 percent of the sampled teachers/staff and students completed the school climate survey. For this reason, we do not discuss the parent results in great detail. Figure 9:6 illustrated the parents' overall ratings on the 10 subscales relative to the results for teachers/staff and students. In terms of parent perceptions of school climate, two areas were below national norms for charter school parents: security and maintenance and parent and community-school relationships. In comparison with teachers and students, parents seemed more positive than students and teachers about the school climate. For example, parents had only 2 subscales out of 10 below national norms, while teachers/staff and students each had 3 subscales out of 10 below national norms.

9.7 Discussion of School Climate Findings

Based on surveys administered to teachers/staff, parents, and students charter schools are particularly strong (above national norms) in teacher-student relationships, administration, and student academic orientation across all three groups. Several areas such as security and maintenance, student behavioral values, parent and community-school relationships were below national norms among all three groups The scores from student group were below national norms on security/maintenance, student behavioral values, and student-peer relationships. Scores from the parent group were also below national norms on security and maintenance and parent and community-school relationships. The teacher/staff group scores were below national norms on student behavioral values, parent and community-school relationships, and student activities.

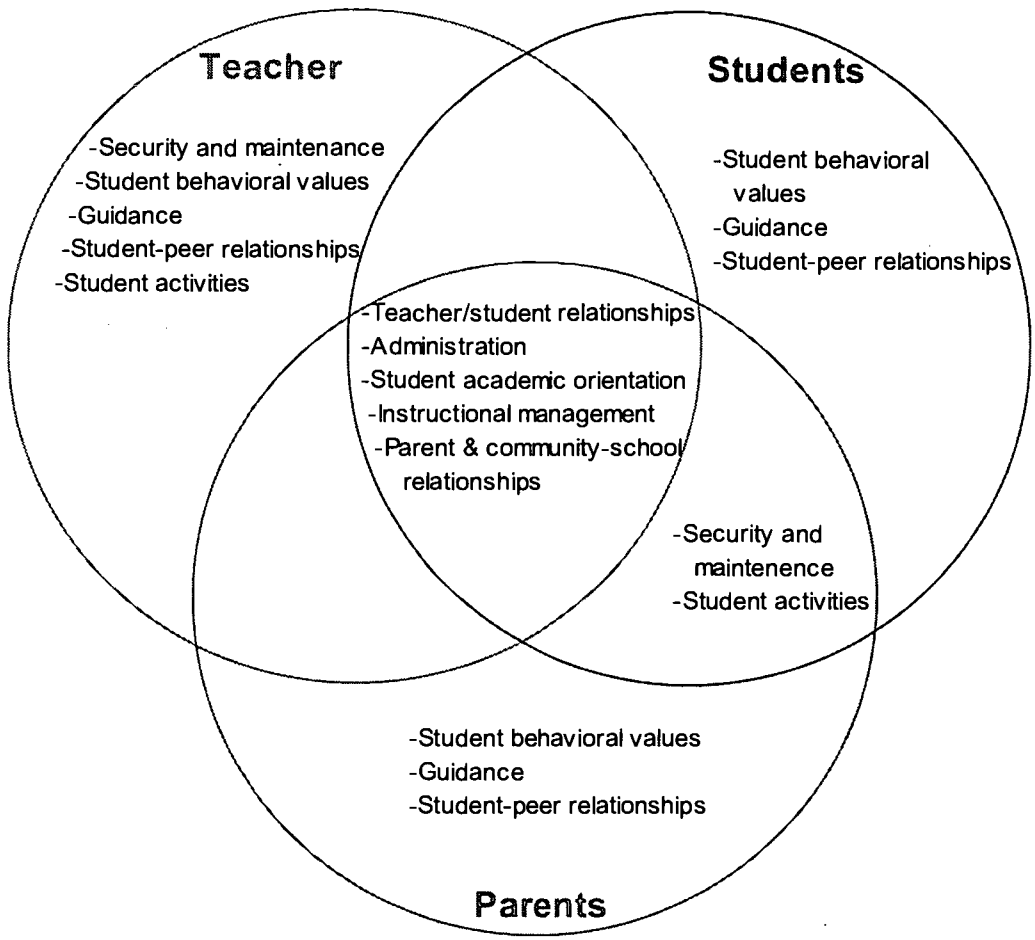


Figure 9:11 Agreement and Disagreement on School Climate Among Informant Groups

Agreement and Disagreement Among Groups

There is agreement among three groups on these five areas: (i) teacher-student relationships, (ii)administration, (iii) student academic orientation, (iv) instructional management, and (v) student activities. See Figure 9:11 for details. There is agreement between students' and parents' perceptions of security/maintenance and student activities. Figure 9:11, on the previous page, illustrates the relationship among groups. There is no agreement between the teacher and student groups nor between teacher and parent groups in these five areas (i) security, (ii) student behavioral value, (iii) guidance, (iv) student-peer relationships, and (v) student activities. Interestingly, the teacher group had lower scores than the student group in student-related areas such as student behavioral values and student activities. Moreover, the teacher group also had lower scores than the parent group regarding the student-related areas. There was also no agreement between student and parent groups on student behavioral values, guidance, and student-peer relationships. The parent group seems more optimistic in these areas than does the student group.

9.8 Summary

There is legitimate debate about precisely what types of student outcomes charter schools should be held accountable for. While most stakeholders seem to agree that student achievement is an important (if not the only) goal of charter schools, others argue that schools should also be judged on their ability to satisfy their customers. Hence, this chapter provides a preliminary analysis of self-rated performance.

Survey evidence suggests that charter school students as a group think that their level of academic performance has improved since they moved to a charter school. Teachers are perhaps a little less sanguine; most teachers expected student achievement to improve more than it has. Still, more than half the teachers reported that student achievement is on the rise at their school. Moreover, parents and teachers said that charter schools are serving needs not well served by other schools.

The chapter also examined various indicators of market accountability, or the extent to which parents and students vote with their feet for or against charter schools. A nonrandom sample of charter schools indicates, for instance, that the average school has a waiting list of 68 students, or 45 percent of total current enrollment. However, just as there are students waiting to get into charter schools, a number have left to return to other public and nonpublic schools. A nonrandom sample of student rosters indicates that the average charter school lost 24.5 percent of its 1998-99 student enrollment to the 1999-00 school year. We must emphasize, however, that available evidence on charter school entry and exit is not based on representative samples. Moreover, we have no way of knowing whether decisions to leave charter schools are motivated by concerns about school quality or other reasons. In spite of the significant enrollment instability in some charter schools, more than 70 percent of parents surveyed reported that the quality of instruction in their charter school is high, and a smaller percentage of parents said that their child received adequate attention. Approximately half of the students surveyed said that they would recommend their charter school to a friend.

Finally, the chapter examined a number of indicators designed to capture charter schools' climates and cultures. Many of these factors might indicate the potential for high achievement levels in the future. For example, more than three-fourths of parents and teachers reported that their charter schools had high expectations for students, an important factor in student achievement. A similar percentage of students said that their teachers encourage them to think about their future. However, a much smaller percentage of students (two-fifths) said that students at their charter school were more interested in learning than students at their previous school.

The findings from the nationally-normed School Climate Surveys administered to teachers/staff, parents, and students charter schools were particularly positive (above national norms) in teacher-student relationships, administration, and student academic orientation. Several areas such as security and maintenance, student behavioral values, parent and community-school relationships were below national norms among all three groups.

Chapter Ten
School Governance in Connecticut Charter Schools

For many, the most important innovative aspect of charter schools is that manner in which they are governed. While traditional public schools are usually governed by elected school boards representing large and heterogeneous constituencies, charter schools are governed by smaller appointed boards. The charter school boards are also more focused on the single school they govern, which has a specific mission. For these reasons the work of the charter school board is considerably more focused and there is likely to be less politics and more effort aimed at the operation and performance of the school. Some charter school advocates have argued that by limiting the scope of conflict in school governance, charter schools will spend less time resolving fundamental disagreements in education policy.

The recent literature on charter schools indicates several factors necessary to improve school climate and increase student achievement: a stable, comprehensive financial plan; a board with expertise in areas such as school finance; accountability within the parameters of autonomy; well-defined bylaws and contracts; committees that take great care to review the cumbersome paperwork that could ultimately make or break the charter school (Consortium for Policy Research in Education, 1998; Good & Braden, 2000; Schorr, 2000). In charter schools, most of these factors are addressed by school governance teams and committees.

Evaluation team members visited all 16 Connecticut charter schools to investigate the presence of these factors at the board level. This chapter contains qualitative information collected through interviews, reading material culture, and observation. We also attended board meetings at several schools and conducted focus groups with board members at three schools.

One of the evaluation questions for this project specifically mentions school governance: *What successes and shortcomings in the development of the school governance procedures and policies exist or have been developed?* This chapter attempts to answer this question by first examining the responsibilities of governing boards. Next we describe the operation and composition of the boards, including such issues as structure of meetings, expectations of board members, background characteristics of board members, and training and preparation of board members. Following this we examine the relationships between the board and the various stakeholders at the school. This includes the balance of power and responsibilities between the board and the school administrator(s); the connectedness of the board with the school and community; and involvement of teachers, parents, and students in the direction and steering of the school. We conclude the chapter by examining some of the perceived weaknesses and strengths of the governing boards and summing up the main findings from the chapter.

10.1 Responsibilities of Governing Boards

Connecticut law requires a charter school to have its own governing body. The law requires charter school applications to detail the procedures for establishing a governing council. The governing body acts in the same manner as a local school board. It is responsible for school management and operation, including curriculum, staff and student policies, and financial operation (http://www.state.ct.us/sde/charter/csrfp.htm). Connecticut law also requires boards to elect officers, hold meetings and public hearings, and have a minimum of one teacher serving on the board. Beyond these minimum requirements, charter schools are independent and self-governing with respect to curriculum, instruction, staffing, budget, and internal organization.

In general, the most important responsibilities include setting policy and overseeing the budget. The board consults with the director of the school who is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the school. One parent shared, "The governing board helps the school because it takes the load off of the school director. The board and management team [and other ad hoc committees] take on tasks beyond what teachers and administrators can do." Other sample contributions to the overall functioning of the school include those listed below:

- Budget: ongoing revisions are made if agreed to unanimously.
- Fund-raising: directors apply for grants and receive funds ranging from $5,000 to $35,000; boards approve or deny funding proposals based on compatibility with the school's interests.
- New building: boards provide extensive assistance on infrastructure and location issues.
- Personnel issues: boards primarily deal with funding issues concerning staff hires and resignations.
- Mission statements: boards draft and refine statements.
- Teacher and administrator evaluation: boards perform administrator evaluations and consult on teacher evaluations.
- Policy development: boards assist with policies on sexual harassment, student retention and promotion, referral, assessment, and evaluation.

While much of the work can seem routine, each board has also had to address very difficult and controversial issues that attract the interest—and participation—of the larger school and community. These include physical plant and infrastructure, decisions regarding converting the school to a magnet school, charter renewals, grant writing, expansion of grade levels, financial management, school director evaluation, transportation, and student disciplinary actions. We found evidence of special board meetings called to disseminate important information (e.g., meeting with the local mayor regarding facilities and school location, conflicts of interest, reinstatement of board members) in one-third of the meeting minutes we reviewed.

Addressing issues related to school administration and student progress. Another important area of responsibility for the board is its role in evaluating the work of the school administrator and staff as well as the overall instruction and services provided by the school. Essentially, every board has either designed and implemented evaluation procedures for the director and staff or anticipates doing so. There is, however, no formal evaluation of the boards themselves. As expressed by one

board member, "At this time, there is no formative or summative evaluation process for the Board, yet it is an issue that has been discussed and will emerge with time. Last year, a lot of work went into developing evaluation plans for faculty, staff, senior management, and students. The Board is now growing in size and as the notion of rotation and term limits emerge, a performance evaluation will evolve as well." At one school's board meeting in February 2001, a motion was made to include board self-evaluation in the bylaws.

In a few cases, the boards are only indirectly addressing issues related to student achievement. These boards believe supporting the schools' missions will increase student achievement. At one school, the board intended to create a committee charged with revising, aligning, and evaluating the curriculum in an effort to increase student achievement. Other school boards are more directly involved. One board member shared, "In addition to the mission statement, the Board also comes together with respect to models and strategies in place to support learning and increasing student achievement. The Board is often called upon to help examine these components and has been helpful in preparing narratives for the annual reports."

Two directors indicated that boards need to measure alumni activities (who goes on to college, what work fields graduates enter, etc.). One of them stated that "Follow-up data should determine the charter schools' affect on the performance of graduates. Boards need to develop more standard evaluation procedures for the school. Board members and administrators tweak and evaluate policies as they come up."

At three schools we found evidence that assessment and narrative data are often discussed at board meetings, resulting in reviews of the school's mission, goals, and objectives. One Board member stated, "We have been evaluating the school's success by examining student success numbers, passing and graduating rates, some testing, and through anecdotal evidence on individual students; our mission is geared to spark the interest of each student by achieving uniform educational goals through individually tailored subject matter and teaching strategies. The Board believes that these strategies allow each student to feel like the education they are receiving is relevant to them in both a personal and practical way." Clearly, the school emphasizes the relationship of governance to student achievement.

10.2 Description of the Operation and Composition of the Governing Boards

Structure of board meetings. On average, board meetings are held once a month, 12 months a year. Typically, the format and structure of board meetings are relaxed. Most board members are familiar with models such as Robert's Rules of Order and use these models to guide the conduct of the meetings. Generally, the boards (except Explorations, which adheres to Robert's Rules) do not complicate meetings with formal terminology and structure. Meetings are advertised and open to the public. A board's Executive Committee can convene in private concerning delicate matters. In general, meetings entail reviewing minutes from the previous meeting, summarizing current school events, status reports, budget reports, fund-raising, personnel issues, grant applications and monetary

requests, new building issues, and new business. Appendix J contains a detailed summary of the governance structures in several of the charter schools.

Expectations for board members in terms of participation and service. On average, elected board members serve 2-3 year terms. However, in a few schools, term lengths and limits have not been established. One officer shared, "At this time, there has not been an establishment of terms of office or duration in various roles. Yet, talks have focused on creating some parameters as the need for 'fresh blood' arises and with the realization that some members will soon be in need of a break."

Although two schools experienced high turnover rates among board members, charter school boards generally enjoy stability in their membership. In a few instances we were informed that there was little turnover among board members but, after reviewing board meeting minutes, we found this not to be the case. Nevertheless, a large number of board members have served since their school's inception. Indeed, each school has members that have served since the original, founding board.

A number of the boards have policies requiring a member that misses a certain number of meetings (on average, three) to resign. Attendance at meetings by nonboard members is typically very low. On average, two nonmembers attend each meeting.

Composition of boards. Board members are typically interested in education issues, the charter school movement, and the particular mission and vision of their charter school. Charter schools seek professionals from diverse backgrounds who can advance the school's mission, goals, and objectives to serve on the boards. Connecticut charter school board members include individuals from a wide array of professional backgrounds, including attorneys, state representatives, librarians, bankers, business managers, financial analysts, clergy, athletic directors, hospital administrators, budget analysts, allied health specialists, health insurance executives, and university officials. Sitting board members typically nominate new members. A board member at one school stated: "Today, the board nominates successors with specific roles in mind. We go after people who might fit our needs at the time, and we generate these suggested individuals at board meetings and vote through a low pressure nominations process. Recruitment tactics consist of a round of verbal brainstorming of appropriate people, and those suggestions are fielded around."

Involvement of for-profit education management organizations (EMOs). While an estimated 20-25 percent of all charter schools across the country are operated by for-profit EMOs (Miron & Nelson, 2002), none of the Connecticut charter schools have contracted the operation of their schools to these companies. While charter schools in other states have reported being regularly approached by EMOs, the Connecticut schools reported that they are seldom approached by EMOs. There are a few likely explanations for this, one being that there is a cap on the size of the schools, which ensues that the schools will remain relatively small in size. For-profit EMOs prefer or require large enrollments in order to take advantage of economies of scale. One board member commented, "If you are asking if an educational management corporation contacted us, the answer is no. I am certain it is because they could never turn a profit due to our size." Another reason is the formal selection process of charter schools conducted by the State Department of Education, which has chartered schools that address high needs areas. States with high proportions of EMO-run charter

schools (e.g., Arizona, Michigan, New York, and the District of Columbia) have multiple authorizers, many of which are not connected or responsible for public schooling at either the district or state level. It is important, however, to point out that three of the charter schools have benefited from the involvement of nonprofit community organizations that have assisted with start-up and management of the schools.

Training and preparation of board members. A number of board members indicated a need for more training and preparation for their specific roles. Many board members are unclear on their roles and obligations to the charter school. Most charter school boards offer new members a large binder containing the minutes of all past meetings, proposals, policies, legally binding documents, annual reports, and notes. New members report that they are "still feeling their way around" during the first year. Members receive handbooks and board bylaws and are expected to review materials on their own time. One charter school director remarks, "As far as the handbook goes, I think it would be helpful to have a quick, bulleted list of items a board is responsible for...everything is in lawyerese and I am not sure how much of that is going to be read by the average board member." A few charter schools hold single day or weekend retreats where they bond as a group and go over the school's mission, goals, and objectives. Other groups do not have this time together and rely on each board member's specific expertise to manage certain components. One board member offers, "We are aware of the legal aspects of our decisions; yet, a lawyer acts as a consultant to the council and we trust in his feedback."

Charter school boards do not possess a standard handbook of model contracts, agendas, policies, or other business items. According to board members at several schools, policy books, contracts, and related materials are modeled on local government documents. The handbook many schools' board members receive contains school policies on various issues (drug administration, bus rules, etc.) and board bylaws. In two schools, plans are under way for a series of summer workshops to help the team build connections and develop materials. Emerging from these workshops will be committees designed to address school mission, roles and responsibilities, and governance structure.

A parent from one school who was a new member of the governing board reported that there was an initial orientation to the rules and legal responsibilities of board members, however, she thought that new board members required more information, including a history of the original charter, current bylaws and how certain policies have emerged. Case studies, examples, and typical scenarios to elaborate the bylaws, would be helpful, she noted. Currently, this particular school has an annual board retreat in the fall to review school goals and mission.

In addition to the preparation and training that each school provides for its board members, the Connecticut State Department of Education has organized workshops for board members and have invited board members to represent their school at a number of meetings and events. A number of schools have hired consultants or community groups to conduct board training.

10.3 Relationships Between the Board and the Various Stakeholders

Relationship between the board and the school administrator(s). We have seen in our evaluations of charter schools in other states that initially there can be misunderstandings between the board and the school administrator about their roles and responsibilities. Conflicts between the board and administration can occur when the board tries to micromanage; in other words, they involve themselves in decisions regarding the day-to-day operation of the school. On the other hand, we have also seen an imbalance when the school administrator wields too much power over the agenda and the decisions made by the board. This often happens when the administrator or her/his spouse plays a leadership role on the board.

Most charter school officials reported no conflict between the board and other governance or administrative structures within the school. There is a positive, voluntary spirit among board members. Very few board members had children enrolled in a charter school. Consequently, they had no special interest affecting their decision making and collaboration. As expressed by one director, "There have been very few struggles; and the small ones they had, they overcame relatively quickly, indicating that the boards work well together. Many opinions are expressed, but these are informed opinions and members never resign out of conflict. It is innovative as a board because it is modeled after many boards found in private schools. There is no us versus them mentality; people are giving up their evenings because they care about this school and want to assist its growth and development." It is important to note that there were apparent conflicts between the boards of directors and administrators at two schools; however, these have since been resolved. After the first year of the reform, it was discovered that the board of directors for Village Academy was serving as an advisory board rather than as a governing board. The Department of Education raised this issue with the school director who then constituted a second board, which was considered a governing board. Even then, questions arose about the composition and independence of this board. After its second year of operation, this school was closed. While governance was not the specific reason cited for its closure, it certainly was a related issue.

Board members at half of the schools clearly view involvement in day-to-day issues as a violation of their goals and objectives as board members. This view is exemplified at Sport Sciences Academy where day-to-day operations are at the discretion of the director. The director accepts feedback on operational issues from the board, but the board doesn't encroach on day-to-day decisions. However, even when boards officially draw the line at interfering with daily operations, this can be difficult. One board member noted, "The Board tries hard to steer clear of day-to-day operations, leaving that to the Director and her management team. The Board feels that this is not a proper role to take and their job is to work with evaluating the Director on the progress she makes on these day-to-day operations." He admits, however, that this is subject to ongoing debate. Many members are genuinely interested in all aspects of the school's operation, so day-to-day management topics can frequently arise.

Other charter school boards are clearly involved in all areas, to the point where it becomes a barrier to providing more effective service to the school. At one school, the board has evolved from being

deeply entrenched in daily operations to shifting away from this role. According to one board member, until this year all members were deeply involved in daily operations and day-to-day decisions. Matters that should not have been handled by the board were appearing on meeting agendas. However, a new group of school administrators has established more autonomy among faculty and paid staff. They have also outlined greater expectations for accountability. The board now has more confidence in the school's administrator and staff, so it is less likely to encroach on daily operations.

Connectedness with the school they govern. Connecticut charter school boards differ in their level of connectedness with their schools. Some school boards are involved with teachers and students. At these schools, board members are involved even outside traditional board roles. "It is a high degree of buy-in by Board members...people in this group work really hard for this school," noted one board member. Another board member stated, "There is a tremendous feeling of connectedness among all the players in the [school] family." Observers witnessed that board members exhibit a tremendous amount of caring and support of faculty, students, and families. Examples of this are highlighted below:

- ❑ At one school, the board and the director emphasized strengthening the school through communication. Everyone in attendance at board meetings really *cared* about the families.
- ❑ At another school, board members and school officials expressed concerns about recent incidents that included a suicide, divorce, and parental hardships.
- ❑ At all schools, faculty and board members have "adopted" families experiencing such hard times and have become mentors.
- ❑ Staff at a few schools have solicited other parents and board members privately for donations to help struggling families.
- ❑ At one particular school a board member reported, "There are high feelings of connectedness with the school as indicated by the level of voluntary commitment. Being connected and active is part of the culture of our school, and this is a critical feature board members look for in identifying potential candidates. Board members are engaged meaningfully, either as directly working during the day with staff and students or attending one or more of the many functions held in the school."
- ❑ Board members frequently add student and teacher presentations to their agenda. Minutes revealed set times in the board sessions at four schools where students would present activities they were engaged in at school.
- ❑ At some schools the process of building connectedness remains in its infancy. For example, one parent noted that "there are feelings of connectedness only between some of the members (parents and teachers), but efforts are under way to improve this [communication with Board members]. For example, on the second Tuesday of the month, there is a director's coffee that is used to evaluate the school and discuss some of the issues that may be occurring at the Board level. So far it has been received well."

Occasionally, feelings of connectedness can inhibit productivity at board meetings. At a few schools, board members are unclear about their roles, so their feelings of connectedness to daily school operations may bring less pressing issues into focus at meetings. One parent board member

shared, "I still see people grappling with what is Board business, what is Management business and what is Director business. Staying on task and keeping to the agenda is another thing that people have to really work on."

At a few schools concerns have arisen about the disconnection between the boards and their schools. One board member admitted, "Parents, teachers, and students are very involved and committed to both the school and committees developed to contribute to the school. Outside members, such as board members, may come in once a month or every other month. There does not seem to be a working relationship between board members and students, staff, or parents. The faculty more than likely could not pick out members off the street and vice versa." At another school it was reported that some board members make an annual trip to view the school, often during summer when schedules are less hectic. The State Department of Education actually cited one school as an extreme example of disconnectedness. In a letter to the school, CDSE stated: "The Board is not aware of poor attitudes held by teachers and students."

Parent and student involvement and influence in the direction and steering of the school. The degree of parental and student involvement in school governance varies across schools. Only two schools include student representatives on their boards of directors or boards of trustees. All boards have at least one parent member. At one charter school, the bylaws require 25 percent of their board members to be parents of students. All charter schools also have at least one parent group. These groups tend to address specific student issues (i.e., fund-raising for the senior class trip or prom). However, the roles and responsibilities of parents on more formal boards (board of directors, board of trustees) differ greatly. Approximately 75 percent of the schools have definitive roles for parents as part of their executive governing boards. Ninety percent of board members agreed that better understanding by both members and parents of the existing governing structure and setting specific member roles is essential to board development.

In some cases, parent roles on the board have evolved over time and have never been fully defined. One board member stated, "There is one parent representative on the board. Originally, there wasn't any parent representation, but this particular parent became active and was taking initiatives to get a parent group. The parent group did not take place, but the parent was invited on the Board as a result of her efforts. This parent has been very effective in helping to organize the reapplication process and contribute to daily school activities. The parent role on the Board itself is not clear." Other times, the parent role is clearly defined in writing, but may not be clear to stakeholders. For example, one parent who serves on the parent committee, but not the board of trustees, noted: "Just one parent is on the board of trustees, but she has not been informed as to how that whole process works or how to become a parent representative on that particular board. There is not a lot of connectedness with them."

At some schools, parents are an integral part of board operations. Parents are heavily represented on these boards and have roles as liaisons between the board and other parents. These parents were often elected to the board rather than appointed. "Students and parents were the driving force behind the school moving to a senior year. There are student and parent members of the council that are an important part of every process," reported a board officer at one charter high school.

Across schools, it was reported that parents or students would approach the director before going to the board with complaints about a teacher. In some cases, parents and staff members have contacted the evaluation team or called the State Department of Education to file complaints without first raising their concerns with the school director or the governing board.

Use of ad hoc committees. All charter schools surveyed had at least three ad hoc committees of teachers, parents, and students that met once each month or as needed. Examples include School Committee/All School Council, Expulsion Hearing, Public Events and Programs, Development and Finance, Site Development, Recruitment and Membership, Management Team, Science Curriculum Team, Technology, and Graduation Committees. The governing boards have established many of the ad hoc committees or groups which play an important advisory role and provide opportunities for stakeholder influence in the governance and operation of the school.

Many schools have continuously evolving committee groups springing from separate parent organizations. Each wave of new parents and students created new initiatives. One school established working committees to examine such issues as school facility and site, fund-raising, and a search committee for new staff. As one staff member pointed out at this school: "These committees take on responsibilities that others do not have time to be concerned about. The management team is newer and is still finding its place in the governance structure." Discussions with other staff members at this school revealed that more structure was needed for these committees, although it was clear that they were successful in helping the governing board, the administrator, and the staff make effective decisions.

While parental involvement varies from school to school, we did find that in some charter schools parents assumed important roles and responsibilities on the governing boards, including president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. At the same time, some charter school parents complain it's like "pulling teeth" to recruit other active and dedicated parent members. At most schools, a small core of individuals generates ideas for fund-raising and student support. Some schools have many groups beyond a single parent committee–finance, building, library, admissions, facility purchase, fund-raising, professional development, public relations, and school council. Local businesses established a foundation to help the school raise capital funds and finish third floor renovations. Parents are volunteers who either serve a two-year term or serve until their child graduates from the charter school.

Several features separate ad hoc groups and committees from the board of directors:

- ❑ More topics address the broader school and community relationships (e.g., conversations about diversity and multiculturalism).
- ❑ The atmospher is more relaxed and informal. Participants try to foster an environment free from intimidation.
- ❑ Meetings have less pressure to cover everything on the agenda.
- ❑ All the parents may have something to contribute, and every voice is heard. Translators are also used in some cases so all parents can participate fully.
- ❑ These groups and committees also are more likely to provide school directors with feedback regarding school operations and school climate.

Decisions influenced by outside community. Community members, parents, and students who are not members rarely attend board meetings. Thus, most board decisions are made without outside influence. One school director remembers parents attending a board of trustees meeting only twice in four years. At this school and at several others, directors report that parents at board meetings are irritated and attend the meeting to complain about various issues. One director stated, "In some cases, parents will show up after the release of report card nights, ignoring what is being shared at the meeting, and when given the chance demand explanations for the grades their child has received." Nevertheless, most parents let the boards tend to board business and accept the decisions made at the board meetings.

In the context of a focus group, a few parents at one school stated the following regarding factors influencing board decisions. "Board decisions are influenced by parents, members of the larger community (i.e., funding) and the school community. Decisions are not made in a vacuum." It is important to note that three charter school boards have had representatives from organizations with vested interests in their schools' performance and governance structure. For example, the New Haven Ecology Project has a close working relationship with Common Ground High School and has had representatives on the school's board. Likewise, Ancestors and Charter Oak have both had representatives of community-based nonprofit organizations on their boards, since these organizations were involved in the founding of the schools. While we found that the involvement of nonprofits groups was a positive force in the Pennsylvania charter school reform (Miron & Nelson, 2000), it is interesting to note that 2 of the 3 Connecticut charter schools with community-based nonprofit organizations have closed.

10.4 Conclusions and Summary

Strong, effective boards are able to collaborate and make tough decisions without micromanaging. Boards have a strong commitment to the school's mission. Most boards include an excellent cross section of the community and members with diverse skills and world views. No one is there for personal gain. All share the excitement of participating in an educational experiment that increases local control, makes a difference in students' educational lives, and potentially influences the current educational landscape.

Board members often lack time, political connections, and the expertise needed to find additional external funding. Some board members indicated that a person (such as a builder or contractor) with expertise in facility issues should serve. Some board members are not sufficiently aware of the educational and political intricacies of Connecticut education. One member says, "As a change agent we find ourselves on the outside looking in."

In some cases, boards are still trying to determine their roles. One director admits that his board moved from being lax and inefficient to being too strict and tight. Yet, he believes that medium ground will be reached soon.

One parent shared that identifying roles and responsibilities within the board while allowing autonomy for various committees is very difficult. Another parent thought boards do not have enough structure or needed expertise.

Parents and teachers think boards have room for improvement in the areas of connectedness, clarity, roles, and responsibility to the schools. With the exception of one school (where teachers have been dissatisfied and only recently became involved in school governance), there has been no indication of mistrust or disdain toward any board or particular members. Parents and teachers are generally satisfied with the school governance structure.

We view members of charter school boards and ad hoc committees as dedicated individuals who genuinely have their schools' best interests at heart. Board members bring a wealth of experiences and opportunities to the table. They are able to share their expertise without being scrutinized by the public to the extent that public school boards often are. Generally, charter school board meetings are conducted in an environment of respect. Critical discussion routinely takes place without the hostility that can accompany sensitive issues. Student, staffing, parent, and facility issues are all addressed with passion and careful discussion before going out for vote.

This chapter sought to describe the successes and shortcomings of charter school governance structures in Connecticut. The successes include low levels of conflict, high parent satisfaction, and extensive community involvement. Board members have backgrounds in education, nonprofit work, business, and law.

Some challenges still remain—better systems of evaluation, more training on board responsibilities are needed, and clearer delineations of board and administrator responsibilities must be made. Aside from these challenges, the governing boards of the charter schools have generally operated as expected. Relative to other states, the Connecticut State Department of Education has demonstrated more extensive oversight and a greater willingness to communicate concerns they have regarding the governance of the charter schools they have authorized.

Chapter Eleven
The Impact of Charter Schools on Local School Districts and Communities

In this chapter we have summed up our initial findings regarding the impact of charter schools on local districts and communities. We have also explored the nature of the relationship among charter schools and their local districts and surrounding noncharter public schools.

During the course of our fieldwork, we have sought out information from a variety of sources. In order to answer questions about impact and the relationship between charter schools and their local districts, we conducted interviews with charter school representatives, local school district officials, and representatives of community organizations. We also reviewed documentation provided by charter schools and local districts as well as other relevant reports or media coverage. Analyzing these data involved developing and grouping findings according to particular themes/topics as well as according to whether they were negative or positive. Finally, a number of items on the surveys addressed these topics and are discussed in this chapter.

11.1 Nature of the Relationships Between Charter Schools and Local Districts

Over the course of time, the relationships between charter and noncharter public schools have improved. This may be due to the realization that the charter school reform is not growing rapidly and is unlikely to be a threat to local districts. Even in states with a large number of charter schools, however, there is a tendency for relations between charter and noncharter schools to normalize over time.

Many charter school personnel in Connecticut noted that they are not into "public school bashing," which is not always the case in other states. Most of the charter schools pointed out instances where the local districts went out of their way to assist them at some point in time. Examples of this include the following:

1. One district facilitated the transfer of student transcripts during a time when there was a UPS strike.
2. Some districts have provided free transportation even for field trips
3. Some districts have helped charter schools write grants or partnered with charter schools on a grant.

Two areas in which charter schools and local districts are required to cooperate are special education and transportation. Initially, many charter schools expressed their dissatisfaction with the districts' efforts to provide transportation and funding for special education. Most charter schools today indicate that transportation is no longer a point of contention except when it comes to out-of-district transportation. Cooperation with special education services has also improved, but a few of the charter schools are still clearly unsatisfied with the districts' support for special education at the charter schools.

As described in chapter 5, collaboration for special education services is mandated by Connecticut's charter school law. The enrollment of students with disabilities in charter schools requires that charter schools develop some form of cooperative agreement as to how services will be delivered and how monies for special education services will be dispersed. Although there are no outstanding examples of collaboration between charter schools and the local noncharter school district, there is overall acceptance of the legal requirements. Special education could be considered cooperative, if not collaborative, usually with a lack of conflict. This lack of conflict could be considered to be a positive impact in the developing relationship between charter and noncharter schools.

Transportation is another service area which requires cooperation between charter schools and their local districts. As with special education, charter and noncharter school districts must develop agreements that specify how services will be provided and paid for. Because students attending charter schools may reside in more than one noncharter district, collaboration between the charter and more than one noncharter district may be required. Particularly when several districts are involved, collaboration is very important. Despite the inherent challenges that can arise in providing all students equal access to free transportation, many charter schools report receiving substantial transportation services from the noncharter school district. In fact, one charter school reported receiving transportation services with no resistance, including cooperation in providing transportation for field trips. However, there remains a majority of school districts unwilling to transport out-of-district charter school students to charter schools.

The mandates for special education and transportation have certainly had an impact on the sending districts that are required to provide them. From an optimistic perspective, charter schools and sending districts have developed ways to cooperate and work together to meet their legal requirements in terms of special education and transportation, which opens the door for possible future collaborations.

An area with the potential for cooperation is in professional development for teachers. Charter school teachers are not usually invited to participate in professional development and/or other district activities. One district official, however, reminded us that local charter school teachers had been invited to attend local professional development activities sponsored by the district. The charter school had reciprocated and opened its own professional development activities to the district teachers who wish to attend. The district official described the district as fairly entrenched, and said it may take time for the new exchange to bear fruit. In the meantime, he expressed that he was happy to help the charter school and was looking forward to more collaboration and the possibility of writing grants with the local charter school.

The charter school reform in Connecticut is clearly not as polarized as in many other states. In part this is due to the legislative bipartisan support the reform has received in Connecticut. The cautious development of the initiative and the inclusion of a number of safeguards also has resulted in less resistance from skeptics. Nevertheless, some groups are not pleased with charter schools and there have been some incidents of hostility. Additionally, some charter schools directors highlighted that they were excluded from some organizations and activities in which traditional public schools are included.

11.2 Impact of Charter Schools on Local Districts and Communities

Positive Impacts

Competition between traditional public schools and charter schools is expected to pressure schools to make improvements. This is considered a positive impact of the charter school initiative. Nevertheless, it was apparent that charter schools are not having easily discernible positive or negative impacts on traditional public schools. This conclusion is based on interviews with superintendents, community leaders, and charter school directors. Superintendents from across the state agreed that because there are so few charter schools in Connecticut, it is difficult to determine their real impact on the noncharter public schools. However, several superintendents did state that the competition is healthy. A number of charter school administrators think the superintendents support the idea of competition because they don't take the charter school movement seriously and therefore do not perceive them as a threat.

One superintendent pointed out that there is a friendly competition in his town between the charter school and the noncharter public schools. The superintendent also noted that the district has tried to make a few improvements as a result of local charter school. Specific examples of changes in this district included increased efforts to raise CMT scores and improvements in the quality of the after-school program. Also noteworthy is that some district officials report that charter schools have eased the crowding in their schools.

Negative Impact

The largest factor that contributes to negative impacts to the local districts is the loss of students and the money that follows these students. As pointed out in chapter 3, local districts could lose about $5,775 per pupil in state equalization aid when a student attends a state charter school (Nelson et al., 2000). This is because charter school students are not counted by the local district for equalization aid purposes. Nevertheless, a majority of school districts in Connecticut are protected from state aid reductions due to an elaborate system of constraints on growth and reductions in state aid (Nelson et al., 2000), so the negative impact of charter schools in terms of loss of funding is likely to be minimal in most districts.

Even while the local districts may not lose substantial resources when students move to charter schools, one of the negative impacts pointed out by a few local districts is that charter schools are

taking away involved parents. These parents volunteered and provided strong support for the public schools in which their child(ren) were enrolled before the charter school. Now the charter school benefits from the involvement of these parents. While this may be the case in some instances, we are also aware that a large number of students enrolled in charter schools do not have parents who are actively involved. Also, many of the charter schools are concerned that the local districts are referring the students that require the most support to them.

Developing a roster of high quality teaching faculty is a challenge for most schools. Schools often devote a considerable portion of their budget to recruitment and professional development. When time and money have been spent on staff recruitment and development, schools logically would consider loss of faculty members to charter schools as a negative impact. Although reports of recruiting teachers away from noncharter schools are not numerous, one charter school director did report having hired good teachers from the noncharter district. Although this could potentially have a negative impact, the affected district did not report it as such.

Athletic programs are very important in most schools and play a big part in the overall spirit of the school community. Charter school students who participated in sports at their previous noncharter public school have—in many cases—expressed their desire to create sports teams at their charter schools instead of playing for the noncharter school. One charter school, in particular, has been successful in attracting athletes from traditional public schools, which a few individuals indicated was perceived as a negative impact upon the local district schools. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that CGS Sec. 10-220d prohibits recruitment of athletes.

11.3 Discussion of Findings

We analyzed the impact data in terms of the relationships between the charter schools and traditional public schools. We collected considerable qualitative data from a variety of informants and used the matrix in Figure 11:1 to classify and analyze the results. Good relationships between charter and noncharter schools can be characterized as those where both parties abided by the law and where a lack of conflict was present. Poor relationships were characterized by one or both parties expressing criticism of the behavior of the other or where there was a lack of communication and cooperation.

As one might expect, we found plenty of examples where there was perceived positive impact when the relations between charter and noncharter public schools were good. On the other hand, there were many examples of perceived negative impacts in the cases where there were poor relationships between charter and noncharter public schools. While many examples of impacts fell into cells "A" and "D" in the matrix, a few examples of impacts could be placed in cells "B" and "D."

Figure 11:1 Matrix Comparing Nature of the Relationships Between Charter and Noncharter Schools and the Type of Impact Charter School Have

	Good Relations (or lack of conflicts)	Poor Relations (or lack of relationship)
Positive Impacts	A	B
Negative Impacts	C	D

There appeared to be a fairly strong correlation between perceived positive impacts and positive relationships between charter and host district schools. In fact, we did not find any examples of perceived positive impacts without good relationships. These findings suggest that development of good, hopefully collaborative, relationships between charter and host district schools is important for positive impacts to result.

Even when charter schools have unique or innovative aspects that traditional public schools could learn from, there are many obstacles to the diffusion of these ideas. For example, the likelihood that charter school innovations can affect noncharter schools is obviously limited in those districts where schools are provided little flexibility. In one host district there is a very scripted curriculum for schools across the district. In the words of one community leader, our district "is too rigid to be impacted, using a 'cookbook' approach where everyone uses the same recipe."

Overall, we found little to report as far as concrete positive or negative impacts. This does not mean that specific districts have not been affected. The development of positive relationships between charter and host district schools is important if positive impacts are to be realized.

Charter schools in Connecticut have provided an opportunity for small groups of educators and community leaders to be creative and do something different. A number of inspired and highly motivated educators have taken advantage of this opportunity and started charter schools. They have the opportunity to fulfill their ideas, take risks, and have public money to support their endeavors.

The charter schools in Connecticut provided us with a number of interesting stories as we followed the development of these schools. In some instances these schools have been initially isolated by their surrounding communities and criticized for their performance, even as they struggled to establish their schools and overcome a list of start-up obstacles. Many highly motivated school leaders have been embroiled in learning how to run a school while their lofty visions have had to wait to be implemented. Even while some of the schools have struggled and have not yet developed the schools they envisioned, others have excelled and established exciting learning communities.

Only 13 charter schools remain in operation in Connecticut as of the 2002-03 school year; four schools have closed and two converted to magnet school status in the summer of 2002. The schools that have remained open, are very strong and successful. On the whole, these schools are targeting students with needs not well met in traditional public schools. Because of the selective application process and the closure of struggling schools, those that remain in operation are both highly accountable and provide unique programs that differ from the surrounding public schools.

In terms of performance accountability and regulatory accountability, charter schools in Connecticut are among the very best in the country. This judgement is based on our work in evaluating charter schools in four other states as well as the extensive literature reviews and the metaanalysis of results from studies of charter schools across the country that we have conducted. Some reasons for the exceptional performance of Connecticut's charter schools are that these schools have received relatively better funding and more technical assistance than charter schools have received in other states. Perhaps the most important factor is that the demands for accountability in Connecticut are

more rigorous than in any other state we have studied. One should be cautious in generalizing the positive results of charter schools in Connecticut to charter schools in other states because of the large differences in how charter schools are approved, supported, and held accountable.

The small size of the reform has made it possible for the State to provide effective assistance and oversight. At the same time, the very small size of the reform suggests that the greatest hope for positive impact will be the examples these schools set for others, rather than the competitive effect that would put pressure on districts to improve. For this reason, it will be important to continue to monitor and learn from both their successful and unsuccessful experiences.

References

Choy, S., Chen, X., & Ross, M. (1998). *Toward better teaching: Professional development in 1993-94.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

Coleman, J. S. et al. (1966). *Equality of educational opportunity.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Connecticut State Department of Education. (1996, 1997, 1998). Charter school application. http://www.state.ct.us/sde/charter.htm

Consortium for Policy Research in Education. (1998). Charter schools: building blocks toward success. Spectrum: The Journal of State Government, 71 (2). 18-20.

Good, T., & Braden, J. (2000). *The great school debate: Choice, vouchers, and charters*. Mahwah, NJ: L. Erlbaum Associates.

Grissmer, D. et al. (2000). *Improving student achievement: What NAEP state test scores tell us.* [Online] Available: http://www.rand.org/publications/MR/MR924/.

Horn, J., & Miron, G. (1999). *Evaluation of the Michigan public school academy initiative final report.* Kalamazoo, MI: Evaluation Center, Western Michigan University.

Horn, J., & Miron, G. (2000). *An evaluation of the Michigan charter school initiative: Performance, accountability, and impact.* Kalamazoo, MI: Western Michigan University, Evaluation Center.

Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation. (1994). *The program evaluation standards.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Miron, G., & Nelson, C. (2000). *Autonomy in exchange for accountability: An initial study of Pennsylvania charter schools*. Kalamazoo, MI: Western Michigan University, Evaluation Center.

Miron, G., & Nelson, C. (2002). *What's public about charter schools? Lessons learned about choice and accountability.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Nathan, J. (1996). Early lessons of the charter school movement. *Educational Leadership, 54*(2), 16-20.

Nathan, J. (1996). *Charter schools: Creating hope and opportunity for American education.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Nelson, B., Berman, P., Ericson, J., Kamprath, N., Perry, R., Silverman, D., & Solomon, D. (2000). *The state of charter schools 2000.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

Nelson, F. H, Muir, E., & Drown, R. (2000). *Venturesome capital: State charter school finance systems.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

Nelson, F. H, Muir, E., & Drown, R. (2002). *Paying for the vision: Charter school revenue and expenditures.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

Owens, R. G. (1998). *Organizational behavior in education.* Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Sanders, J. R., Horn, J. G., Thomas, R. A., Tuckett, D. M., & Yang, H. (1995). *A model for school evaluation.* Kalamazoo, MI: Center for Research on Educational Accountability and Teacher Evaluation, Western Michigan University Evaluation Center.

Schorr, J. (2000). While some charter schools thrive, others self-destruct. *The Nation, 270* (22). 19-28.

Appendices

Appendix A Charter School Survey Results for All Connecticut Charter School Teachers and Staff, 1997-1998

Appendix B Charter School Survey Results for All Connecticut Charter School Students (Grades 5-12), 1997-1998

Appendix C Charter School Survey Results for All Connecticut Charter School Parents, 1997-1998

Appendix D School Climate Survey Results for Connecticut Charter School Teachers/Staff, Students (Grades 5-12), and Parents, 1998-1999

Appendix E Charter School Survey Results for All Connecticut Charter School Teachers and Staff, 1999-2000

Appendix F Charter School Survey Results for All Connecticut Charter School Students (Grades 5-12), 1999-2000

Appendix G Charter School Survey Results for All Connecticut Charter School Parents, 1999-00

Appendix H Comparison of Characteristics of Charter School Students with Host Districts

Appendix I Results from the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) and the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) by School and Year

Appendix J Sample Structures of the Governing Boards in Connecticut Charter Schools

Appendix A

Survey Results for All Connecticut Charter School Teachers and Staff, 1997-1998

WMU Charter School Survey

Teachers/Staff (N=136) 1997-1998 Descriptive statistics

1. What is your role at this school?

	Teacher	Teaching assistant	Specialist	Student teacher	Principal/ director	Other	Total	Missing
N	69	17	4	3	9	25	127	9
%	54.3	13.4	3.1	2.4	7.1	19.7	100.0	

2. What is your current teaching certification status (teachers only)?

	Currently certified to teach in this state	Currently certified to teach in another state	I am working to obtain certification	I am not certified and am not working to obtain certification	Total	Missing
N	62	1	6	0	69	10
%	89.9	1.4	8.7	0.0	100.0	

3. Are you teaching in a subject area in which you are certified to teach (teachers only)?

	Yes	No	Not applicable	Total	Missing
N	60	2	5	69	5
%	87.0	2.9	7.2	97.1	

4. With which grade do you mostly work?

	Grade level								
	K	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th
N	8	6	6	5	5	3	14	0	0
%	6.3	4.7	4.7	3.9	3.9	2.3	10.9	0.0	0.0

	9th	10th	11th	12th	Not applicable	Total	Missing
N	37	14	5	1	24	128	8
%	28.9	10.9	3.9	0.8	18.8	100.0	

5. What is your age?

	Younger than 20	20-29	30-39	40-49	50 or older	Total	Missing
N	0	36	37	32	29	134	2
%	0.0	26.9	27.6	23.9	21.6	100.0	

6. What is your race/ethnicity?

	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/Pac. Islander	Native American	Total	Missing
N	89	26	11	1	0	127	9
%	70.1	20.5	8.7	0.8	0.0	100.0	

7. What is your gender?

	Female	Male	Total	Missing
N	88	38	126	10
%	69.8	30.2	100.0	

Note: Questions 2 and 3 include the responses from only those staff who indicated that they were teachers

8. How many years of experience have you had in each of these types of schools (teachers only)?

	Private school	Parochial school	Charter school	Public school	Other	Total	Total (excluding "other")
Mean	0.52	0.00	1.00	6.49	0.32	8.39	8.07
STD	1.91	0.29	0.00	8.21	1.10	8.24	8.25
Min	0	0	1	0	0	1	1
Max	14	2	1	31	5	32	32
N	69	69	69	69	69	69	69

9. How many years have you worked at your current school?

Years at current school	WMU Cha
1.00	1998
0.00	
1	
1	
69	

10. How much formal education have you had (teachers only)?

	Did not complete high school	Completed high school	Less than 4 years of college	College graduate BA/BS	Graduate courses, no degree	Graduate/ professional degree	Total	Missing
N	0	0	1	12	15	40	68	1
%	0.0	0.0	1.4	17.4	21.7	58.0	98.6	

11. What is the highest college degree you hold (teachers only)?

	Bachelors 1	Masters 2	5-6- year Certificate 3	Doctorate 4	Total	Missing
N	26	36	6	0	68	1
%	37.7	52.2	8.7	0.0	98.6	

12a. Are you working toward another degree at this time?

	No	Yes	Total	Missing
N	94	42	136	0
%	69.1	30.9	100.0	

12b. If yes, what degree?

	Bachelors 1	Masters 2	5-6- year Certificate 3	Doctorate 4	Total	Missing
N	2	27	6	3	38	98
%	2.9	27.5	4.3	2.9	37.7	

13a. Are you aware of the school's mission?

	No	Yes	Total	Missing
N	1	132	133	3
%	0.8	99.2	100.0	

13b. If yes, to what extent is the mission being followed by the school?

	Not very well 1	Fair 2	Well 3	Very well 4	Total	Missing
N	3	17	49	60	129	7
%	2.3	13.2	38.0	46.5	100.0	

14. Do you plan (hope) to be teaching at this school next year?

	No	Yes	Total	Missing
N	20	106	126	10
%	15.9	84.1	100.0	

15. Rate the importance of the following factors in your decision to seek employment at this school.

	Percentages									
	Not important 1	2	3	4	Very important 5	Mean	STD	N	Don't know	Missing
a. Convenient location	33.1	11.0	29.4	10.3	16.2	2.65	1.44	136	0	0
b. More emphasis on academics than extracurricular activit.	7.6	9.1	33.3	25.8	24.2	3.50	1.18	132	0	4
c. My interest in an educational reform effort	3.7	1.5	11.9	26.9	56.0	4.30	1.00	134	0	2
d. Promises made by charter school's spokespersons	12.6	6.7	16.3	26.7	37.8	3.70	1.37	135	0	1
e. Academic reputation (high standards) of this school	8.2	6.7	22.4	23.1	39.6	3.79	1.26	134	0	2
f. Parents are committed	5.9	3.0	23.7	34.1	33.3	3.86	1.10	135	0	1
g. Safety at school	6.7	10.4	33.6	19.4	29.9	3.55	1.21	134	0	2
h. Difficulty to find other positions	57.3	8.4	21.4	4.6	8.4	1.98	1.32	131	0	5
i. Opportunity to work with like-minded educators	2.3	5.3	7.5	21.8	63.2	4.38	0.99	133	0	3
j. This school has small class sizes	6.8	6.1	21.2	23.5	42.4	3.89	1.22	132	0	4

16. Rate each of the following statements as to what you expected when you first began working at this school (initial expectation)and how you would rate it today (current experience).

	Initial Expectation					Current Experience				
	False	Partly True	True	Don't know	Missing	False	Partly True	True	Don't know	Missing
a. Students will be/*are* eager and motivated to learn	3.1	33.6	63.4	5	0	4.5	59.7	35.8	2	0
b. The quality of instruction will be/*is* high	0.0	13.4	86.6	2	0	3.0	28.6	68.4	2	1
c. Students will receive/*receive* sufficient individual attention	0.8	10.7	88.5	3	2	6.0	32.3	61.7	1	2
d. Parents will be/*are* able to influence the direction and activities at the school	1.5	31.8	66.7	4	0	9.2	49.2	41.5	4	2
e. There will be/*is* good communication between the school and parents/guardians	0.0	12.9	87.1	3	1	6.8	38.3	54.9	1	2
f. Students will have/*have* access to computers and other new technologies	2.3	20.6	77.1	5	0	14.1	38.5	47.4	0	1
g. The school will have/*has* effective leadership and administration	0.8	8.5	90.8	4	2	8.3	23.5	68.2	2	2
h. The school will have/*has* small class sizes	9.8	10.6	79.5	2	2	11.9	15.7	72.4	0	2
i. School personnel will be/*are* accountable for the achievement/performance of students	2.3	20.6	77.1	5	0	2.3	30.8	66.9	5	1
j. The achievement levels of students will improve/are improving	0.8	12.4	86.8	7	0	2.3	35.2	62.5	8	0
k. Support services (i.e., counseling, health care, etc.) will be/are available to students	5.0	20.7	74.4	14	1	17.4	43.2	39.4	4	0
l. The school will support/*is supporting* innovative practices	0.0	12.3	87.7	4	2	1.5	24.6	73.8	2	4
m. Teachers will be able to influence the steering and direction of the school	0.0	11.6	88.4	6	1	5.3	22.0	72.7	4	0
n. There will be/*are* new professional opportunities for teachers	0.9	23.2	75.9	22	2	7.6	31.4	61.0	15	3
o. Teachers will be/*are* committed to the mission of the school	0.0	4.5	95.5	2	1	0.0	16.5	83.5	2	1
p. Teachers will be/*are* autonomous and creative in their classrooms	0.0	13.4	86.6	8	1	0.8	21.8	77.4	3	0

17. Rate your level of satisfaction with the following aspects or features of your school.

	Percentages									
	Very dissatisfied 1	2	3	4	Very satisfied 5	Mean	STD	N	Don't know	Missing ive stat
a. Salary level	6.3	11.9	39.7	20.6	21.4	3.39	1.14	126	0	10
b. Fringe benefits	10.2	14.8	28.7	25.0	21.3	3.32	1.25	108	27	1
c. Relations with the community at large	2.3	17.2	37.5	22.7	20.3	3.41	1.07	128	6	2
d. School mission statement	0.0	3.8	15.3	23.7	57.3	4.34	0.88	131	4	1
e. Ability of the school to fulfil its stated mission	4.5	8.2	17.9	42.5	26.9	3.79	1.07	134	2	0
f. Evaluation or assessment of your performance	6.3	5.4	25.2	33.3	29.7	3.75	1.13	111	25	0
g. Resources available for instruction	6.1	15.3	26.7	33.6	18.3	3.43	1.14	131	5	0
h. School buildings and facilities	11.0	14.7	39.0	19.9	15.4	3.14	1.18	136	0	0
i. Availability of computers and other technology	15.8	13.5	21.1	26.3	23.3	3.28	1.38	133	3	0
j. School governance	6.9	9.2	21.5	33.1	29.2	3.68	1.19	130	6	0
k. Administrative leadership of school	5.2	7.4	16.3	30.4	40.7	3.94	1.16	135	1	0

18. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Percentages									
	Strongly disagree 1	2	3	4	Strongly agree 5	Mean	STD	N	Don't know	Missing
a. This school is meeting students' needs that could not be addressed at other local schools	1.5	5.3	18.8	26.3	48.1	4.14	1.00	133	3	0
b. Students feel safe at this school	0.0	0.0	8.3	28.8	62.9	4.55	0.65	132	3	1
c. Class sizes are too large to meet the individual student's needs	65.4	15.0	7.5	6.0	6.0	1.72	1.20	133	1	2
d. Teachers are disenchanted with what can be accomplished at this school	51.6	18.0	15.6	11.7	3.1	1.97	1.20	128	6	2
e. Teachers are involved in decision making at this school	3.0	5.2	18.5	14.1	59.3	4.21	1.10	135	1	0
f. The school has sufficient financial resources	28.2	32.3	20.2	10.5	8.9	2.40	1.25	124	11	1
g. I am satisfied with the school's curriculum	3.7	7.4	26.7	25.2	37.0	3.84	1.12	135	0	1
h. Parents are satisfied with the instruction	0.0	4.5	19.8	42.3	33.3	4.05	0.85	111	24	1
i. Teachers are challenged to be effective	0.8	5.3	12.1	23.5	58.3	4.33	0.94	132	1	3
j. This school has been well received by the community	1.6	9.5	23.8	22.2	42.9	3.95	1.09	126	10	0
k. I think this school has a bright future	0.8	3.8	15.0	14.3	66.2	4.41	0.93	133	2	1
l. Too many changes are occurring at the school	27.1	33.8	24.8	9.0	5.3	2.32	1.12	133	0	3
m. This school reflects a community atmosphere	2.2	4.5	19.4	26.9	47.0	4.12	1.02	134	1	0
n. Extracurricular activities are not emphasized at the expense of academics	2.3	6.3	15.6	21.1	54.7	4.20	1.07	128	6	2
o. This school has high standards and expectation for students	0.7	3.7	13.4	24.6	57.5	4.34	0.90	134	0	2
p. This school has good physical facilities	20.0	23.8	33.1	13.8	9.2	2.68	1.21	130	1	5
q. Parents are involved and can influence instruction and school activities	12.1	11.4	28.8	31.1	16.7	3.29	1.23	132	4	0
r. Teachers and school leadership are accountable for student achievement/performance	0.0	3.8	21.5	36.2	38.5	4.09	0.87	130	3	3
s. Students are satisfied with the instruction	1.7	4.2	25.2	41.2	27.7	3.89	0.92	119	13	4
t. Lack of student discipline hinders my ability to teach and the opportunity for other students to	26.2	16.7	21.4	22.2	13.5	2.80	1.40	126	6	4
u. Teachers are insecure about their future at this school	38.1	14.4	20.3	15.3	11.9	2.48	1.43	118	17	1
v. Teachers have many noninstructional duties	17.7	10.8	16.2	26.2	29.2	3.38	1.45	130	5	1

Appendix B

Survey Results for All Connecticut Students (Grades 5-12) (N=288)

WMU Charter School Survey

Students (N=288) 1997-1998 Descriptive Statistics

1. In what grade are you this year?

	Grade level									
	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	Total	Missing
N	45	50	5	0	90	45	37	16	288	0
%	15.6	17.4	1.7	0.0	31.3	15.6	12.8	5.6	100.0	0.0

2. How old are you?

Mean	14.17
STD	2.45
Missing	1

	Years							
	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
N	0	26	35	32	7	26	64	48
%	0	9.1	12.2	11.1	2.4	9.1	22.3	16.7

	17	18	19	20	Total
N	35	8	5	1	287
%	12.2	2.8	1.7	0.3	100.0

3. How many years, including this year, have attended this school?

Mean	1.20
STD	0.42
Missing	1

	Years at current school							
	<1	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
N	233	53	1	0	0	0	0	287
%	81.2	18.5	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0

4. What kind of school did you attend before enrolling in this school?

	Public school	Private school	Paro-chial	Home schooled	Did not attend	Other	Total	Missing
N	257	4	13	1	1	6	282	6
%	91.1	1.4	4.6	0.4	0.4	2.1	100.0	

5. How many of your brothers and sisters are attending this or another charter school?

Mean	0.31
STD	0.81
Missing	0

	Number of siblings at same school								
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7+	Total
N	230	41	12	2	0	1	1	1	288
%	79.9	14.2	4.2	0.7	0.0	0.3	0.3	0.3	100.0

6. Would you recommend to a friend that he/she enroll in this school?

	No	Yes	Not sure	Total	Missing
N	27	176	85	288	0
%	9.4	61.1	29.5	100.0	

7. Do you maintain friendships with students from your old school?

	No	Yes	Total	Missing
N	29	252	281	7
%	10.3	89.7	100.0	

8. How did you do in your previous school?

Mean	2.37
STD	0.98
Missing	6

	Excel-lent	Good	Average	Poor	Unsatis-factory	
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
N	50	122	73	30	7	282
%	17.7	43.3	25.9	10.6	2.5	100.0

9. How are you doing so far in this school?

Mean	2.13
STD	0.95
Missing	2

	Excel-lent	Good	Average	Poor	Unsatis-factory	
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
N	79	118	65	20	4	286
%	27.6	41.3	22.7	7.0	1.4	100.0

10. Compared to your previous school, how interested are in your school work?

Mean	1.58
STD	0.67
Missing	9

	More interested	About the same	Less interested		
	1	2	3	Total	Missing
N	145	106	28	279	9
%	52.0	38.0	10.0	100.0	

11. What is your gender?

	Female	Male	Total	Missing
N	122	157	279	9
%	43.7	56.3	100.0	

12. What is your race/ethnicity?

	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/Pac. Islander	Native American	Total	Missing
N	115	86	73	1	5	280	8
%	41.1	30.7	26.1	0.4	1.8	100.0	

13a. Do you have paid employment outside of the home?

	No	Yes	Total	Missing
N	245	43	288	0
%	85.1	14.9	100.0	

13b. If yes, how many hours do you work per week?

	0-8 hours	9-15 hours	16-25 hours	26 or more hours	Total	Missing
N	7	15	14	4	40	248
%	17.5	37.5	35.0	10.0	100.0	

14. What is the highest level of education you plan to complete?

	High school	2 year college	4 year college	Graduate school	Not sure yet	Total	Missing
N	19	24	83	96	61	283	5
%	6.7	8.5	29.3	33.9	21.6	100.0	

15. Why did you and your family choose this school?

	Percentages					Mean	STD	N	Missing
	Not important 1	2	3	4	Very important 5				
a. This school has a convenient location	38.1	14.3	21.7	6.6	19.2	2.55	1.52	286	2
b. My parents thought this school is better for me	9.5	8.1	19.4	16.2	46.8	3.83	1.35	284	4
c. I was not doing very well at the previous school	51.1	7.2	15.1	9.7	16.9	2.34	1.57	278	10
d. This school is smaller	41.4	8.1	14.0	10.5	26.0	2.72	1.68	285	3
e. This school has better computers and other equipment	32.3	10.9	21.4	13.7	21.8	2.84	1.54	285	3
f. This school is safer	26.7	13.9	21.7	12.5	25.3	2.96	1.53	281	7
g. Teachers at the previous school did not help me enough	33.6	10.5	15.7	11.5	28.7	2.91	1.65	286	2
h. We heard that teachers were better in this school	30.6	10.2	21.1	14.4	23.6	2.90	1.55	284	4
i. My friends were attending this school	51.2	13.7	15.4	6.0	13.7	2.17	1.45	285	3
j. This school has small classes	30.7	10.5	13.6	15.0	30.3	3.04	1.64	287	1

16. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Percentages					Mean	STD	N	Don't know	Missing
	Strongly disagree 1	2	3	4	Strongly agree 5					
a. The grades I receive reflect what I think I deserve	9.7	3.6	15.4	21.1	50.2	3.99	1.29	279	7	2
b. More homework at this school than at my previous school	23.3	14.3	28.0	12.2	22.2	2.96	1.45	279	8	1
c. I am learning more here than at the previous school	10.6	6.6	17.9	20.1	44.9	3.82	1.35	274	8	6
d. Students at this school are more interested in learning	16.0	13.3	26.2	19.0	25.5	3.25	1.39	263	23	2
e. My parents are glad that I attend this school	4.7	7.6	14.4	23.5	49.8	4.06	1.17	277	7	4
f. This school provides enough extracurricular activities	26.2	11.1	22.5	11.8	28.4	3.05	1.56	271	9	8
g. I thought the teachers at this school would be better	18.0	14.2	26.8	14.6	26.4	3.17	1.43	261	18	9
h. My parents ask every day about what happened at school	16.6	13.7	21.3	14.1	34.3	3.36	1.48	277	3	8
i. I wish there were more courses I could choose from	10.9	9.1	21.7	15.6	42.8	3.70	1.38	276	10	2
j. I have a computer available at school when I need one	11.2	11.6	13.8	12.3	51.1	3.80	1.45	276	5	7
k. My grades are determined almost totally by tests	31.6	18.6	28.1	11.4	10.3	2.50	1.32	263	23	2
l. Students feel safe at this school	10.9	7.0	24.1	19.5	38.5	3.68	1.34	257	28	3
m. I am aware of the mission of my school	8.3	2.7	21.2	23.5	44.3	3.93	1.23	264	19	5
n. My teachers encourage me to think about my future	6.0	6.7	20.2	24.1	42.9	3.91	1.20	282	4	2
o. Students respect one another and their property	20.4	12.9	27.2	21.9	17.6	3.03	1.37	279	6	3
p. The school building is clean and well maintained	5.6	6.3	26.1	28.2	33.8	3.78	1.15	284	2	2
q. There are rules at this school we must follow	1.4	3.2	10.7	21.4	63.3	4.42	0.91	281	2	5
r. There are students who don't follow the rules	9.2	8.9	20.7	18.1	43.2	3.77	1.33	271	7	10
s. If the teacher left the room, most students would continue to work on their assignments	14.9	13.8	30.1	18.4	22.7	3.20	1.34	282	2	4
t. Almost every assignment that I turn in to the teacher is returned with corrections & suggestions for improvement	8.9	12.1	24.6	24.2	30.2	3.55	1.28	281	5	2
u. Students take responsibility for their own achievement	6.0	9.3	21.3	23.5	39.9	3.82	1.22	268	12	8
v. Teachers & administrators know me by my name	2.5	1.8	7.5	12.2	76.0	4.57	0.90	279	3	6
w. My teacher is available to talk about academic matters	4.3	3.9	14.0	19.7	58.1	4.23	1.10	279	6	3
x. This school is a good choice for me	9.0	6.0	15.7	15.7	53.7	3.99	1.32	268	16	4
y. Teachers what me to be in school and ask me why I wasn't there when I have been absent	6.3	7.0	20.7	23.0	43.0	3.89	1.22	270	13	5
z. We work in groups most of the time	3.6	9.0	35.0	27.1	25.3	3.61	1.07	277	5	6
aa. At this school, a mistake is understood as a learning experience	9.5	7.0	21.6	24.2	37.7	3.74	1.29	273	10	5
The following two questions should be answered only by those middle and high school students who have access to counselors										
bb. A counselor is available to talk about personal problems	16.2	5.6	19.0	16.2	43.0	3.64	1.48	179	10	99
cc. A counselor is available to talk about academic matters	14.9	6.3	18.9	16.6	43.4	3.67	1.46	175	12	101

Appendix C

Survey Results for All Connecticut Parents, 1997-98 (N=188)

WMU Charter School Survey

Parents (N=188) 1997-1998 Descriptive statistics

1. In what grades do you have children enrolled in this charter school?

	Grade level												
	K	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	Total
First child	13	6	9	16	5	7	33	5	0	46	23	16	6	185
Second child	5	7	6	7	2	3	2	4	1	2	2	0	1	42
Third child	1	1	1	1	3	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	10
Fourth child	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Total number	20	14	16	24	10	11	35	9	2	48	26	16	8	239
Total percent	8.4	5.9	6.7	10.0	4.2	4.6	14.6	3.8	0.8	20.1	10.9	6.7	3.3	100.0

2a. Do you have other school-age children not attending this charter school?

	No	Yes	Total	Missing
N	94	92	186	2
%	50.5	49.5	100.0	

2b. If yes, in what type of school(s) are they enrolled?

	Public school	Private school	Parochial school	Home-schooled	Another charter	Other	Total	Missing
N	74	3	3	1	2	8	91	97
%	81.3	3.3	3.3	1.1	2.2	8.8	100.0	

3. Approximately how many miles do you live from this charter school?

Mean	4.02
STD	2.90
Missing	2

	Miles											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	>10	Total
N	33	43	30	12	23	12	9	4	4	3	13	186
%	17.7	23.1	16.1	6.5	12.4	6.5	4.8	2.2	2.2	1.6	7.0	100.0

4. Approximately how many miles do you live from the nearest traditional public school where your child could be enrolled?

Mean	2.44
STD	2.02
Missing	2

	Miles											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	>10	Total
N	91	33	20	10	18	5	4	2	0	1	2	186
%	48.9	17.7	10.8	5.4	9.7	2.7	2.2	1.1	0.0	0.5	1.1	100.0

5. What is your gender?

	Female	Male	Total	Missing
N	149	37	186	2
%	80.1	19.9	100.0	

6. Which best describes your household?

	Two parents/ guardians	Single parent/ guardian	Other	Total	Missing
N	130	53	3	186	2
%	69.9	28.5	1.6	100.0	

7. What is the estimated annual income of your household/family?

	Less than $10,000	$10,000-$19,999	$20,000-$29,999	$30,000-$39,999	$40,000-$59,999	$60,000-$99,999	$100,000 or more	Total	Missing
N	12	20	23	26	51	36	14	182	6
%	6.6	11.0	12.6	14.3	28.0	19.8	7.7	100.0	

8a. Are you aware of the school's mission?

	No	Yes	Total	Missing
N	7	179	186	2
%	3.8	96.2	100.0	

8b. If yes, to what extent is the mission being followed by the school?

	Not very well	Fair	Well	Very well	Total	Missing
	1	2	3	4		
N	3	23	73	71	170	18
%	1.8	13.5	42.9	41.8	100.0	

9. Do you have concerns about your child's safety in this school?

	No	Yes	Total	Missing
N	167	19	186	2
%	89.8	10.2	100.0	

10a. Estimate the total number of hours that you and other adults in your household have served as a volunteer at the school during an average month?

	0 hours	1-3 hours	4-6 hours	7-9 hours	10-12 hours	More than 12 hours	Total	Missing
N	85	53	17	5	6	19	185	3
%	45.9	28.6	9.2	2.7	3.2	10.3	100.0	

10b. Is voluntary work required by the school? attending this charter school?

	No	Yes	Total	Missing
N	130	30	160	28
%	81.3	18.8	100.0	

11. What is your race/ethnicity?

	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/Pac. Islander	Native American	Total	Missing
N	103	38	38	0	2	181	7
%	56.9	21.0	21.0	0.0	1.1	100.0	

12. How much formal education have you had?

	Did not complete high school	Completed high school	Less than 4 years of college	College graduate BA/BS	Graduate courses, no degree	Graduate/ profession-al degree	Total	Missing
N	12	42	59	31	20	23	187	1
%	6.4	22.5	31.6	16.6	10.7	12.3	100.0	

13. What kind of school did your child previously attend before this charter school?

	Public school	Private school	Parochial school	Home-schooled	Another charter	Other	Total	Missing
N	148	5	7	3	1	19	183	5
%	80.9	2.7	3.8	1.6	0.5	10.4	100.0	

14. Rate the importance of the following factors in your decision to enroll your child in this school.

	Not important 1	Percentages 2	3	4	Very important 5	Mean	STD	N	Missing
a. Convenient location	30.8%	16.8%	22.2%	8.1%	22.2%	2.74	1.52	185	3
b. More emphasis on academics than extracurricular activities	5.9%	9.0%	28.2%	23.4%	33.5%	3.70	1.19	188	0
c. My interest in an educational reform effort	8.6%	15.7%	27.6%	23.2%	24.9%	3.40	1.26	185	3
d. Promises made by charter school's spokespersons	9.1%	5.9%	18.8%	30.1%	36.0%	3.78	1.25	186	2
e. Academic reputation (high standards) of this school	9.6%	5.6%	17.4%	24.2%	43.3%	3.86	1.30	178	10
f. Safety for my child	6.4%	7.0%	13.9%	17.1%	55.6%	4.09	1.25	187	1
g. I prefer the emphasis and educational philosophy of this school	0.5%	4.8%	8.6%	21.5%	64.5%	4.45	0.88	186	2
h. My child has special needs that were not met at previous school	36.1%	9.3%	17.5%	10.9%	26.2%	2.82	1.64	183	5
i. Good teachers and high quality of instruction	1.6%	2.7%	7.6%	23.4%	64.7%	4.47	0.87	184	4
j. I prefer a private school but could not afford it	42.6%	12.0%	19.7%	9.8%	15.8%	2.44	1.50	183	5
k. My child wanted to attend this school	13.6%	4.9%	17.9%	15.2%	48.4%	3.80	1.43	184	4
l. My child was performing poorly at previous school	41.2%	7.7%	17.6%	12.1%	21.4%	2.65	1.61	182	6
m. I was unhappy with the curriculum & instruction at previous school	33.1%	8.8%	20.4%	15.5%	22.1%	2.85	1.56	181	7
n. This school has good physical facilities	23.5%	17.5%	23.0%	17.5%	18.6%	2.90	1.43	183	5
o. Recommendations of teacher/official at my child's previous school	36.4%	12.0%	16.8%	16.8%	17.9%	2.68	1.54	184	4

15. Rate each of the following statements as to what you expected when you first began working at this school (initial expectation)and how you would rate it today (current experience).

	Initial Expectation							Current Experience						
	False	Partly true	True	Mean	STD	Don't know	Missing	False	Partly true	True	Mean	STD	Don't know	Missing
a. My child will be/*is* motivated to learn	1.1%	13.6%	85.3%	2.84	0.39	4	0	2.2%	26.2%	71.6%	2.69	0.51	1	4
b. The quality of instruction will be/*is* high	0.5%	14.6%	84.9%	2.84	0.38	3	0	1.7%	28.1%	70.2%	2.69	0.50	5	5
c. My child will receive/*receives* sufficient individual attention	0.6%	15.0%	84.4%	2.84	0.38	7	1	7.3%	25.1%	67.6%	2.60	0.62	3	6
d. I will be/*am* able to influence the direction and activities in the school	11.5%	38.8%	49.7%	2.38	0.68	21	2	13.5%	52.8%	33.7%	2.20	0.66	16	9
e. There will be/*is* good communication between the school and my household	0.6%	19.3%	80.1%	2.80	0.42	6	1	8.2%	26.1%	65.8%	2.58	0.64	0	4
f. My child will have/*has* access to computers and other new technologies	3.9%	18.9%	77.2%	2.73	0.52	7	1	8.3%	32.8%	58.9%	2.51	0.65	4	4
g. The school will have/*has* effective leadership and administration	1.1%	15.1%	83.8%	2.83	0.41	8	1	7.2%	33.1%	59.7%	2.52	0.63	3	4
h. The school will have/*has* small class sizes	3.8%	11.5%	84.6%	2.81	0.48	4	2	5.5%	18.8%	75.7%	2.70	0.57	1	6
i. School personnel will be/*are* accountable for my child's achievement/performance	4.4%	31.1%	64.4%	2.60	0.58	7	1	10.2%	40.7%	49.2%	2.39	0.67	6	5
j. My child's achievement levels of students will improve/*is* improving	2.8%	18.9%	78.3%	2.76	0.49	8	0	8.2%	32.4%	59.3%	2.51	0.65	1	5
k. Support services (i.e., counseling, health care, etc.) will be/*are* available to my child	10.8%	39.8%	49.4%	2.39	0.68	19	3	18.3%	38.5%	43.2%	2.25	0.75	14	5
l. The school will support/*is supporting* innovative practices	1.2%	18.0%	80.8%	2.80	0.43	12	4	5.3%	23.4%	71.3%	2.66	0.58	9	8
m. I will be/*am* able to participate in volunteer work and other activities	5.6%	21.1%	73.3%	2.68	0.58	8	0	9.6%	28.7%	61.8%	2.52	0.67	6	4

16. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your child's school?

	Percentages					Mean	STD	N	Don't know	Missing
	Strongly disagree 1	2	3	4	Strongly agree 5					
a. This school is meeting students' needs that could not be addressed at other local schools	5.1%	6.8%	22.0%	21.5%	44.6%	3.94	1.18	177	10	1
b. Students feel safe at this school	3.9%	1.7%	8.8%	24.3%	61.3%	4.38	0.99	181	5	2
c. Class sizes are too large to meet the individual student's needs	68.6%	11.4%	10.8%	7.0%	2.2%	1.63	1.07	185	1	2
d. Teachers are disenchanted with what can be accomplished	52.2%	15.9%	13.4%	10.2%	8.3%	2.06	1.35	157	22	9
e. Teachers are involved in decision making at this school	2.5%	4.3%	6.8%	19.9%	66.5%	4.43	0.97	161	26	1
f. This school has sufficient financial resources	30.3%	23.9%	29.7%	11.6%	4.5%	2.36	1.16	155	28	5
g. I am satisfied with the school's curriculum	2.2%	6.6%	24.0%	29.0%	38.3%	3.95	1.04	183	2	3
h. I am satisfied with the instruction offered	1.6%	7.7%	20.2%	31.7%	38.8%	3.98	1.02	183	1	4
i. Teachers are challenged to be effective	1.2%	6.7%	18.9%	28.7%	44.5%	4.09	1.01	164	22	2
j. This school has been well received by the community	2.9%	9.7%	21.1%	32.0%	34.3%	3.85	1.09	175	9	4
k. I think this school has a bright future	3.3%	3.3%	10.3%	19.0%	64.1%	4.38	1.02	184	1	3
l. Too many changes are occurring at the school	34.5%	25.7%	27.5%	4.7%	7.6%	2.25	1.20	171	10	7
m. This school reflects a community atmosphere	1.1%	4.0%	17.1%	27.4%	50.3%	4.22	0.95	175	8	5
n. Extracurricular activities are not emphasized at the expense of academics	6.7%	5.5%	20.7%	25.0%	42.1%	3.90	1.20	164	15	9
o. This school has high standards and expectation for students	1.6%	2.7%	13.0%	27.6%	55.1%	4.32	0.92	185	1	2
p. This school has small class sizes	6.0%	4.4%	20.3%	13.2%	56.0%	4.09	1.22	182	2	4
q. This school has good physical facilities	16.0%	18.2%	27.1%	17.7%	21.0%	3.09	1.36	181	4	3
r. This school has good administrative leadership	6.6%	6.6%	16.0%	23.8%	47.0%	3.98	1.22	181	4	3
s. Parents are involved and can influence instruction and school activities	4.5%	7.3%	25.1%	30.7%	32.4%	3.79	1.11	179	8	1
t. Teachers and school leadership are accountable for student achievement/performance	5.0%	5.5%	23.2%	24.9%	41.4%	3.92	1.15	181	6	1

Appendix D

School Climate Survey Results for Charter School Teachers/Staff, Students, and Parents
1998-99 and 2000-01

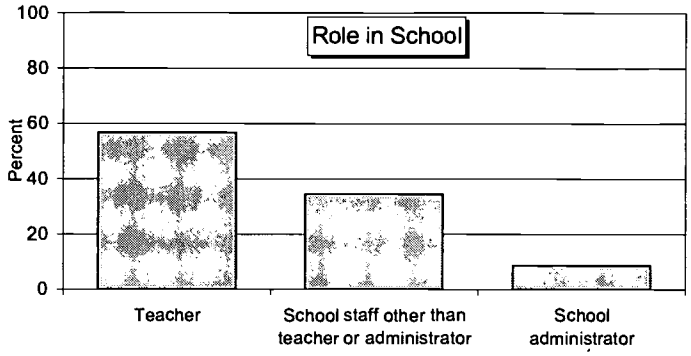
Teacher/Staff Totals, 1998-98

Informant Group: **Teachers/Staff (N=235)**

School Climate Survey
Descriptive statistics

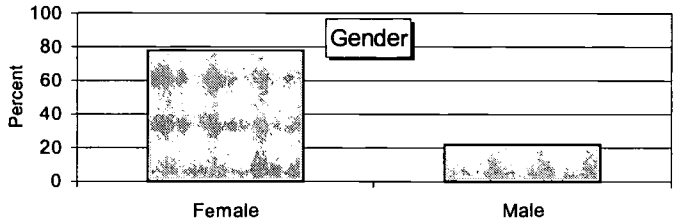
What role do you have in the school?

	Teacher	School staff other than teacher or administrator	School adminis-trator	Total	Missing
N	125	76	19	220	15
%	56.8	34.5	8.6	100.0	



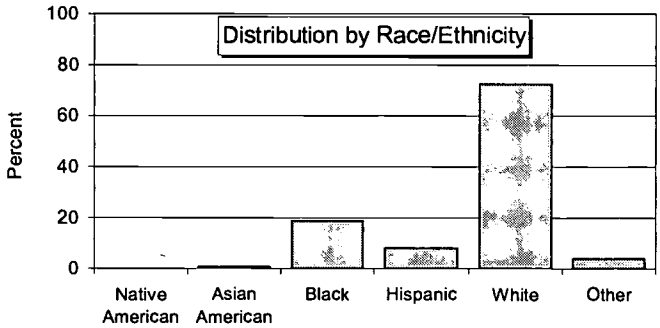
What is your gender?

	Female	Male	Total	Missing
N	177	50	227	8
%	78.0	22.0	100.0	



What is your race/ethnicity?

	Native American	Asian American	Black	Hispanic	White	Other	Total	Missing
N	0	1	28	12	108	6	149	86
%	0.0	0.7	18.8	8.1	72.5	4.0	100.0	



Choose the answer that you think most people in your school and community would pick.

	Subscale	Teacher/Staff Charter School Data Mean	STD	Standard Score		National Norm Data STD	Mean	Standard Score
1	Teacher-Student Relationships	52.99	7.10	57		47.7	5.9	50
2	Security and Maintenance	29.23	5.02	51		28.4	4.5	50
3	Administration (Principal, Assist. Principal, etc.)	25.74	4.32	55		22.8	4.2	50
4	Student Academic Orientation	15.07	3.90	53		14.1	2.9	50
5	Student Behavioral Values	8.77	3.00	46		9.0	2.3	50
6	Guidance	17.17	2.87	54		16.1	2.4	50
7	Student-Peer Relationships	15.22	3.41	51		14.8	2.4	50
8	Parent and Community-School Relationships	13.25	3.91	49		13.2	3.2	50
9	Instructional Management	28.07	5.52	51		27.4	4.1	50
10	Student Activities	16.27	3.85	49		16.2	2.6	50

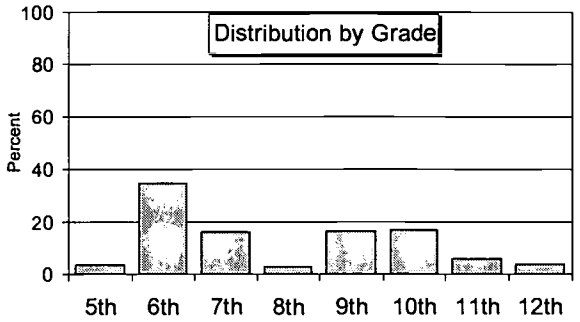
Student Results on School Climate Survey, 1998-98

School Climate Survey
Descriptive statistics

Informant Group: **Students (N=606)**

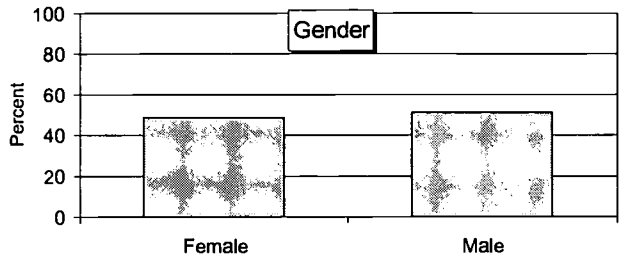
Grade level

	Grade level								
	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	Total
N	21	210	98	17	100	102	36	22	606
%	3.5	34.7	16.2	2.8	16.5	16.8	5.9	3.6	100.0



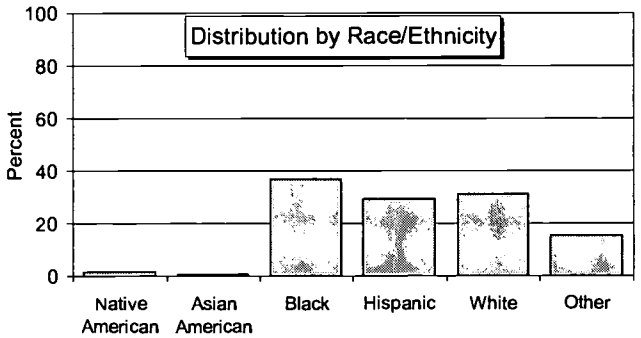
What is your gender?

	Female	Male	Total	Missing
N	296	310	606	0
%	48.8	51.2	100.0	



What is your race/ethnicity?

	Native American	Asian American	Black	Hispanic	White	Other	Total	Missing
N	9	4	192	153	162	80	520	86
%	1.7	0.8	36.9	29.4	31.2	15.4	100.0	



Choose the answer that you think most people in your school and community would pick.

	Subscale	Student Results Charter School Data				National Norm Data		
		Mean	STD	All schools		Mean	STD	Standard Score
1	Teacher-Student Relationships	45.34	9.03	57		39.2	7.9	50
2	Security and Maintenance	25.69	6.31	47		26.5	4.9	50
3	Administration (Principal, Assist. Principal, etc.)	22.81	5.42	54		20.3	4.8	50
4	Student Academic Orientation	14.98	3.86	52		13.5	3.1	50
5	Student Behavioral Values	7.97	3.01	48		7.6	2.6	50
6	Guidance	15.75	3.68	50		15.1	3.2	50
7	Student-Peer Relationships	13.68	4.02	48		13.7	3.2	50
8	Parent and Community-School Relationships	14.57	4.02	50		13.9	3.1	50
9	Instructional Management	26.56	5.26	50		26.2	4.4	50
10	Student Activities	15.95	4.03	51		14.7	3.4	50

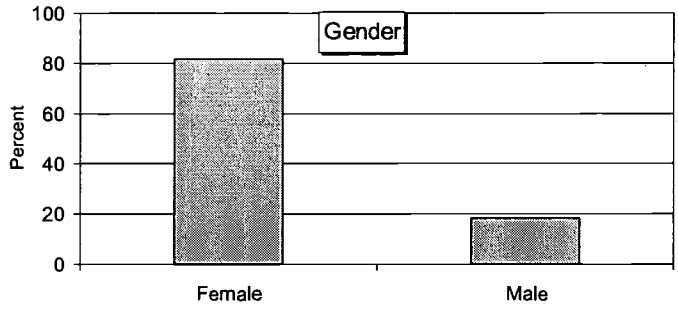
Parent Results on School Climate Survey, 1998-99

Descriptive statistics

Informant Group: **Parents (N=209)**

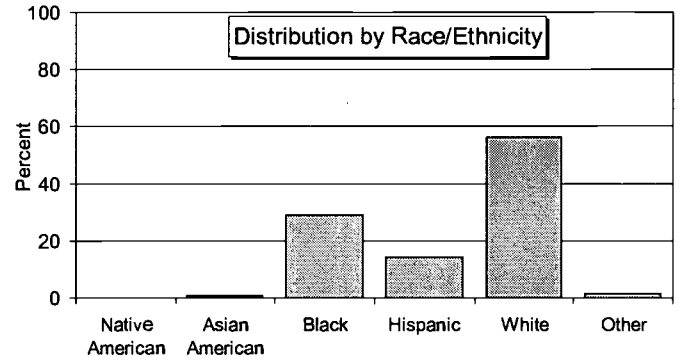
What is your gender?

	Female	Male	Total	Missing
N	107	24	131	78
%	81.7	18.3	100.0	



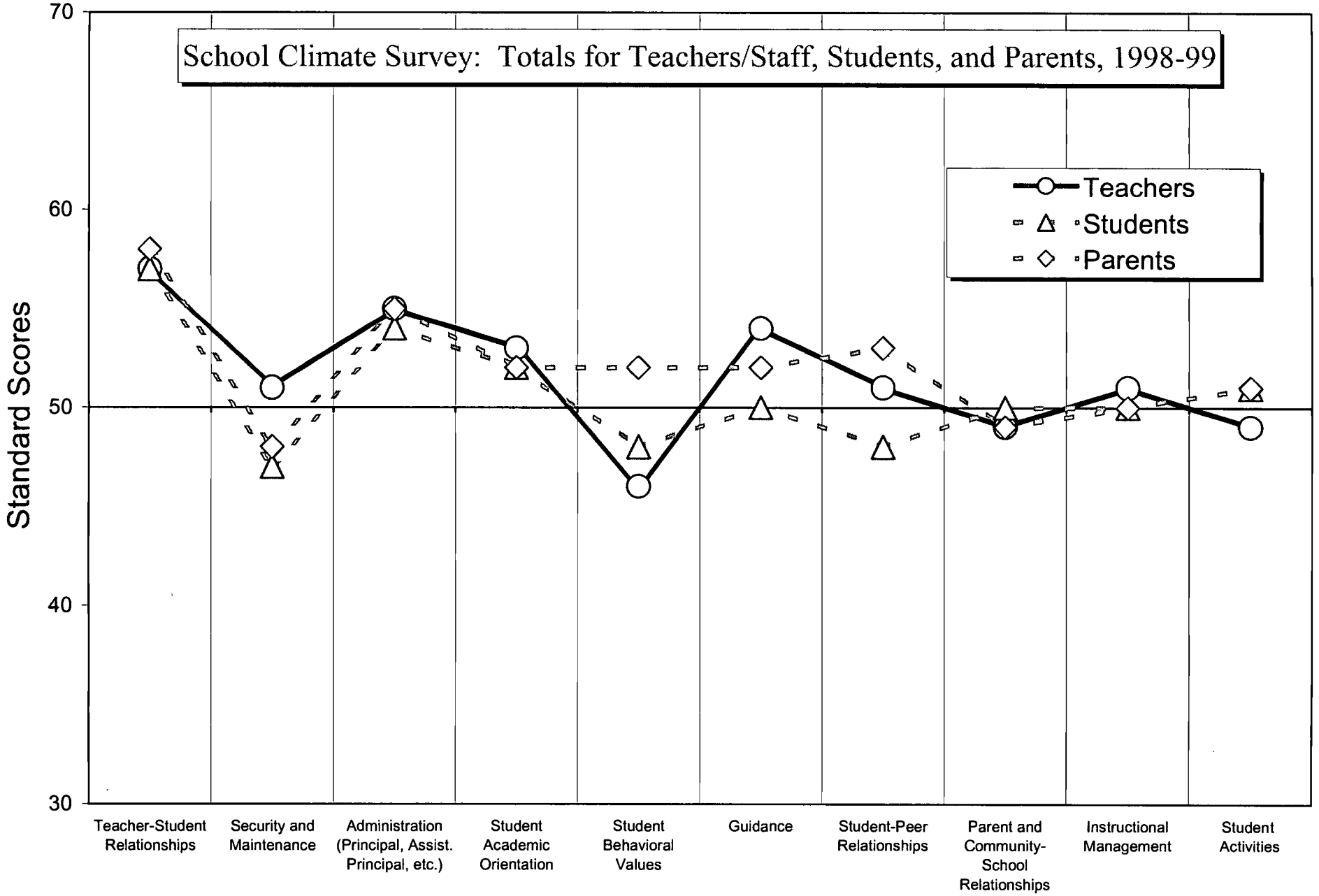
What is your race/ethnicity?

	Native American	Asian American	Black	Hispanic	White	Other	Total	Missing
N	0	1	37	18	72	2	128	81
%	0.0	0.8	28.9	14.1	56.3	1.6	100.0	



Choose the answer that you think most people in your school and community would pick.

	Subscale	Parent Results Charter School Data				National Norm Data		
		Mean	STD	Standard Score		Mean	STD	Standard Score
1	Teacher-Student Relationships	50.99	7.46	58		43.6	8.1	50
2	Security and Maintenance	28.99	4.57	48		29.0	3.8	50
3	Administration (Principal, Assist. Principal, etc.)	25.10	4.33	55		22.9	4.5	50
4	Student Academic Orientation	16.89	2.89	52		15.6	2.5	50
5	Student Behavioral Values	9.95	2.81	52		8.6	2.6	50
6	Guidance	16.36	3.12	52		15.3	3.0	50
7	Student-Peer Relationships	16.08	2.93	53		15.1	2.7	50
8	Parent and Community-School Relationships	14.26	3.66	49		14.3	3.0	50
9	Instructional Management	28.15	5.13	50		27.8	3.8	50
10	Student Activities	16.07	3.30	51		15.6	2.8	50


School Climate Survey: Totals for Teachers/Staff, Students, and Parents, 1998-99
Standard Scores
70
60
50
40
30
Teachers
Students
Parents
Teacher-Student Relationships
Security and Maintenance
Administration (Principal, Assist. Principal, etc.)
Student Academic Orientation
Student Behavioral Values
Guidance
Student-Peer Relationships
Parent and Community-School Relationships
Instructional Management
Student Activities

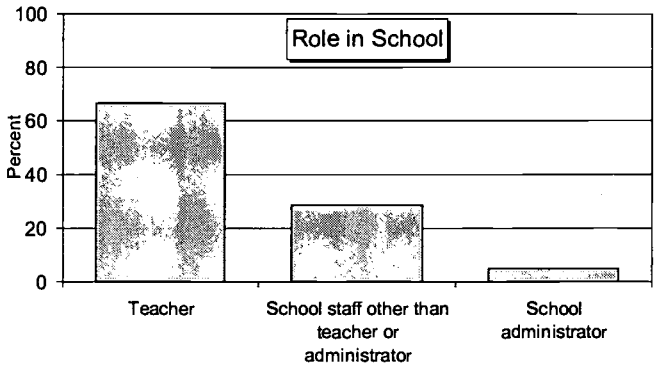
Total for all Connecticut Charter School Teachers/Staff, 2000-01

School Climate Survey
Descriptive statistics

Informant Group: **Teachers/Staff (N=273)**

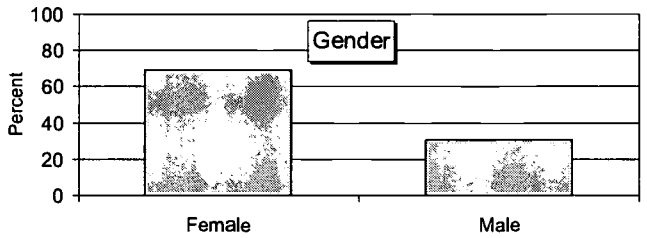
What role do you have in the school?

	Teacher	School staff other than teacher or administrator	School administrator	Total	Missing
N	182	78	13	273	0
%	66.7	28.6	4.8	100.0	



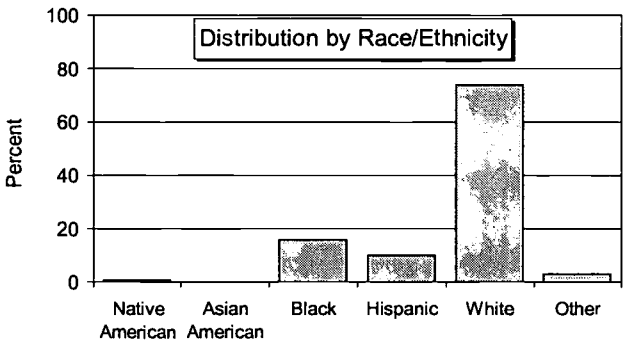
What is your gender?

	Female	Male	Total	Missing
N	149	66	215	58
%	69.3	30.7	100.0	



What is your race/ethnicity?

	Native American	Asian American	Black	Hispanic	White	Other	Total	Missing
N	1	0	27	17	126	5	171	102
%	0.6	0.0	15.8	9.9	73.7	2.9	100.0	



Choose the answer that you think most people in your school and community would pick.

	Subscale	Charter School Data				National Norm Data		
		Mean	STD	Standard Score		Mean	STD	Standard Score
1	Teacher-Student Relationships	52.79	6.05	67		47.7	5.9	50
2	Security and Maintenance	28.11	5.04	53		28.4	4.5	50
3	Administration (Principal, Assist. Principal, etc.)	25.40	4.09	61		22.8	4.2	50
4	Student Academic Orientation	14.91	3.38	55		14.1	2.9	50
5	Student Behavioral Values	8.75	2.78	54		9.0	2.3	50
6	Guidance	17.25	2.73	57		16.1	2.4	50
7	Student-Peer Relationships	15.41	3.02	55		14.8	2.4	50
8	Parent and Community-School Relationships	12.88	3.63	46		13.2	3.2	50
9	Instructional Management	28.16	4.68	54		27.4	4.1	50
10	Student Activities	16.92	2.98	57		16.2	2.6	50

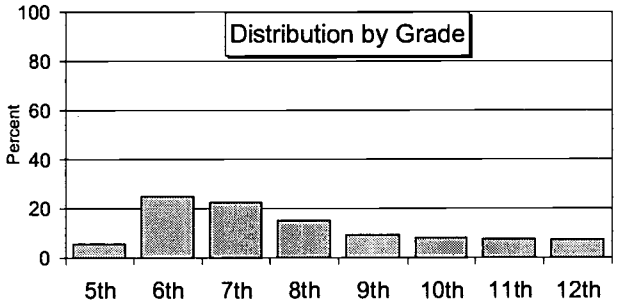
Totals for all Connecticut Charter School Students, 2000-01

School Climate Survey
Descriptive statistics

Informant Group: **Students (N=694)**

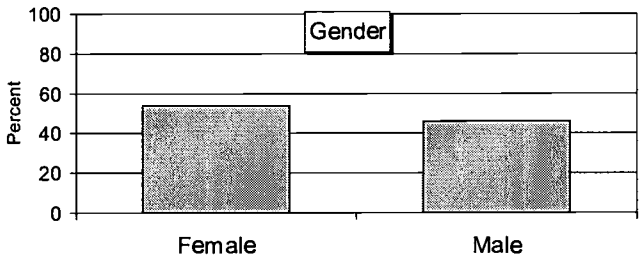
Grade level

	Grade level							
	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
N	39	174	156	104	64	55	52	50
%	5.6	25.1	22.5	15.0	9.2	7.9	7.5	7.2



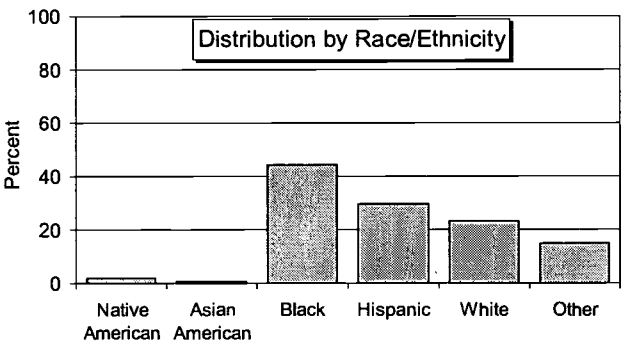
What is your gender?

	Female	Male	Total	Missing
N	364	310	674	20
%	54.0	46.0	100.0	



What is your race/ethnicity?

	Native American	Asian American	Black	Hispanic	White	Other	Total	Missing
N	11	4	258	172	135	87	580	114
%	1.9	0.7	44.5	29.7	23.3	15.0	100.0	



Choose the answer that you think most people in your school and community would pick.

	Subscale	Charter School Data				National Norm Data		
		Mean	STD	Standard Score		Mean	STD	Standard Score
1	Teacher-Student Relationships	41.61	10.77	53		39.2	7.9	50
2	Security and Maintenance	22.65	7.35	42		26.5	4.9	50
3	Administration (Principal, Assist. Principal, etc.)	21.13	6.21	52		20.3	4.8	50
4	Student Academic Orientation	14.12	4.00	52		13.5	3.1	50
5	Student Behavioral Values	7.78	3.30	51		7.6	2.6	50
6	Guidance	14.69	4.13	49		15.1	3.2	50
7	Student-Peer Relationships	12.67	4.33	47		13.7	3.2	50
8	Parent and Community-School Relationships	13.37	4.49	48		13.9	3.1	50
9	Instructional Management	24.63	6.21	46		26.2	4.4	50
10	Student Activities	14.78	4.59	50		14.7	3.4	50

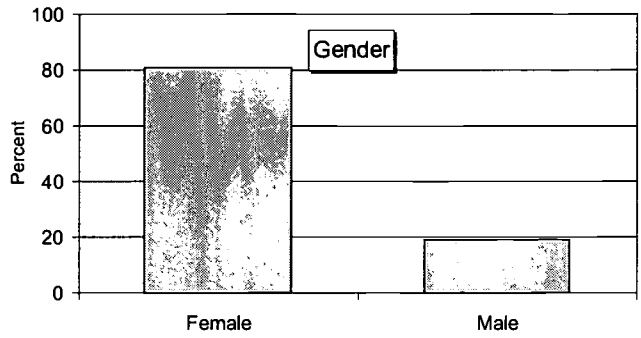
Parent Results on School Climate Survey, 2000-01

School Climate Survey
Descriptive statistics

Informant Group: **Parents/Guardians (N=173)**

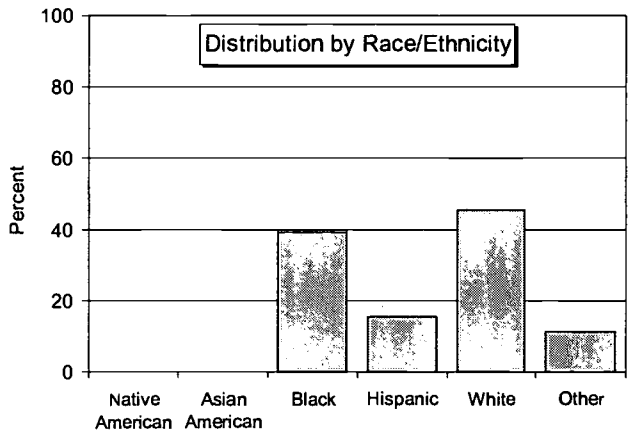
What is your gender?

	Female	Male	Total	Missing
N	88	21	109	64
%	80.7	19.3	100.0	



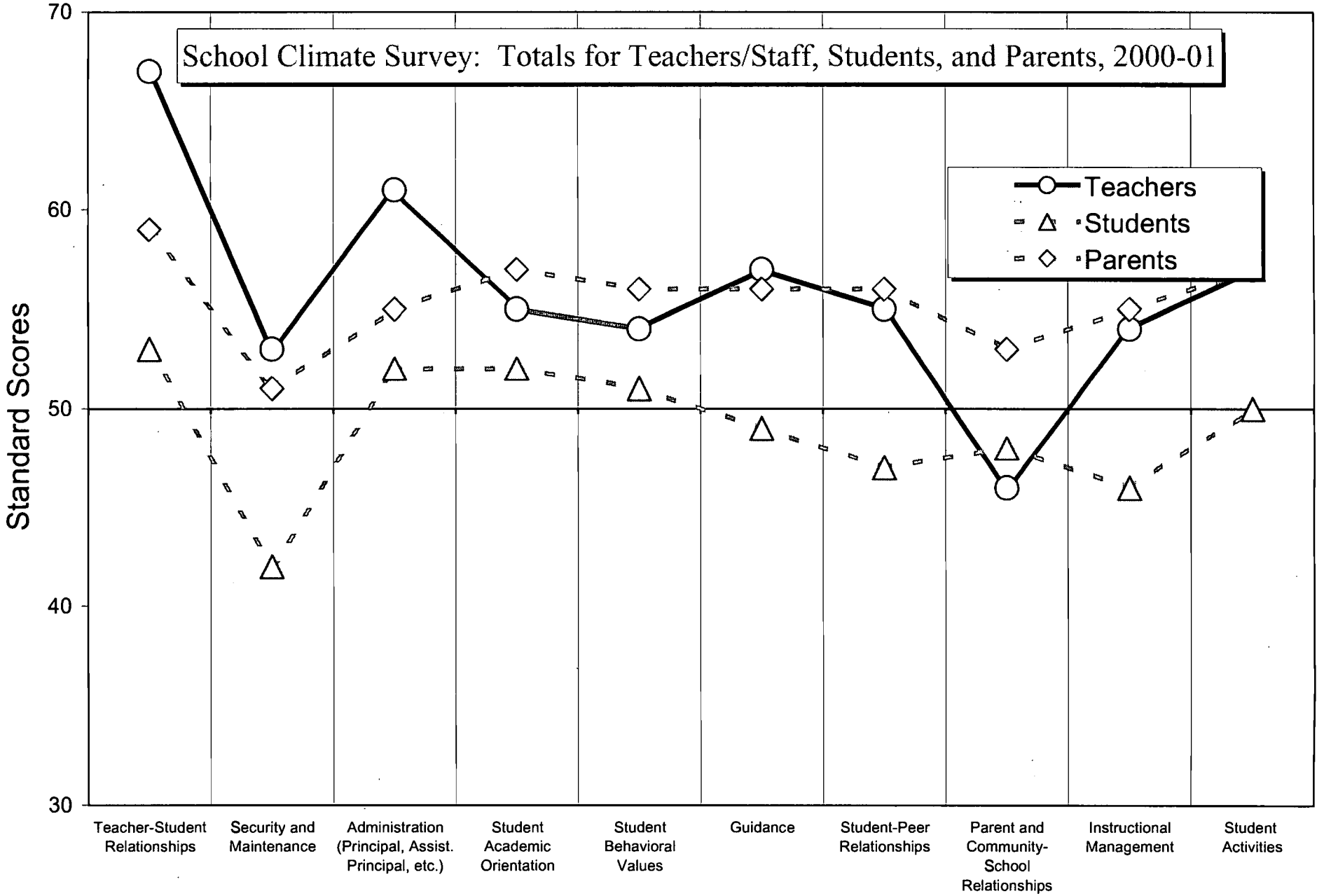
What is your race/ethnicity?

	Native American	Asian American	Black	Hispanic	White	Other	Total	Missing
N	0	0	38	15	44	11	97	76
%	0.0	0.0	39.2	15.5	45.4	11.3	100.0	



Choose the answer that you think most people in your school and community would pick.

	Subscale	Charter School Data			National Norm Data		
		Mean	STD	Standard Score	Mean	STD	Standard Score
1	Teacher-Student Relationships	51.09	8.44	59	43.6	8.1	50
2	Security and Maintenance	29.32	5.25	51	29.0	3.8	50
3	Administration (Principal, Assist. Principal, etc.)	25.24	4.62	55	22.9	4.5	50
4	Student Academic Orientation	17.38	2.87	57	15.6	2.5	50
5	Student Behavioral Values	10.25	3.03	56	8.6	2.6	50
6	Guidance	17.04	2.89	56	15.3	3.0	50
7	Student-Peer Relationships	16.18	3.33	56	15.1	2.7	50
8	Parent and Community-School Relationships	15.37	3.03	53	14.3	3.0	50
9	Instructional Management	29.53	4.21	55	27.8	3.8	50
10	Student Activities	17.46	2.68	57	15.6	2.8	50


School Climate Survey: Totals for Teachers/Staff, Students, and Parents, 2000-01
Standard Scores
70
60
50
40
30
Teachers
Students
Parents
Teacher-Student Relationships
Security and Maintenance
Administration (Principal, Assist. Principal, etc.)
Student Academic Orientation
Student Behavioral Values
Guidance
Student-Peer Relationships
Parent and Community-School Relationships
Instructional Management
Student Activities

Appendix E

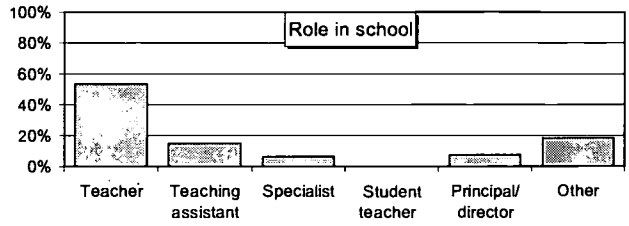
Survey Results for All Connecticut Charter School Teachers and Staff, 1999-2000

WMU Charter School Survey

Teachers/Staff (N=285) 1999-2000 Descriptive statistics

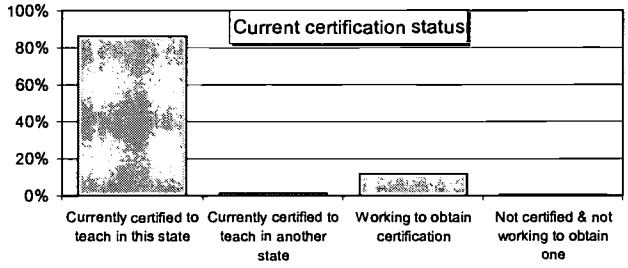
1. What is your role at this school?

	Teacher	Teaching assistant	Specialist	Student teacher	Principal/ director	Other	Total	Missing
N	152	42	18	0	21	52	285	0
%	53.3%	14.7%	6.3%	0.0%	7.4%	18.2%	100.0%	



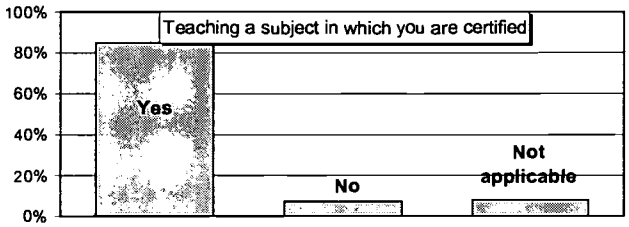
2. What is your current teaching certification status (teachers only)?

	Currently certified to teach in this state	Currently certified to teach in another state	Working to obtain certification	Not certified and not working to obtain certification	Total
N	130	2	18	1	151
%	86.1%	1.3%	11.9%	0.7%	100.0%



3. Are you teaching in a subject area in which you are certified to teach? (teachers only)

	Yes	No	Not applicable	Total
N	129	11	12	152
%	84.9%	7.2%	7.9%	100.0%

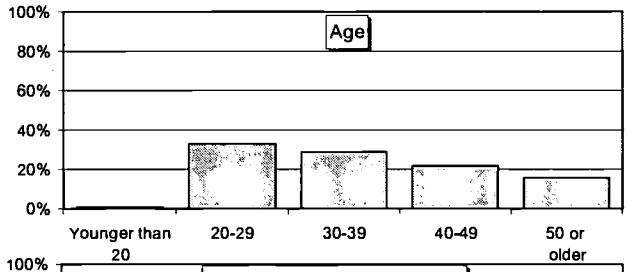


4. With which grade do you mostly work?

	Grade Level															
	K	1st	2nd	3td	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	Not applicable	Total	Missing
N	12	14	11	14	10	19	22	27	16	23	32	10	5	65	280	5
%	4.3%	5.0%	3.9%	5.0%	3.6%	6.8%	7.9%	9.6%	5.7%	8.2%	11.4%	3.6%	1.8%	23.2%	100.0%	

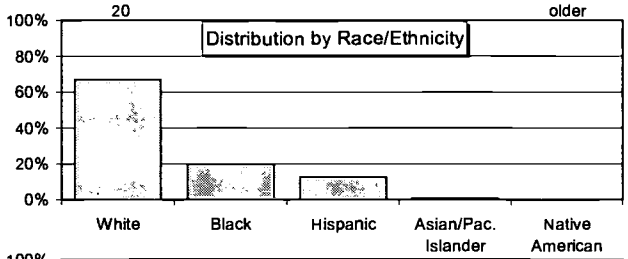
5. What is your age?

	Younger than 20	20-29	30-39	40-49	50 or older	Total	Missing
N	2	92	81	61	44	280	5
%	0.7%	32.9%	28.9%	21.8%	15.7%	100.0%	



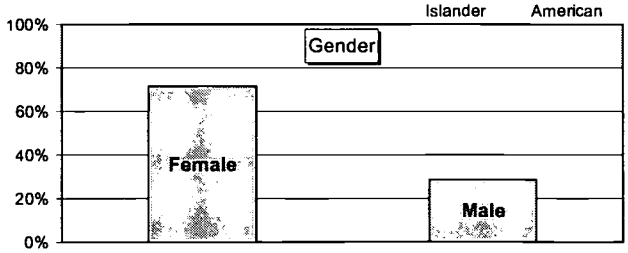
6. What is your race/ethnicity?

	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/Pac. Islander	Native American	Total	Missing
N	179	53	34	2	0	268	17
%	66.8%	19.8%	12.7%	0.7%	0.0%	100.0%	



7. What is your gender?

	Female	Male	Total	Missing
N	190	76	266	19
%	71.4%	28.6%	100.0%	



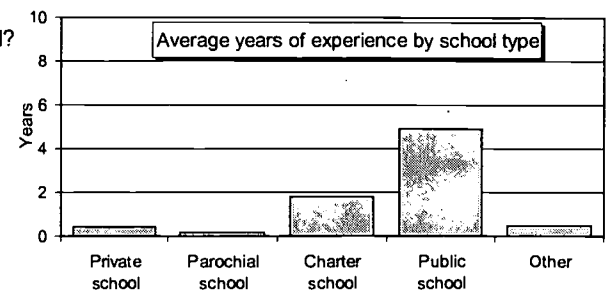
Note: Questions 2 and 3 include the responses from only those staff who indicated that they were teachers

8. How many years of experience have you had in each of these types of schools (teachers only)

	Private school	Parochial school	Charter school	Public school	Other	Total	Total (excluding "other")
Mean	0.43	0.16	1.80	4.90	0.49	7.78	7.29
STD	1.60	0.81	0.84	6.77	1.81	7.31	7.28

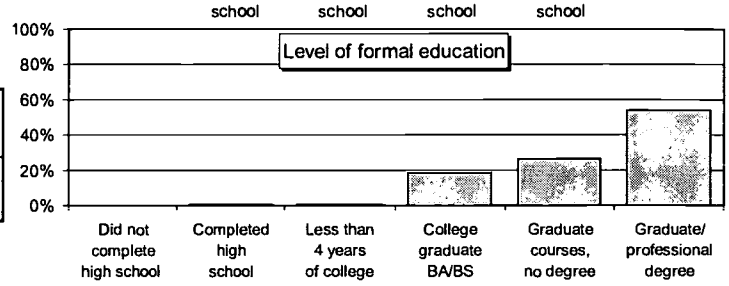
9. Years at current school?

Years at current school
1.82
0.84



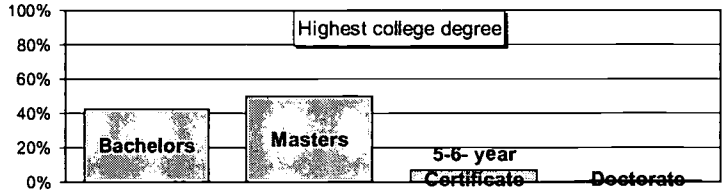
10. How much formal education have you had (teachers only)

	Did not complete high school	Completed high school	Less than 4 years of college	College graduate BA/BS	Graduate courses, no degree	Graduate/ professional degree	Total	Mis-sing
N	0	1	1	28	40	82	152	133
%	0.0%	0.7%	0.7%	18.4%	26.3%	53.9%	100.0%	



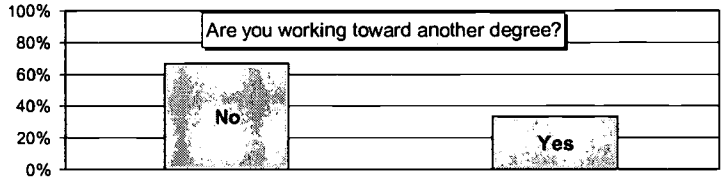
11. What is the highest college degree you hold? (teachers only)

	Bachelors	Masters	5-6- year Certificate	Doctorate	Total	Missing
N	64	75	10	1	150	135
%	42.7%	50.0%	6.7%	0.7%	100.0%	



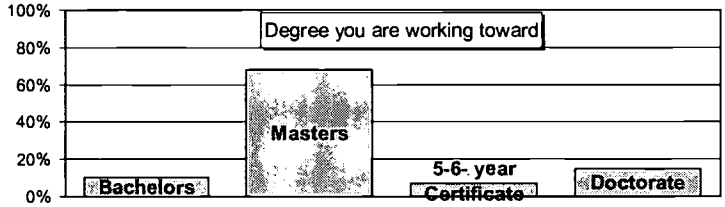
12a. Are you working toward another degree at this time?

	No	Yes	Total	Missing
N	182	91	273	12
%	66.7%	33.3%	100.0%	



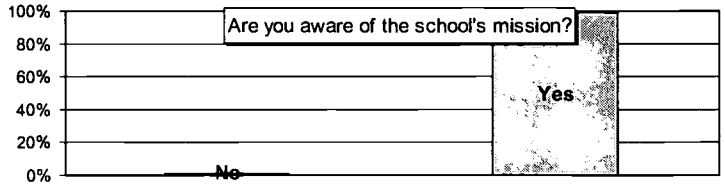
12b. If yes, what degree?

	Bachelors	Masters	5-6- year Certificate	Doctorate	Total	Missing
N	9	60	6	13	88	197
%	10.2%	68.2%	6.8%	14.8%	100.0%	



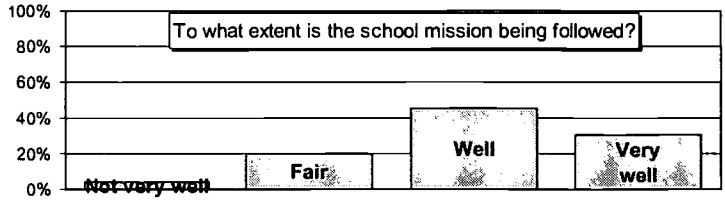
13a. Are you aware of the school's mission?

	No	Yes	Total	Missing
N	3	273	276	9
%	1.1%	98.9%	100.0%	



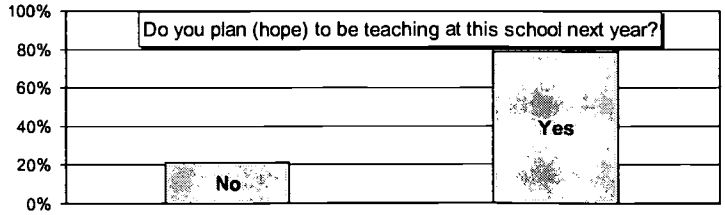
13b. If yes, to what extent is the mission being followed by the school?

	Not very well 1	Fair 2	Well 3	Very well 4	Total	Missing
N	11	53	121	82	267	18
%	4.1%	19.9%	45.3%	30.7%	100.0%	



14. Do you plan (hope) to be working at this school next year?

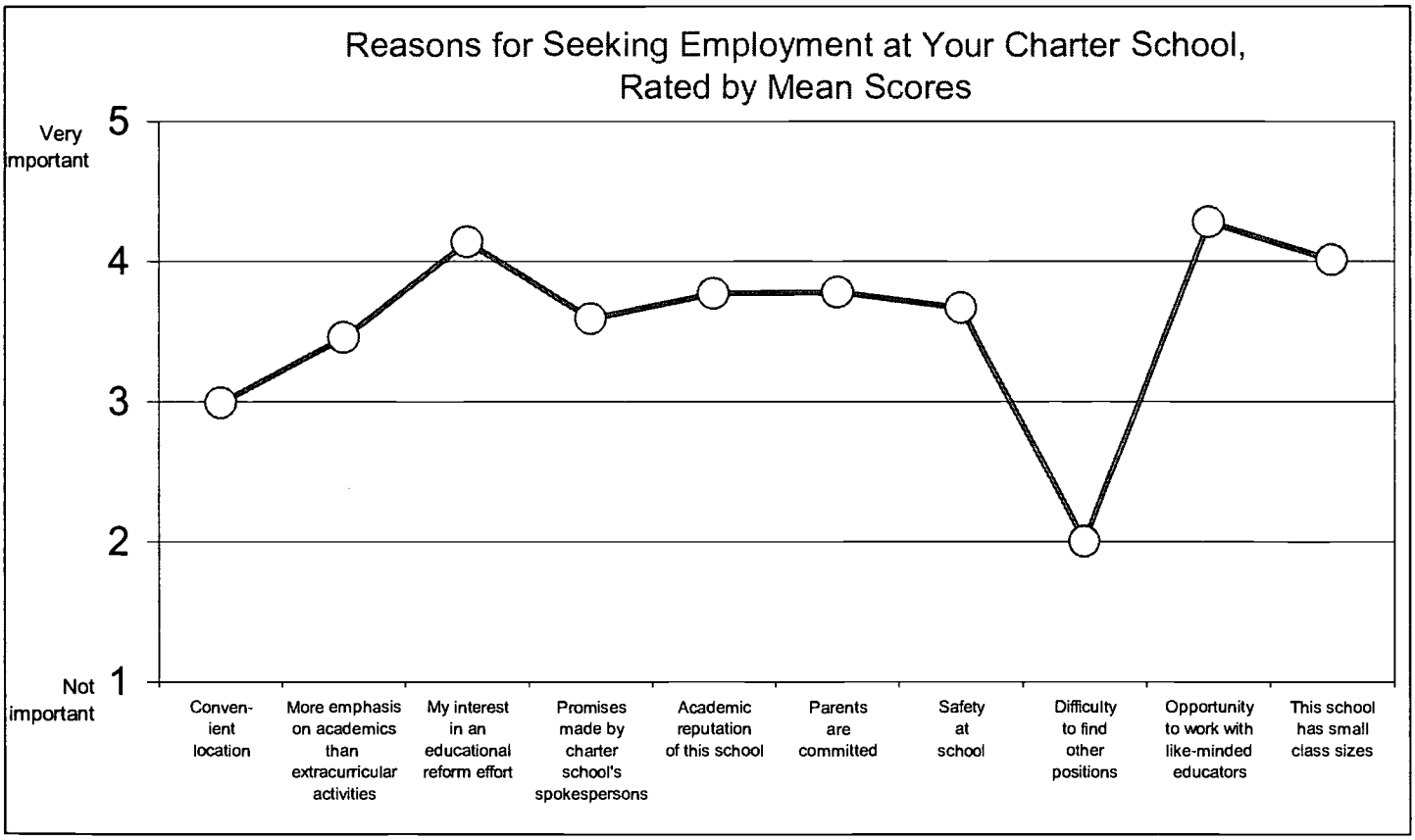
	No	Yes	Total	Missing
N	56	209	265	20
%	21.1%	78.9%	100.0%	



Note: Questions 8, 9, 10 and 11 include the responses from only those staff who indicated that they were teachers

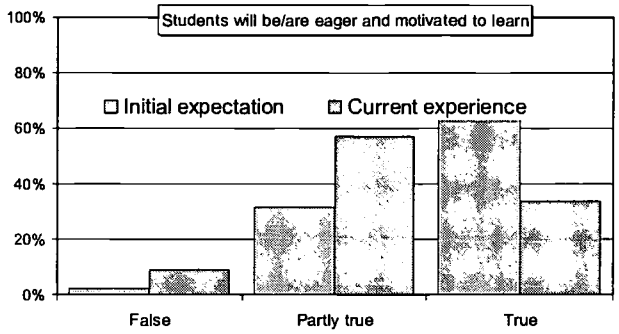
15. Rate the importance of the following factors in your decision to seek employment at this school.

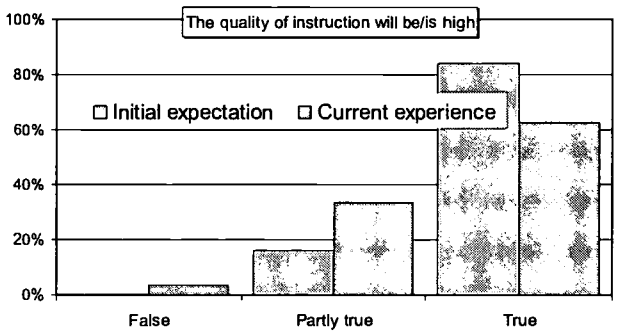
		Percentages									
		Not important 1	2	3	4	Very important 5	Mean	STD	Median	N	Missing
a.	Convenient location	21.8%	14.4%	25.4%	19.7%	18.7%	2.99	1.40	3	284	1
b.	More emphasis on academics as opposed to extracurricular activities	8.6%	7.9%	34.4%	27.6%	21.5%	3.46	1.16	3	279	6
c.	My interest in being involved in an educational reform effort	2.9%	3.9%	15.7%	31.4%	46.1%	4.14	1.01	4	280	5
d.	Promises made by charter school's spokespersons	8.2%	10.0%	24.2%	29.9%	27.8%	3.59	1.22	4	281	4
e.	Academic reputation (high standards) of this school	6.4%	7.1%	22.8%	30.6%	33.1%	3.77	1.17	4	281	4
f.	Parents are committed	4.3%	8.2%	25.4%	29.6%	32.5%	3.78	1.12	4	280	5
g.	Safety at school	6.4%	9.6%	26.4%	25.7%	31.8%	3.67	1.20	4	280	5
h.	Difficulty to find other positions	51.6%	16.8%	16.1%	10.8%	4.7%	2.00	1.24	1	279	6
I.	Opportunity to work with like-minded educators	1.8%	1.8%	13.0%	33.2%	50.2%	4.28	0.89	5	277	8
j.	This school has small class sizes	4.3%	3.2%	21.0%	30.2%	41.3%	4.01	1.07	4	281	4

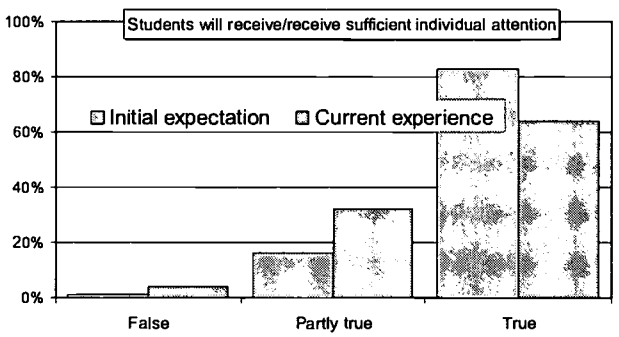


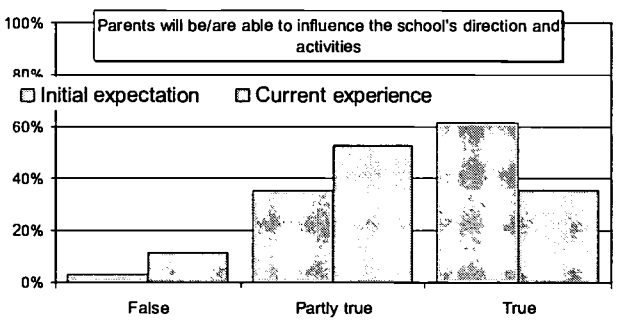
16. Rate each of the following statements as to what you expected when you first began working at this school (initial expectation)and how you would rate it today (current experience).

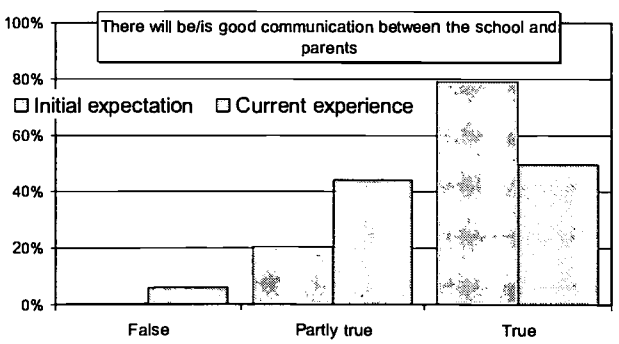
	Initial Expectation							Current Experience						
	False	Partly True	True	Mean	STD	Don't know	Mis-sing	False	Partly true	True	Mean	STD	Don't know	Mis-sing
	1	2	3					1	2	3				
Students will be/are eager and motivated to learn	2.2%	31.5%	66.3%	2.64	0.52	7	5	9.0%	57.2%	33.8%	2.25	0.61	0	7
The quality of instruction will be/is high	0.0%	16.1%	83.9%	2.84	0.37	7	5	3.6%	33.7%	62.7%	2.59	0.56	3	6
Students will receive/ receive sufficient individual attention	1.1%	16.1%	82.8%	2.82	0.41	5	7	4.0%	32.1%	63.9%	2.60	0.57	1	7
Parents will be/are able to influence the direction and activities at the school	3.1%	35.3%	61.6%	2.58	0.55	24	6	11.5%	52.9%	35.6%	2.24	0.64	16	8
There will be/is good communica-tion between the school and parents/ guardians	0.4%	20.6%	79.0%	2.79	0.42	9	4	6.1%	44.2%	49.6%	2.44	0.61	1	6





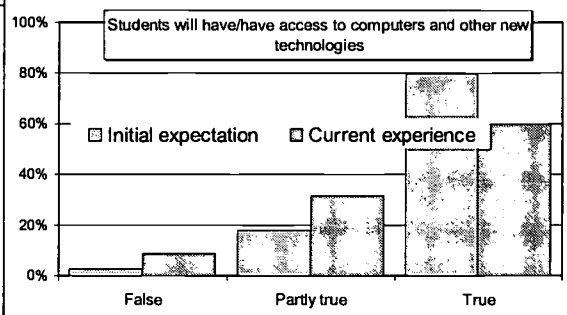


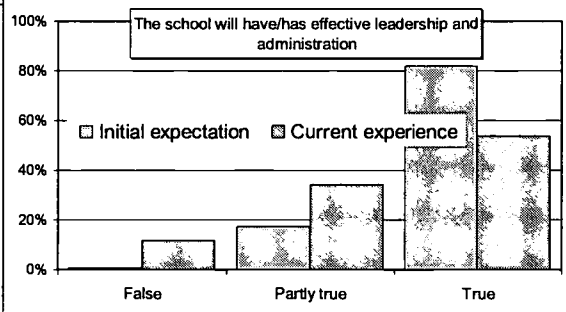


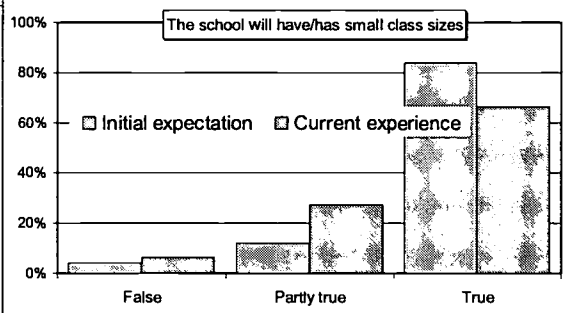


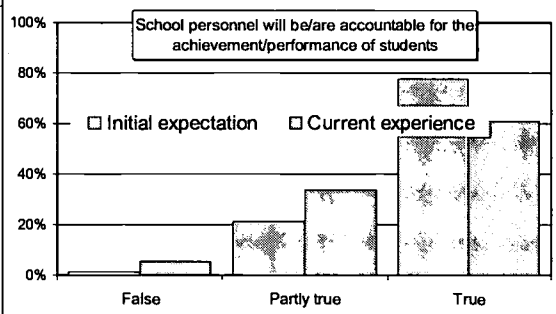
Rate each of the following statements as to what you expected when you first began working at this school (initial expectation)and how you would rate it today (current experience).

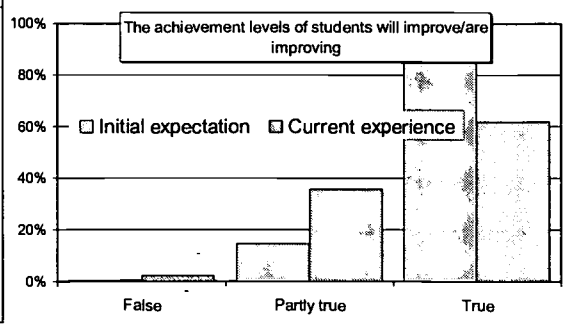
		Initial Expectation							Current Experience						
		False 1	Partly True 2	True 3	Mean	STD	Don't know	Mis-sing	False 1	Partly true 2	True 3	Mean	STD	Don't know	Mis-sing
f.	Students will have/have access to computers and other new technologies	2.6%	17.9%	79.6%	2.77	0.48	6	5	8.6%	31.7%	59.7%	2.51	0.65	1	6
g	The school will have/has effective leadership and admin-istration	0.7%	17.3%	82.0%	2.81	0.41	4	3	11.9%	34.3%	53.8%	2.42	0.70	2	6
h	The school will have/has small class sizes	4.1%	11.9%	84.0%	2.80	0.49	6	11	6.3%	27.3%	66.4%	2.60	0.61	0	14
I	School personnel will be/are accountable for the achievement/ performance of students	1.1%	21.1%	77.7%	2.77	0.45	16	4	5.3%	33.7%	61.0%	2.56	0.60	11	10
j	The achievement levels of students will improve/are improving	0.4%	14.6%	85.0%	2.85	0.37	15	3	2.2%	35.8%	61.9%	2.60	0.54	11	6





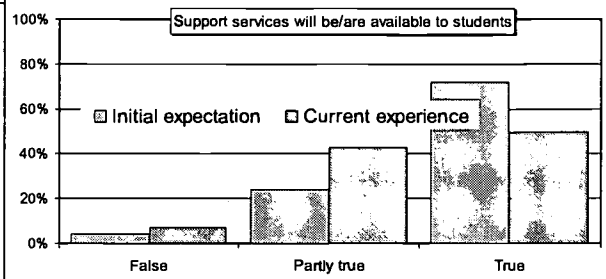


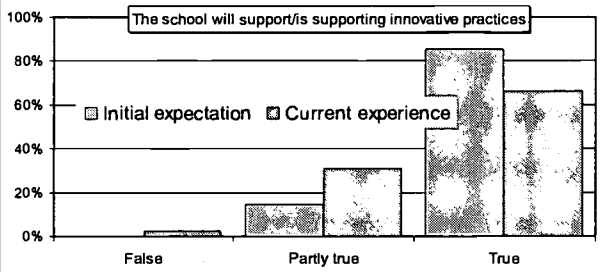


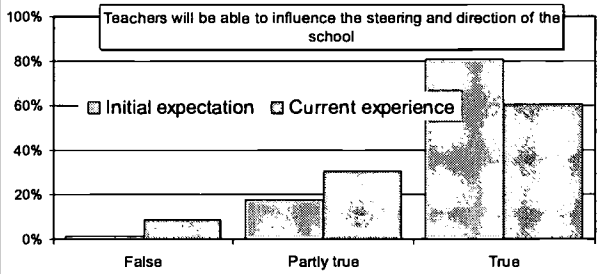


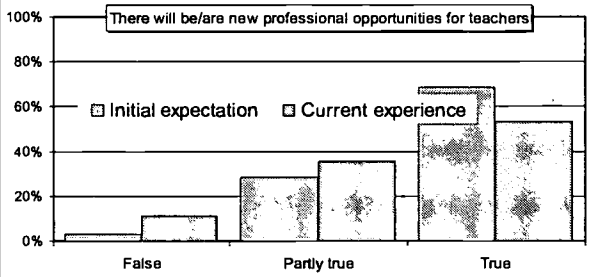
Rate each of the following statements as to what you expected when you first began working at this school (initial expectation)and how you would rate it today (current experience).

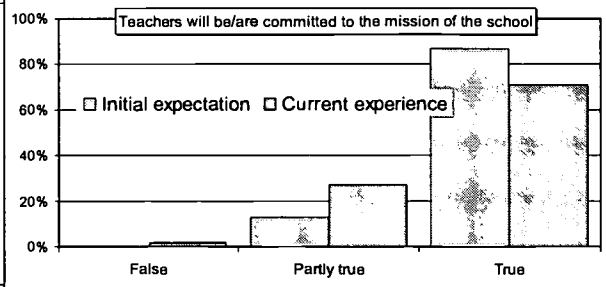
		Initial Expectation							Current Experience						
		False 1	Partly True 2	True 3	Mean	STD	Don't know	Mis-sing	False 1	Partly true 2	True 3	Mean	STD	Don't know	Mis-sing
k	Support services (i.e., counseling, health care, etc.) will be/are available to students	4.2%	23.9%	72.0%	2.68	0.55	17	4	7.3%	42.9%	49.8%	2.43	0.63	4	6
l	The school will support/is supporting innovative practices	0.0%	14.6%	85.4%	2.85	0.35	11	6	2.6%	31.1%	66.3%	2.64	0.53	11	7
m	Teachers will be able to influence the steering and direction of the school	1.5%	17.7%	80.8%	2.79	0.44	15	5	8.8%	30.5%	60.7%	2.52	0.65	7	6
n	There will be/are new professional opportunities for teachers	3.0%	28.4%	68.6%	2.66	0.53	42	7	11.3%	35.4%	53.3%	2.42	0.69	35	10
o	Teachers will be/are committed to the mission of the school	0.4%	12.9%	86.7%	2.86	0.35	8	6	1.8%	27.2%	71.0%	2.69	0.50	2	7
p	Teachers will be/are autonomous and creative in their classrooms	0.7%	16.7%	82.5%	2.82	0.41	10	6	1.5%	29.4%	69.1%	2.68	0.50	6	7

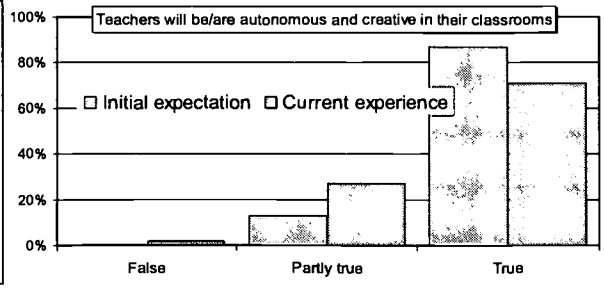






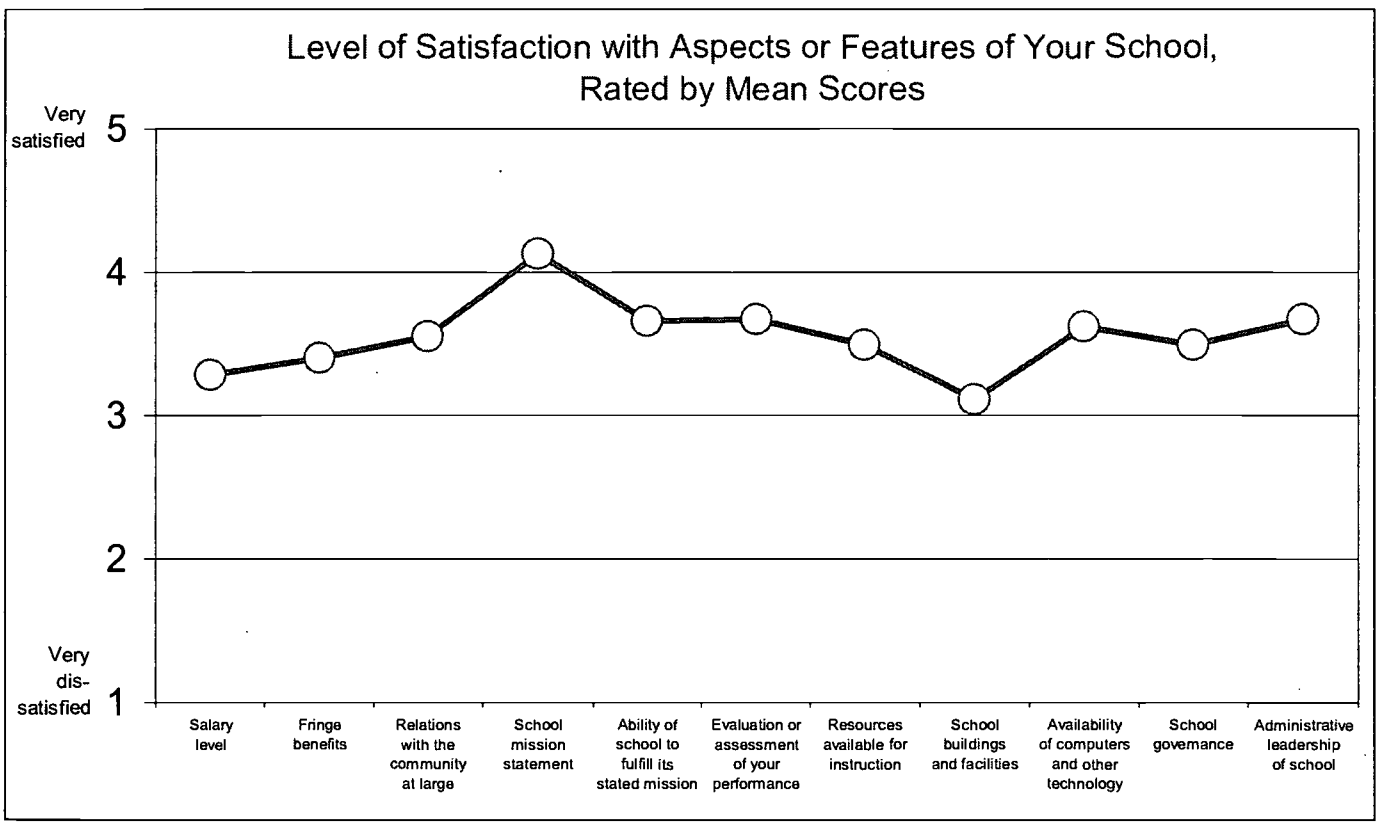






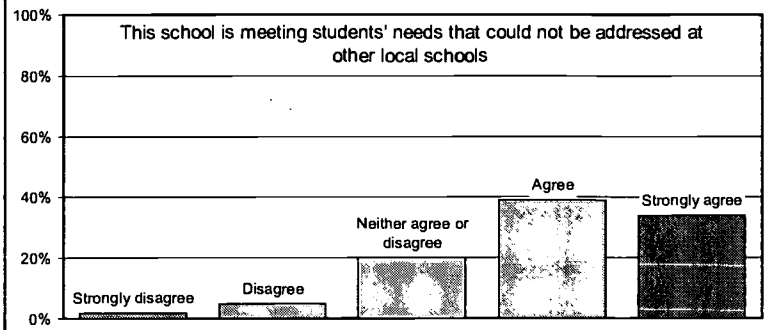
17. Rate your level of satisfaction with the following aspects or features of your school.

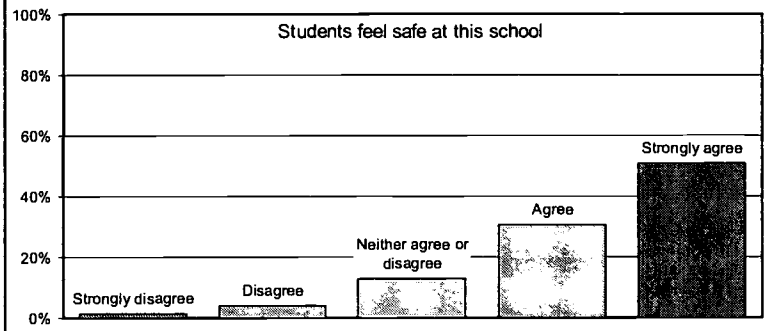
		Percentages										
		Not very satisfied 1	2	3	4	Very satisfied 5	Mean	STD	Median	N	Don't know	Missing
a.	Salary level	11.3%	12.4%	32.7%	24.4%	19.3%	3.28	1.23	3.00	275	6	4
b.	Fringe benefits	6.7%	15.3%	31.8%	24.3%	22.0%	3.40	1.18	3.00	255	23	7
c.	Relations with the community at large	2.3%	13.7%	32.1%	30.2%	21.8%	3.55	1.05	4.00	262	19	4
d.	School mission statement	1.1%	2.9%	17.2%	39.8%	39.1%	4.13	0.87	4.00	279	3	3
e.	Ability of the school to fulfill its stated mission	3.3%	11.0%	22.3%	43.2%	20.1%	3.66	1.02	4.00	273	6	6
f.	Evaluation or assessment of your performance	4.5%	9.9%	24.7%	35.8%	25.1%	3.67	1.09	4.00	243	35	7
g.	Resources available for instruction	4.1%	15.9%	28.1%	30.4%	21.5%	3.49	1.12	4.00	270	12	3
h.	School buildings and facilities	13.5%	20.6%	27.3%	18.8%	19.9%	3.11	1.31	3.00	282	1	2
i.	Availability of computers and other technology	7.4%	11.3%	22.7%	29.1%	29.4%	3.62	1.23	4.00	282	1	2
j.	School governance	8.2%	13.4%	23.4%	31.6%	23.4%	3.49	1.22	4.00	269	13	3
k	Administrative leadership of school	7.1%	11.8%	22.5%	23.9%	34.6%	3.67	1.26	4.00	280	2	3

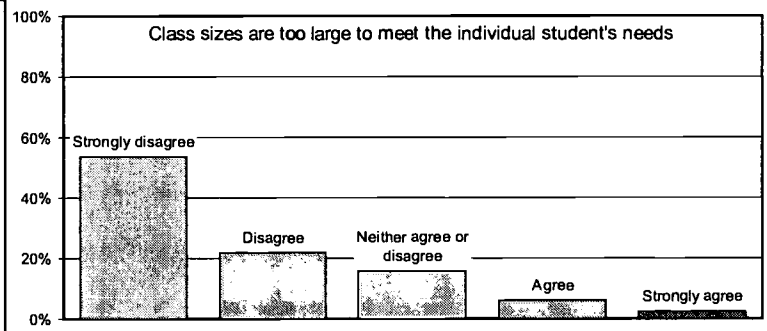


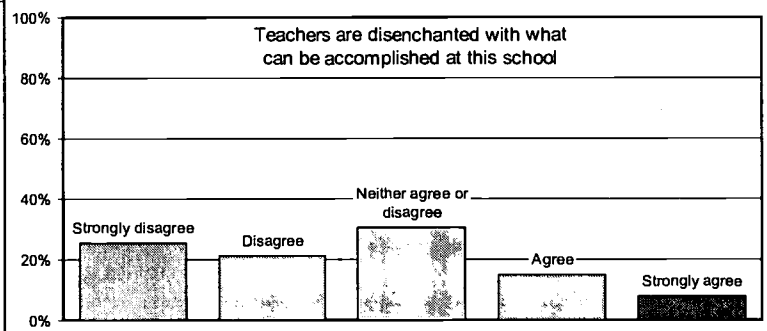
18. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your school?

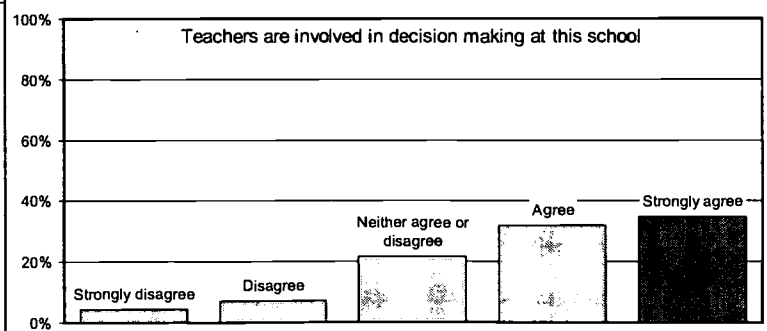
	Strongly disagree 1	2	3	4	Strongly agree 5	Mean	STD	N	Don't know	Mis-sing
This school is meeting students' needs that could not be addressed at other local schools	1.9%	4.9%	20.1%	39.0%	34.1%	3.98	0.96	264	16	5
Students feel safe at this school	1.4%	4.0%	13.0%	30.7%	50.9%	4.26	0.93	277	3	5
Class sizes are too large to meet the individual student's needs	53.6%	21.9%	15.8%	6.1%	2.5%	1.82	1.07	278	2	5
Teachers are disenchanted with what can be accomplished at this school	25.5%	21.2%	30.6%	14.9%	7.8%	2.58	1.24	255	22	8
Teachers are involved in decision making at this school	4.5%	7.1%	21.6%	32.0%	34.9%	3.86	1.11	269	9	7





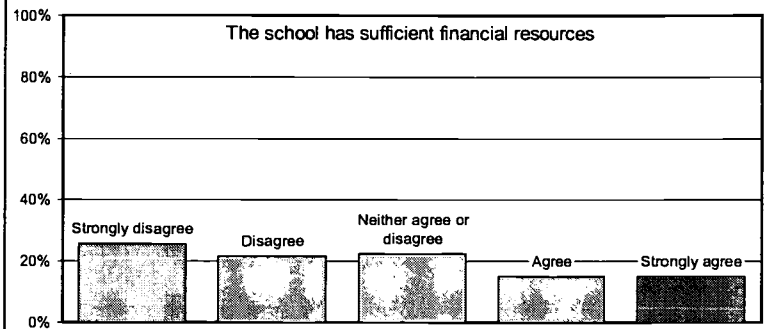


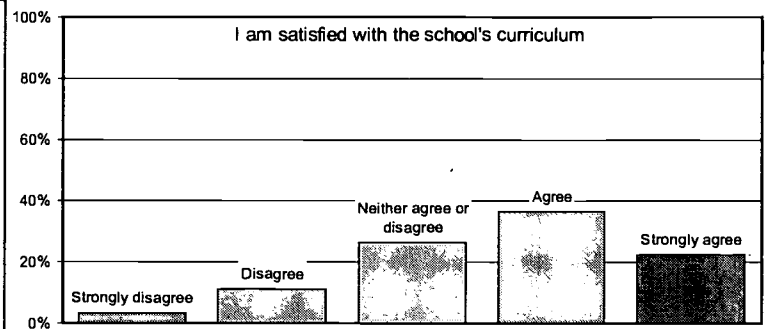


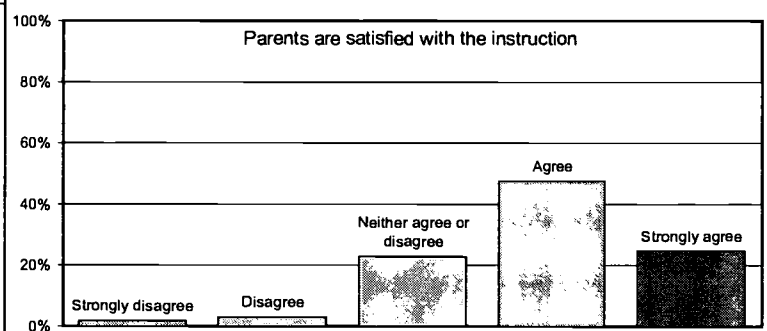


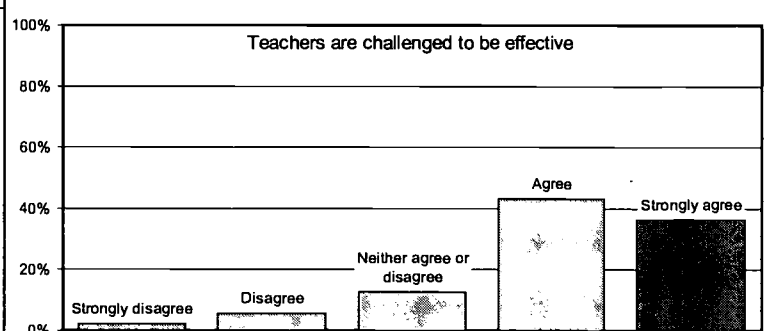
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

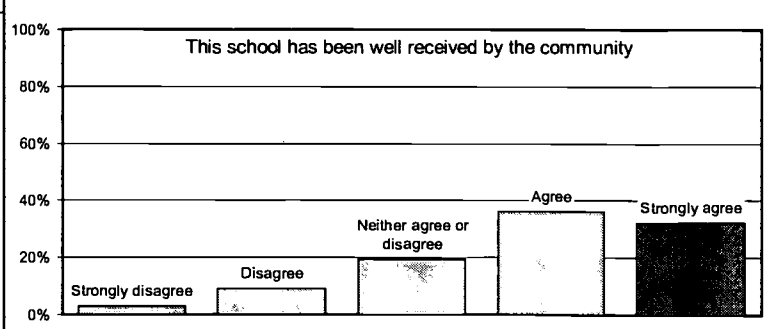
		Strongly disagree 1	2	3	4	Strongly agree 5	Mean	STD	N	Don't know	Mis-sing
f	The school has sufficient financial resources	25.7%	21.7%	22.5%	15.0%	15.0%	2.72	1.39	253	25	7
g	I am satisfied with the school's curriculum	3.4%	11.2%	26.5%	36.6%	22.4%	3.63	1.05	268	10	7
h	Parents are satisfied with the instruction	1.8%	3.1%	22.9%	47.5%	24.7%	3.90	0.87	223	54	8
i	Teachers are challenged to be effective	2.2%	5.6%	12.6%	43.1%	36.4%	4.06	0.96	269	10	6
j	This school has been well received by the community	3.0%	9.1%	19.4%	36.1%	32.3%	3.86	1.07	263	17	5





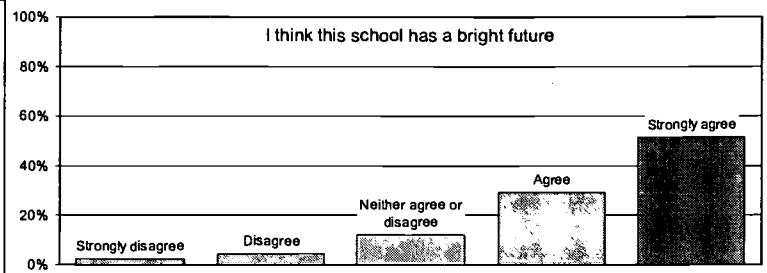


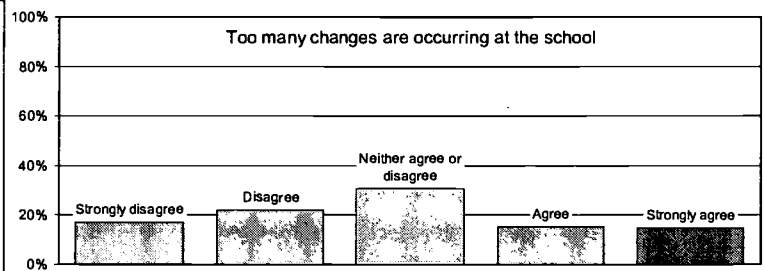


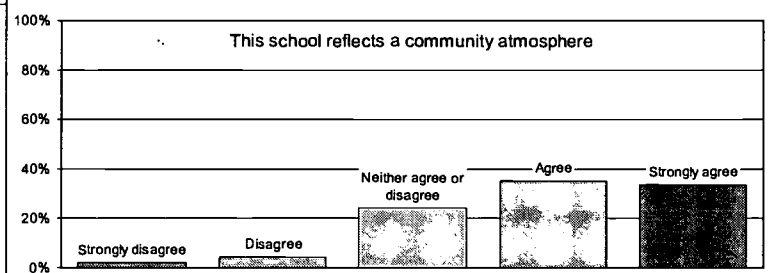


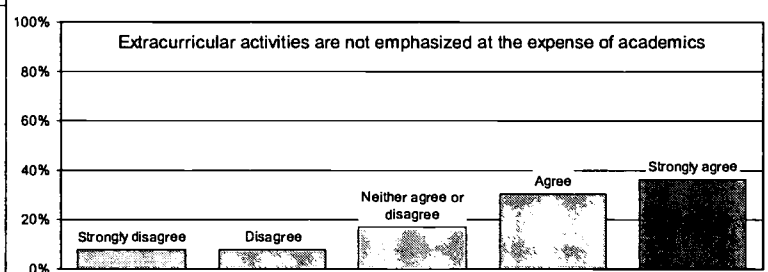
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

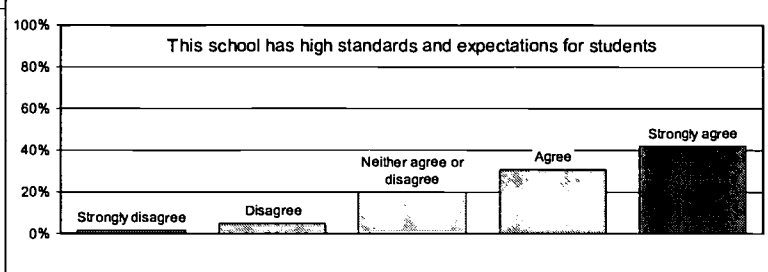
		Strongly disagree 1	2	3	4	Strongly agree 5	Mean	STD	N	Don't know	Mis-sing
k	I think this school has a bright future	2.6%	4.4%	12.2%	29.3%	51.5%	4.23	1.00	270	7	8
l	Too many changes are occurring at the school	17.0%	22.0%	30.7%	15.5%	14.8%	2.89	1.28	277	2	6
m	This school reflects a community atmosphere	2.2%	4.4%	24.4%	35.2%	33.7%	3.94	0.98	270	9	6
n	Extracurricular activities are not emphasized at the expense of academics	8.0%	8.0%	17.1%	30.4%	36.5%	3.79	1.24	263	13	9
o	This school has high standards and expectations for students	1.8%	5.1%	19.9%	31.0%	42.2%	4.07	0.99	277	0	8
p	This school has good physical facilities	20.4%	22.5%	22.2%	14.9%	20.0%	2.92	1.41	275	1	9

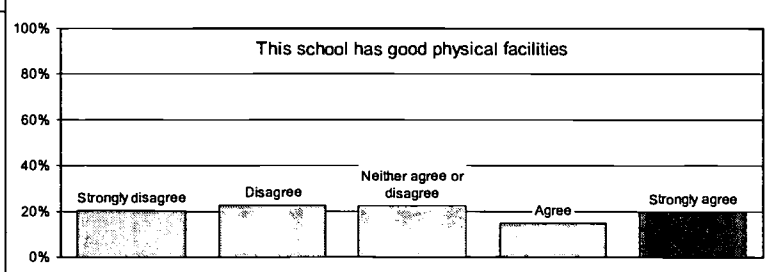






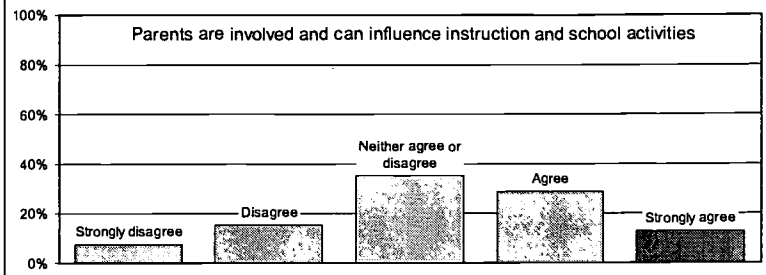


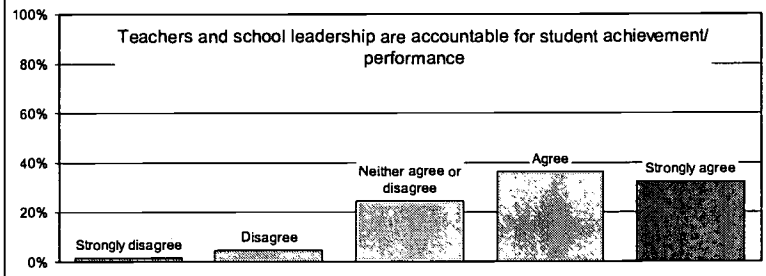


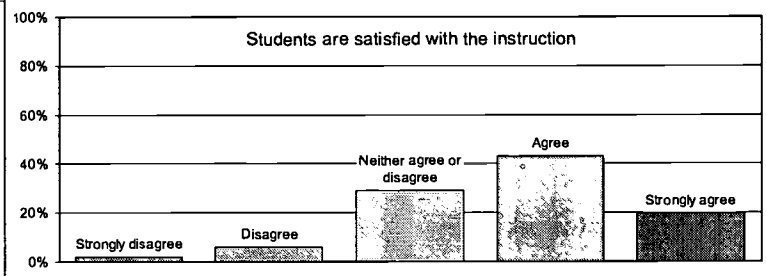


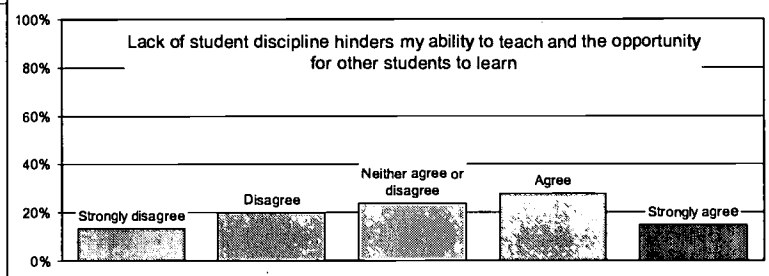
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

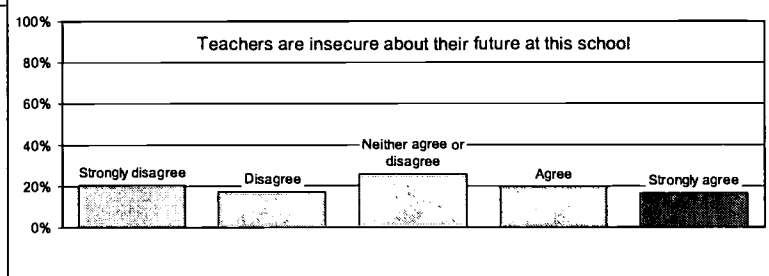
		Strongly disagree 1	2	3	4	Strongly agree 5	Mean	STD	N	Don't know	Mis-sing
q	Parents are involved and can influence instruction and school activities	7.6%	15.5%	35.2%	28.8%	12.9%	3.24	1.10	264	15	6
r	Teachers and school leadership are accountable for student achievement/ performance	1.8%	4.7%	24.5%	36.5%	32.5%	3.93	0.96	274	5	6
s	Students are satisfied with the instruction	2.0%	6.0%	29.0%	43.1%	19.8%	3.73	0.92	248	26	11
t	Lack of student discipline hinders my ability to teach and the opportunity for other students to learn	13.5%	19.7%	23.9%	27.8%	15.1%	3.11	1.27	259	15	11
u	Teachers are insecure about their future at this school	20.4%	17.4%	26.0%	19.6%	16.6%	2.94	1.36	235	42	8
v	Teachers have many noninstructional duties	10.5%	19.5%	25.3%	24.9%	19.8%	3.24	1.27	257	21	7

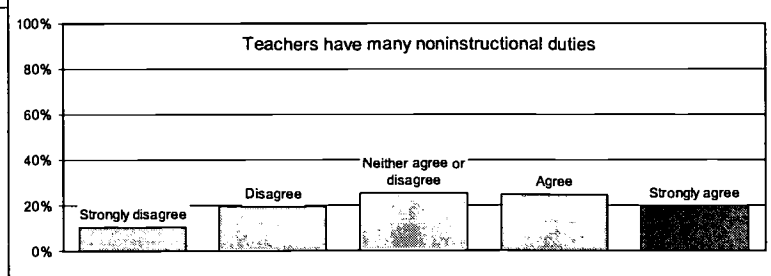












Appendix F

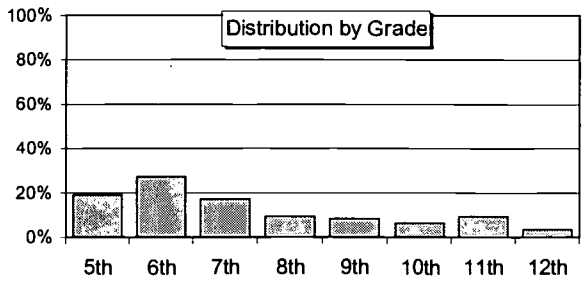
Survey Results for All Connecticut Students (Grades 5-12) 1999-2000

WMU Charter School Survey

Students (N=741) 1999-2000 Descriptive statistics

1. In what grade are you this year?

	Grade level									
	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	Total	Missing
N	141	201	127	69	62	46	69	26	741	0
%	19.0%	27.1%	17.1%	9.3%	8.4%	6.2%	9.3%	3.5%	100.0%	



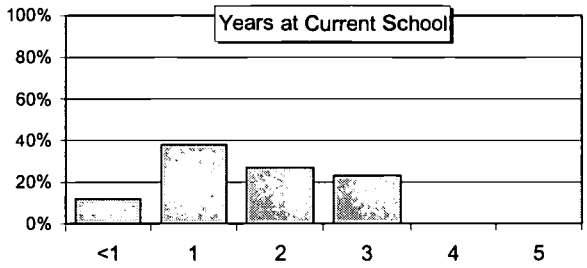
2. How old are you?

Mean	12.84
STD	2.34
Missing	1

	Years												
	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Total
N	1	99	165	152	82	62	48	57	45	22	3	4	740
%	0.1%	13.4%	22.3%	20.5%	11.1%	8.4%	6.5%	7.7%	6.1%	3.0%	0.4%	0.5%	100.0%

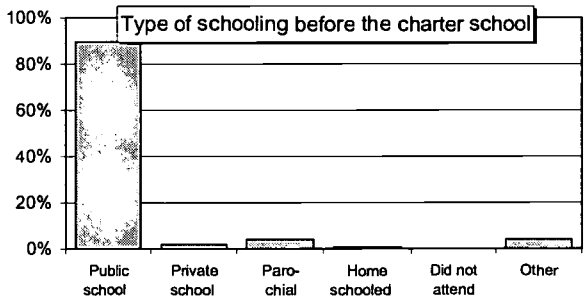
3. How many years, including this year, have you attended this school?

	Years at current school							
	<1	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Missing
N	88	282	200	171	0	0	741	0
%	11.9%	38.1%	27.0%	23.1%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	



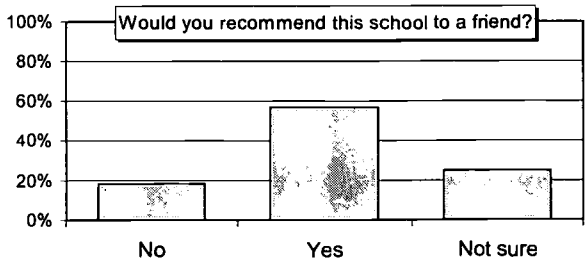
4. What kind of school did you attend before enrolling in this school?

	Public school	Private school	Paro-chial	Home schooled	Did not attend	Other	Total	Missing
N	656	14	29	5	0	29	733	8
%	89.5%	1.9%	4.0%	0.7%	0.0%	4.0%	100.0%	



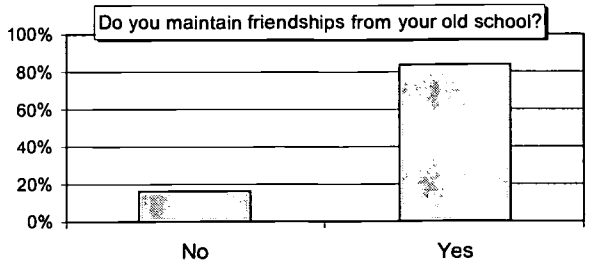
5. Would you recommend to a friend that he/she enroll in this school?

	No	Yes	Not sure	Total	Missing
N	135	416	182	733	8
%	18.4%	56.8%	24.8%	100.0%	



6. Do you maintain friendships with students from your old school?

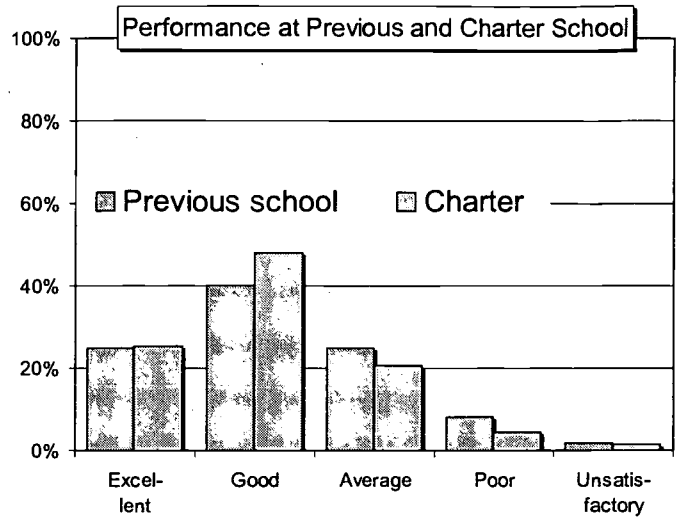
	No	Yes	Total	Missing
N	118	611	729	12
%	16.2%	83.8%	100.0%	



7. How did you do in your previous school? (Self-rated)

Mean	2.22
STD	0.97
Missing	1

	Excel-lent 1	Good 2	Average 3	Poor 4	Unsatis-factory 5	Total
N	184	297	185	61	13	740
%	24.9%	40.1%	25.0%	8.2%	1.8%	100.0%



8. How are you doing so far in this school? (Self-rated)

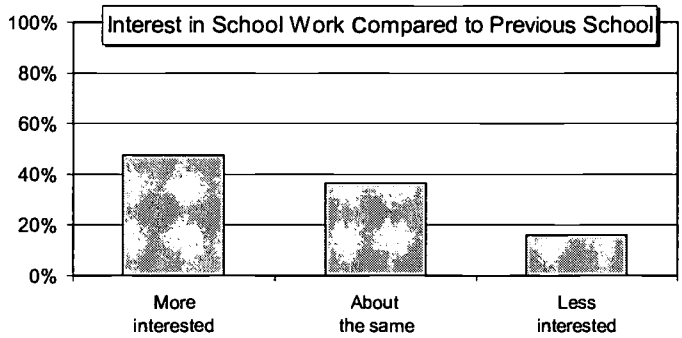
Mean	2.09
STD	0.88
Missing	10

	Excel-lent 1	Good 2	Average 3	Poor 4	Unsatis-factory 5	Total
N	185	351	151	33	11	731
%	25.3%	48.0%	20.7%	4.5%	1.5%	100.0%

9. Compared to your previous school, how interested are you in your school work?

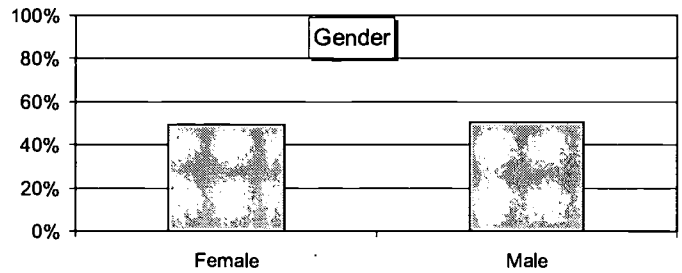
Mean	1.69
STD	0.73
Missing	23

	More interested 1	About the same 2	Less interested 3	Total
N	340	263	115	718
%	47.4%	36.6%	16.0%	100.0%



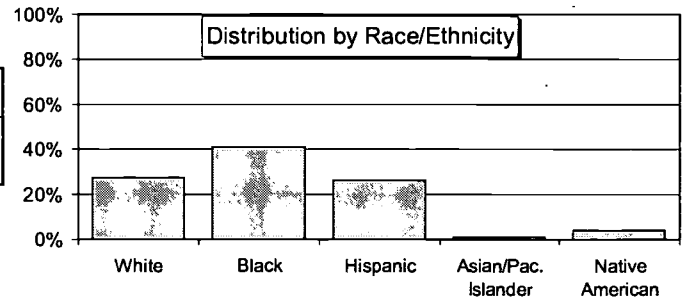
10. What is your gender?

	Female	Male	Total	Missing
N	350	359	709	32
%	49.4%	50.6%	100.0%	



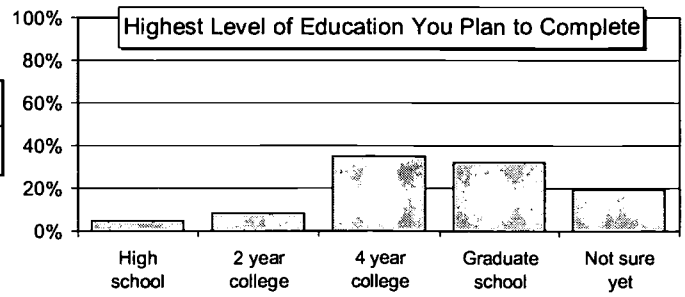
11. What is your race/ethnicity?

	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/Pac. Islander	Native American	Total	Missing
N	199	297	190	8	29	723	18
%	27.5%	41.1%	26.3%	1.1%	4.0%	100.0%	



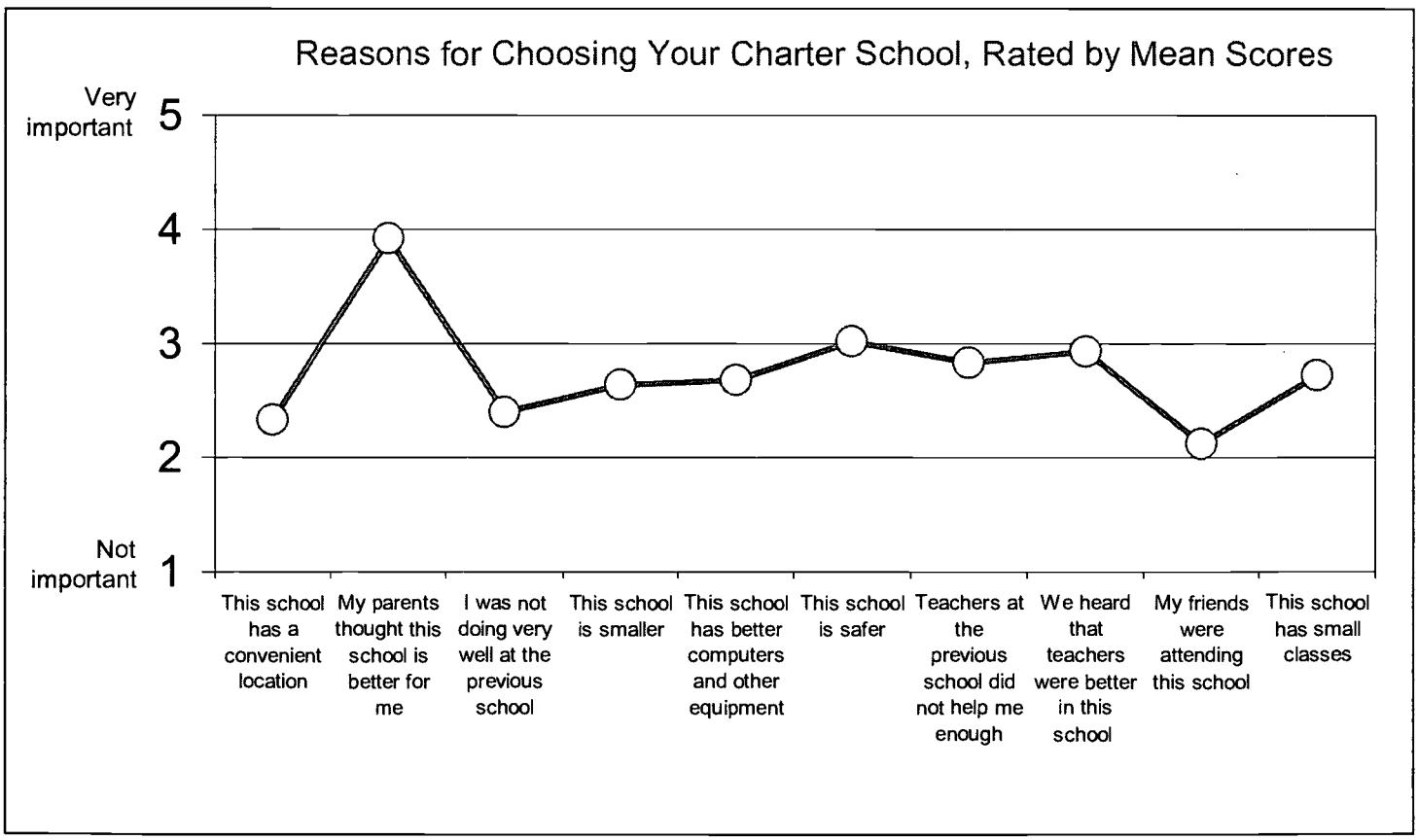
12. Highest level of education you plan to complete?

	High school	2 year college	4 year college	Graduate school	Not sure yet	Total	Missing
N	35	62	259	237	144	737	4
%	4.7%	8.4%	35.1%	32.2%	19.5%	100.0%	



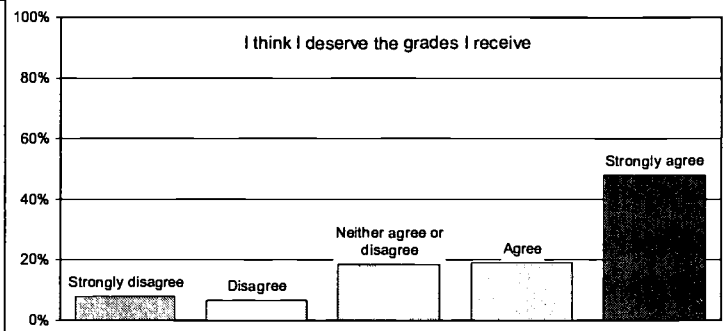
Why did you and your family choose this school?

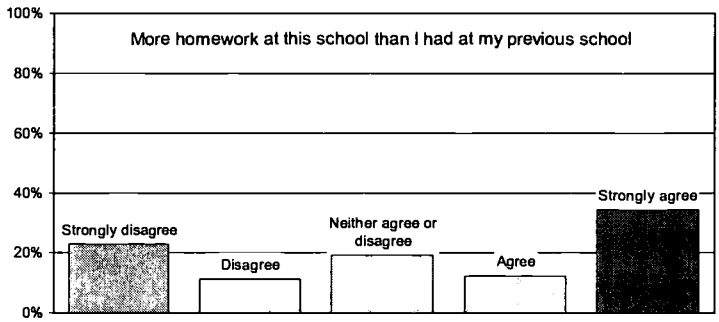
	Percentages: Not important 1	2	3	4	Very important 5	Mean	STD	Median	N	Missing
This school has a convenient location	44.0%	12.6%	20.9%	10.8%	11.7%	2.33	1.42	2	738	3
My parents thought this school is better for me	9.4%	6.5%	15.2%	20.7%	48.2%	3.92	1.32	4	735	6
I was not doing very well at the previous school	44.5%	11.7%	17.7%	11.2%	14.9%	2.40	1.50	2	733	8
This school is smaller	41.1%	9.9%	15.1%	11.8%	22.0%	2.64	1.62	2	735	6
This school has better computers and other equipment	37.7%	12.3%	15.5%	12.9%	21.5%	2.68	1.59	3	734	7
This school is safer	25.6%	12.2%	22.8%	13.1%	26.3%	3.02	1.53	3	731	10
Teachers at the previous school did not help me enough	35.1%	9.8%	16.7%	13.6%	24.9%	2.83	1.61	3	736	5
We heard that teachers were better in this school	29.8%	11.0%	20.0%	14.7%	24.5%	2.93	1.56	3	735	6
My friends were attending this school	54.3%	10.9%	14.3%	9.4%	11.1%	2.12	1.43	1	736	5
This school has small classes	37.7%	10.0%	17.3%	12.4%	22.6%	2.72	1.60	3	740	1

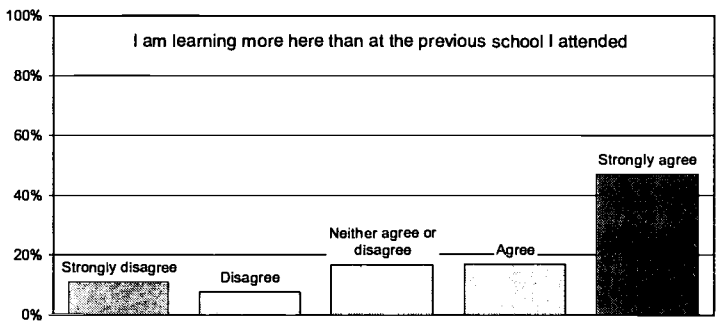


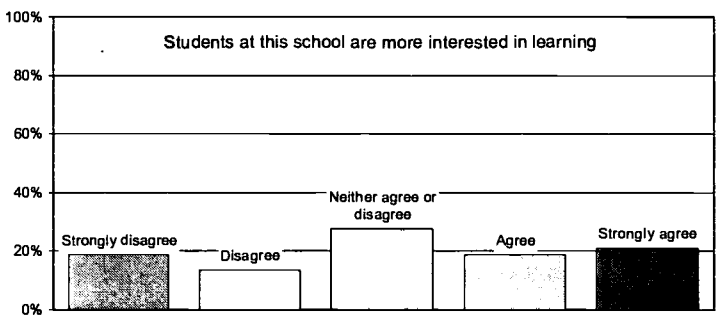
16. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

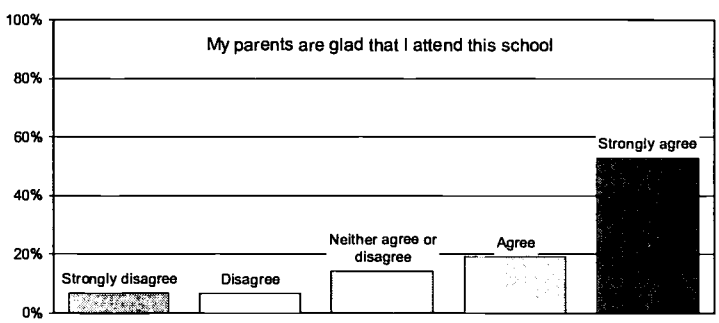
	Strongly disagree 1	2	3	4	Strongly agree 5	Mean	STD	Median	N	Don't know	Missing
I think I deserve the grades I receive	7.9%	6.6%	18.4%	19.1%	48.1%	3.93	1.28	4	686	55	0
I have more homework at this school than I had at my previous school	22.9%	11.2%	19.3%	12.2%	34.4%	3.24	1.57	3	715	24	2
I think that I am learning more here than at the previous school I attended	11.1%	7.8%	16.9%	17.1%	47.1%	3.81	1.39	4	709	30	2
Students at this school are more interested in learning than they were at my last school	18.9%	13.5%	27.6%	18.9%	21.1%	3.10	1.38	3	645	90	6
My parents are glad that I attend this school	6.9%	6.7%	14.3%	19.2%	52.9%	4.05	1.25	5	686	50	5





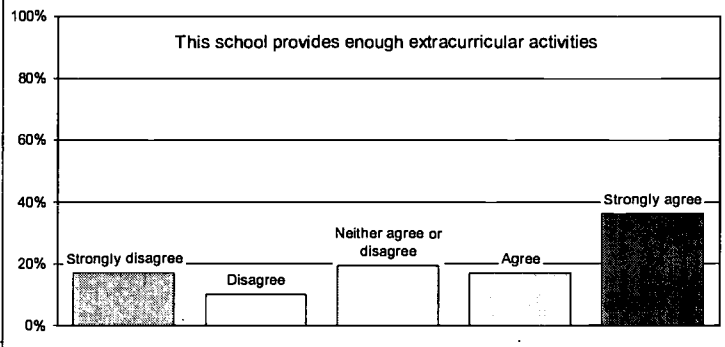


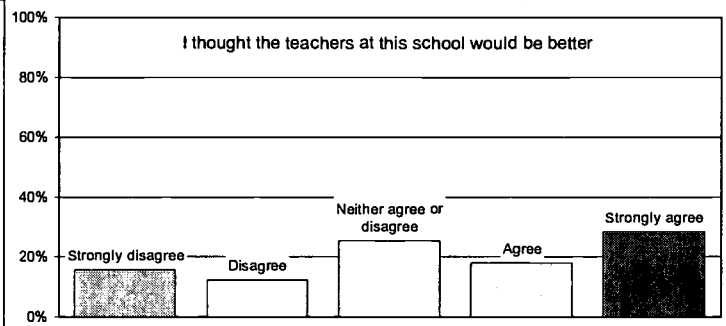


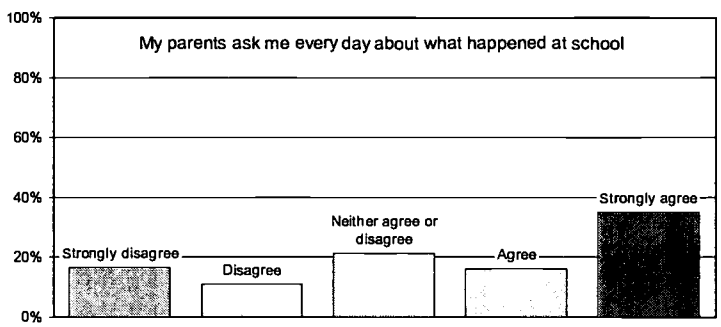


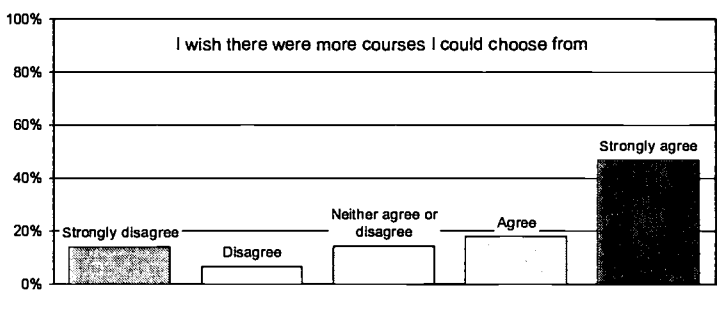
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

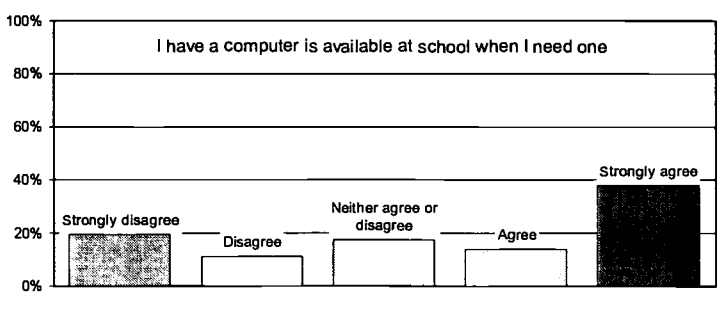
	Strongly disagree 1	2	3	4	Strongly agree 5	Mean	STD	Median	N	Don't know	Mis-sing
This school provides enough extracurricular activities for me	17.0%	10.1%	19.4%	17.1%	36.4%	3.46	1.48	4	701	29	11
I thought the teachers at this school would be better	15.8%	12.2%	25.4%	18.1%	28.5%	3.31	1.41	3	657	70	14
My parents ask me every day about what happened at school	16.5%	11.1%	21.4%	16.1%	35.0%	3.42	1.47	4	721	9	11
I wish there were more courses I could choose from	14.2%	6.7%	14.3%	18.0%	46.8%	3.76	1.45	4	712	23	6
I have a computer is available at school when I need one	19.5%	11.1%	17.4%	14.0%	38.0%	3.40	1.55	4	713	18	10





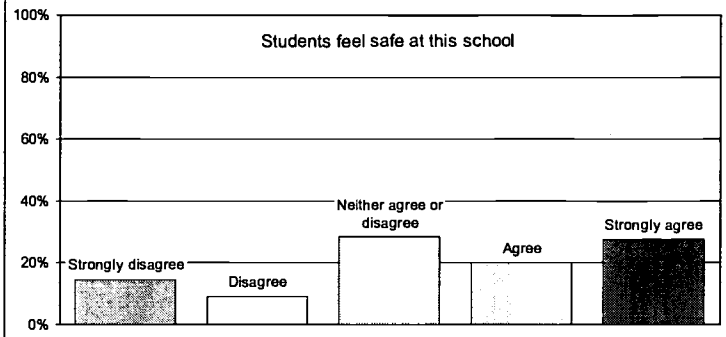


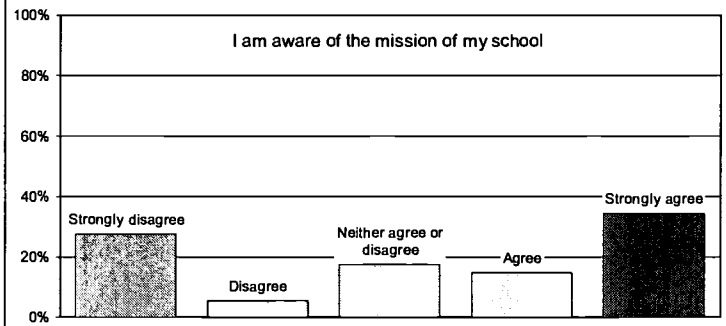


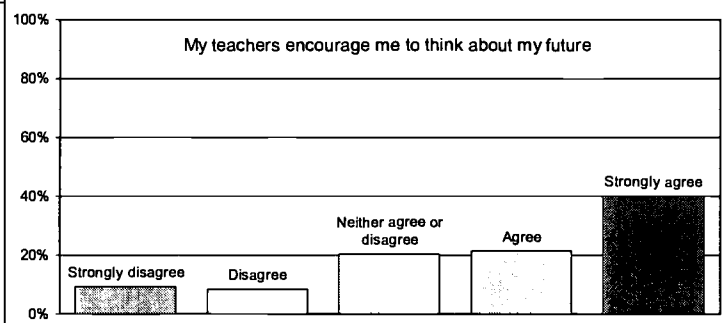


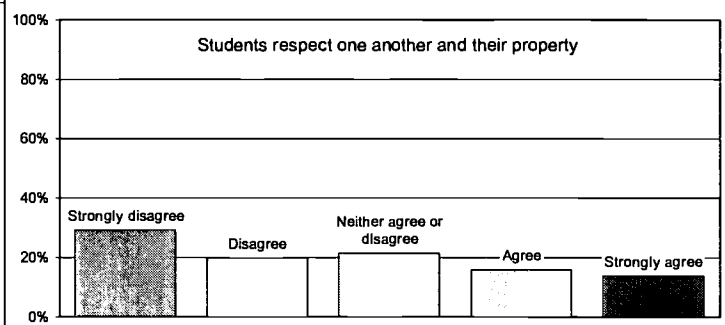
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

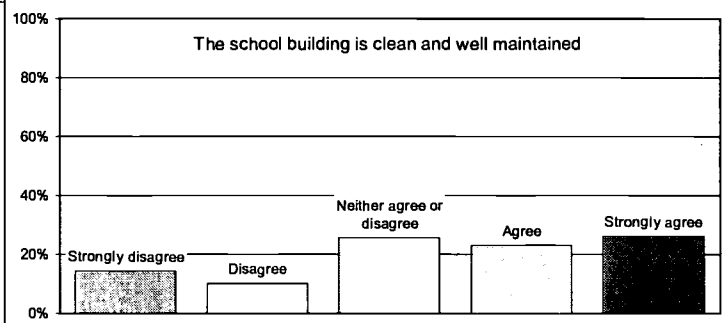
	Strongly disagree 1	2	3	4	Strongly agree 5	Mean	STD	Median	N	Don't know	Mis-sing
Students feel safe at this school	14.8%	9.1%	28.4%	20.1%	27.7%	3.37	1.36	3	603	123	15
I am aware of the mission of my school	27.7%	5.4%	17.4%	14.8%	34.6%	3.23	1.63	3	667	64	10
My teachers encourage me to think about my future	9.4%	8.5%	20.5%	21.4%	40.2%	3.74	1.32	4	709	27	5
Students respect one another and their property	29.3%	19.8%	21.4%	15.8%	13.8%	2.65	1.40	4	711	29	1
The school building is clean and well maintained	14.4%	10.3%	25.7%	23.2%	26.3%	3.37	1.35	4	727	10	4





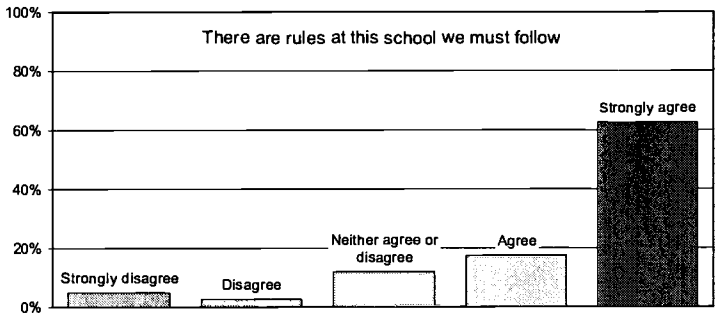


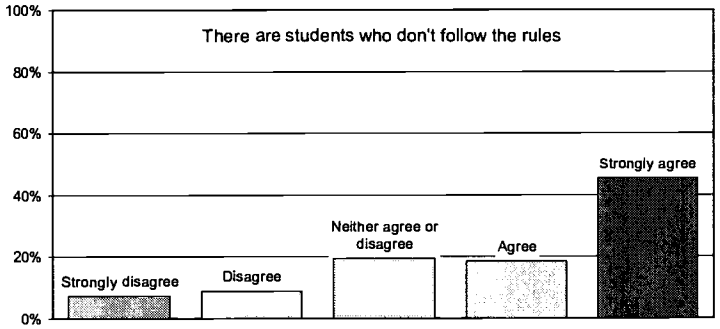


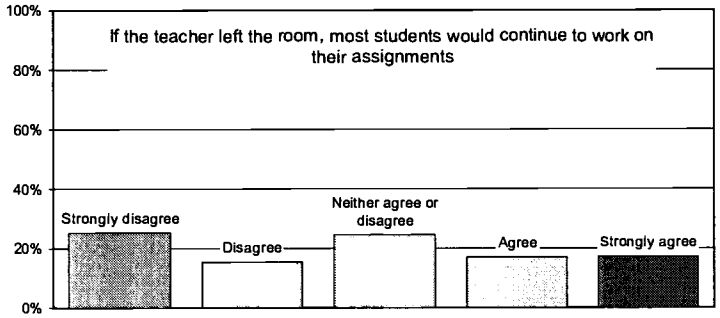


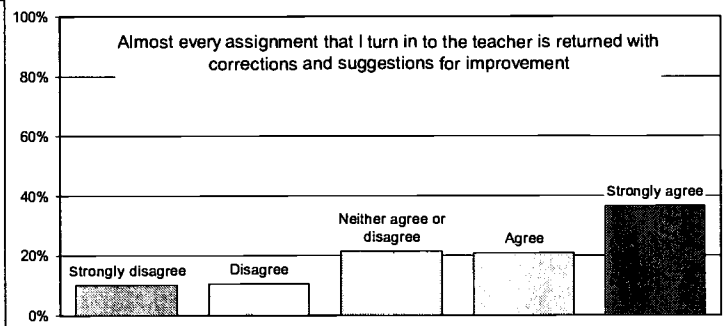
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

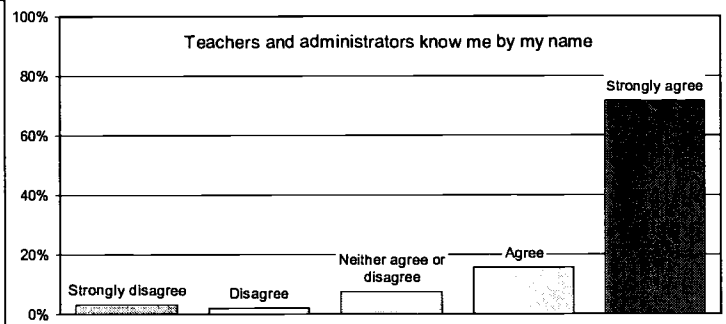
	Strongly disagree 1	2	3	4	Strongly agree 5	Mean	STD	Median	N	Don't know	Mis-sing
There are rules at this school we must follow	5.1%	2.8%	11.8%	17.5%	62.8%	4.30	1.11	5	726	8	7
There are students who don't follow the rules	7.4%	9.0%	19.4%	18.7%	45.6%	3.86	1.29	4	713	18	10
If the teacher left the room, most students would continue to work on their assignments	25.4%	15.5%	24.5%	17.2%	17.4%	2.86	1.42	3	723	14	4
Almost every assignment that I turn in to the teacher is returned with corrections and suggestions for improvement	10.3%	10.6%	21.6%	20.8%	36.6%	3.63	1.34	4	716	20	5
Teachers and administrators at this school know me by my name.	3.2%	2.1%	7.5%	15.6%	71.7%	4.51	0.95	5	724	13	4





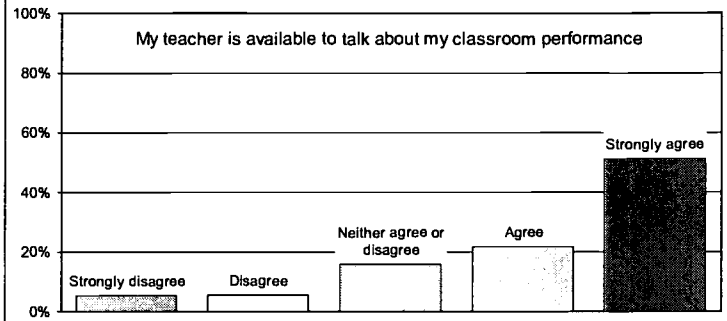


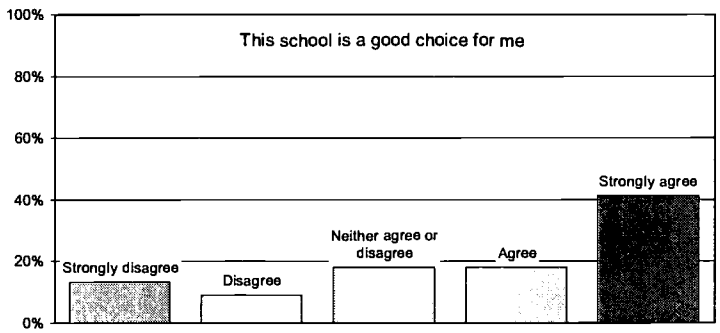


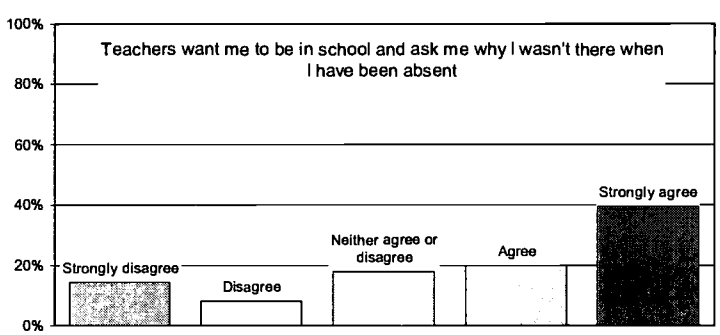


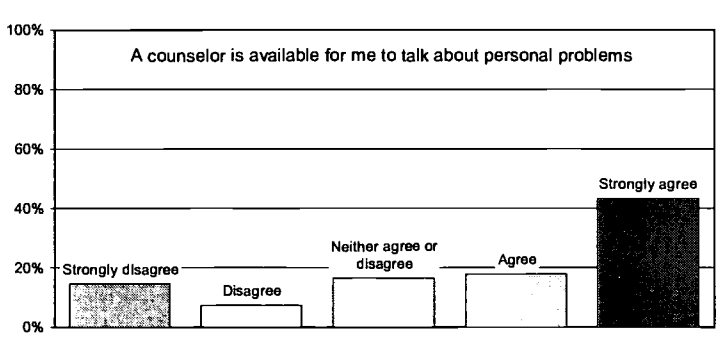
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

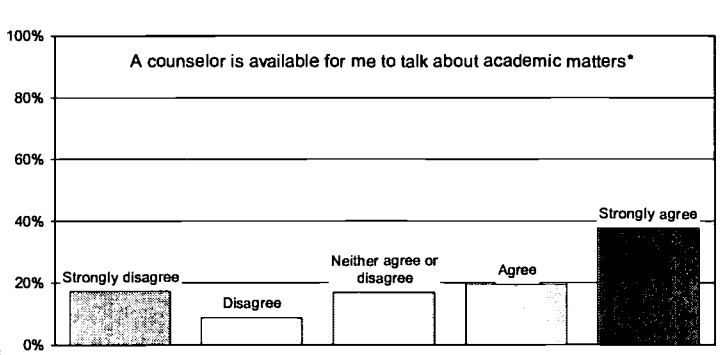
	Strongly disagree 1	2	3	4	Strongly agree 5	Mean	STD	Median	N	Don't know	Mis-sing
My teacher is available to talk about my classroom performance, (i.e., course work, homework, grades, etc.)	5.3%	5.6%	15.9%	21.8%	51.4%	4.08	1.17	5	697	37	7
This school is a good choice for me	13.4%	9.2%	18.0%	18.0%	41.4%	3.65	1.43	4	695	38	8
Teachers want me to be in school and ask me why I wasn't there when I have been absent	14.5%	8.1%	17.9%	19.9%	39.5%	3.62	1.44	4	688	43	10
A counselor is available for me to talk about personal problems	14.7%	7.5%	16.5%	18.0%	43.3%	3.68	1.46	4	388	33	320
A counselor is available for me to talk about academic matters*	17.3%	8.8%	16.8%	19.4%	37.8%	3.52	1.49	4	376	40	325











* The last two items were only to be answered by those middle and high school students who have access to counselors

Appendix G

Survey Results for All Connecticut Parents, 1999-00 (N=230)

WMU Charter School Survey

Parents (N=230) 1999-2000 Descriptive statistics

1. In what grades do you have children enrolled in this charter school?

	Grade level													
	K	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	Total
First child	14	18	15	16	8	22	37	23	23	18	15	11	7	227
Second child	12	5	4	6	6	8	11	4	1	1	3	0	1	62
Third child	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total number	26	23	19	22	14	30	48	27	24	19	18	11	8	289
Total percent	9.0%	8.0%	6.6%	7.6%	4.8%	10.4%	16.6%	9.3%	8.3%	6.6%	6.2%	3.8%	2.8%	100%

2. If you have other children attending another K-12 school, in what type of school(s) are they enrolled

	Public school	Private school	Parochial school	Home-schooled	Another charter	Other	Total	Missing
N	88	3	5	1	5	20	122	108
%	72.1%	2.5%	4.1%	0.8%	4.1%	16.4%	100%	

3. Approximately how many miles do you live from this charter school?

Mean	4.78
STD	3.28
Missing	9

	Miles											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	>10	Total
N	33	36	32	25	22	15	9	11	2	9	27	221
%	14.9%	16.3%	14.5%	11.3%	10.0%	6.8%	4.1%	5.0%	0.9%	4.1%	12.2%	100%

4. Approximately how many miles do you live from the nearest traditional public school where your child could be enrolled?

Mean	2.18
STD	2.01
Missing	13

	Miles											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	>10	Total
N	121	47	14	9	9	4	3	5	3	0	2	217
%	55.8%	21.7%	6.5%	4.1%	4.1%	1.8%	1.4%	2.3%	1.4%	0.0%	0.9%	100%

5. What is your gender?

	Female	Male	Total	Missing
N	190	33	223	7
%	85.2%	14.8%	100%	

6. Which best describes your household?

	Two parents/ guardians	Single parent/ guardian	Other	Total	Missing
N	137	89	2	228	2
%	60.1%	39.0%	0.9%	100%	

7. What is the estimated annual income of your household/family?

	Less than $10,000	$10,000-$19,999	$20,000-$29,999	$30,000-$39,999	$40,000-$59,999	$60,000-$99,999	$100,000 or more	Total	Missing
N	14	31	44	32	46	39	14	220	10
%	6.4%	14.1%	20.0%	14.5%	20.9%	17.7%	6.4%	100%	

8a. Are you aware of the school's mission?

	No	Yes	Total	Missing
N	21	207	228	2
%	9.2%	90.8%	100%	

8b. If yes, to what extent is the mission being followed by the school?

	Not very well	Fair	Well	Very well	Total	Missing
	1	2	3	4		
N	6	33	97	73	209	21
%	2.9%	15.8%	46.4%	34.9%	100%	

9. Do you have concerns about your child's safety in this school?

	No	Yes	Total	Missing
N	192	35	227	3
%	84.6%	15.4%	100%	

10a. Estimate the total number of hours that you and other adults in your household have served as a volunteer at the school during an average month?

	0 hours	1-3 hours	4-6 hours	7-9 hours	10-12 hours	More than 12 hours	Total	Missing
N	105	71	20	9	4	12	221	9
%	47.5%	32.1%	9.0%	4.1%	1.8%	5.4%	100%	

10b. Is voluntary work required by the school? attending this charter school?

	No	Yes	Total	Missing
N	108	74	182	48
%	59.3%	40.7%	100%	

11. What is your race/ethnicity?

	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/Pac. Islander	Native American	Total	Missing
N	93	92	36	2	2	225	5
%	41.3%	40.9%	16.0%	0.9%	0.9%	100%	

12. How much formal education have you had?

	Did not complete high school	Completed high school	Less than 4 years of college	College graduate BA/BS	Graduate courses, no degree	Graduate/ professional degree	Total	Missing
N	20	45	86	25	20	32	228	2
%	8.8%	19.7%	37.7%	11.0%	8.8%	14.0%	100%	

13. What kind of school did your child previously attend before this charter school?

	Public school	Private school	Parochial school	Home-schooled	Another charter	Other	Total	Missing
N	168	9	7	5	9	23	221	9
%	76.0%	4.1%	3.2%	2.3%	4.1%	10.4%	100%	

14. Rate the importance of the following factors in your decision to enroll your child in this school.

	Percentages Not important 1	2	3	4	Very important 5	Mean	STD	Median	N	Missing
a. Convenient location	32.6%	18.1%	17.2%	8.8%	23.3%	2.72	1.56	2	230	3
b. My interest in an educational reform effort	7.2%	7.6%	19.7%	24.2%	41.3%	3.85	1.24	4	230	7
c. Promises made by charter school's spokespersons	3.2%	5.9%	12.2%	24.8%	54.1%	4.21	1.07	5	230	8
d. Academic reputation (high standards) of this school	1.8%	2.3%	12.6%	21.6%	61.7%	4.39	0.92	5	230	8
e. Safety for my child	5.8%	4.0%	9.7%	10.6%	69.9%	4.35	1.17	5	230	4
f. I prefer the emphasis and educational philosophy of this school	2.7%	1.3%	9.8%	23.7%	62.5%	4.42	0.92	5	230	6
g. My child has special needs that were not met at previous school	36.9%	6.9%	13.8%	9.7%	32.7%	2.94	1.72	3	230	13
h. Good teachers and high quality of instruction	1.8%	0.0%	4.9%	19.2%	74.1%	4.64	0.74	5	230	6
i. I prefer a private school but could not afford it	37.7%	7.6%	17.0%	12.6%	25.1%	2.80	1.64	3	230	7
j. My child wanted to attend this school	11.3%	5.0%	21.7%	19.5%	42.5%	3.77	1.35	4	230	9
k. My child was performing poorly at previous school	44.2%	6.0%	15.8%	13.0%	20.9%	2.60	1.63	2	230	15
l. I was unhappy with the curriculum & instruction at previous school	25.5%	9.3%	17.1%	13.4%	34.7%	3.23	1.61	3	230	14
m. Recommendations of teacher/official at my child's previous school	42.8%	10.7%	11.2%	12.1%	23.3%	2.62	1.66	2	230	15

15. Rate each of the following statements as to what you expected when you first began working at this school (initial expectation) and how you would rate it today (current experience).

	Initial Expectation							Current Experience						
	False	Partly true	True	Mean	STD	Don't know	Missing	False	Partly true	True	Mean	STD	Don't know	Mis-sing
a. My child will be/*is* motivated to learn	0.9%	11.7%	87.4%	2.87	0.37	4	3	3.2%	18.1%	78.7%	2.75	0.50	1	13
b. The quality of instruction will be/*is* high	0.9%	11.7%	87.4%	2.86	0.37	9	7	4.8%	23.3%	71.9%	2.67	0.56	5	15
c. My child will receive/*receives* sufficient individual attention	1.8%	15.5%	82.6%	2.81	0.44	5	6	9.1%	24.9%	66.0%	2.57	0.66	6	15
d. I will be/*am* able to influence the direction and activities in the school	7.1%	36.4%	56.6%	2.49	0.63	25	7	18.4%	35.7%	45.9%	2.28	0.75	19	15
e. There will be/*is* good communication between the school and my household	2.3%	11.5%	86.2%	2.84	0.43	7	6	10.3%	15.4%	74.3%	2.64	0.66	3	13
f. My child will have/*has* access to computers and other new technologies	4.3%	14.4%	81.3%	2.77	0.52	15	7	7.0%	20.7%	72.3%	2.65	0.61	3	14
g. The school will have/*has* effective leadership and administration	0.9%	12.3%	86.8%	2.86	0.38	11	7	7.6%	22.7%	69.7%	2.62	0.62	6	13
h. The school will have/*has* small class sizes	4.3%	12.4%	83.3%	2.79	0.50	11	9	11.0%	18.6%	70.5%	2.60	0.68	5	15
i. School personnel will be/*are* accountable for my child's achievement/performance	4.4%	24.9%	70.7%	2.66	0.56	18	7	11.5%	31.5%	57.0%	2.46	0.69	15	15
j. My child's achievement levels of students will improve/*is* improving	1.5%	15.5%	83.0%	2.82	0.42	11	13	7.2%	21.5%	71.3%	2.64	0.61	4	17
k. Support services (i.e., counseling, health care, etc.) will be/*are* available to my child	6.5%	22.9%	70.6%	2.64	0.60	21	8	10.4%	24.9%	64.7%	2.54	0.68	14	15
l. The school will support/*is supporting* innovative practices	1.0%	15.6%	83.3%	2.82	0.41	30	8	3.1%	23.6%	73.3%	2.70	0.52	23	16
m. I will be/*am* able to influence instruction and school activities	7.8%	38.5%	53.6%	2.46	0.64	37	14	14.7%	38.6%	46.7%	2.32	0.72	26	20

16. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your child's school?

	Percentages										
	Strongly disagree 1	2	3	4	Strongly agree 5	Mean	STD	edian	N	Don't know	Mis-sing
a. This school is meeting students' needs that could not be addressed at other local schools	8.0%	7.1%	23.1%	16.0%	45.8%	3.84	1.30	4	212	17	1
b. Students feel safe at this school	1.4%	1.9%	11.7%	24.3%	60.7%	4.41	0.87	5	214	12	4
c. This school has sufficient financial resources	31.8%	20.1%	23.5%	11.2%	13.4%	2.54	1.39	2	179	43	8
d. I am satisfied with the school's curriculum	4.0%	5.8%	19.9%	24.8%	45.6%	4.02	1.12	4	226	2	2
e. I am satisfied with the instruction offered	3.2%	7.2%	17.6%	25.7%	46.4%	4.05	1.10	4	222	5	3
f. This school has been well received by the community	5.3%	7.3%	20.4%	28.6%	38.3%	3.87	1.16	4	206	20	4
g. I think this school has a bright future	3.6%	4.0%	11.7%	14.8%	65.9%	4.35	1.07	5	223	5	2
h. Too many changes are occurring at the school	29.2%	21.1%	25.4%	6.2%	18.2%	2.63	1.43	2	209	16	5
i. This school reflects a community atmosphere	2.8%	3.8%	18.5%	23.2%	51.7%	4.17	1.04	5	211	11	8
j. Extracurricular activities are not emphasized at the expense of academics	12.0%	3.1%	21.9%	18.2%	44.8%	3.81	1.36	4	192	34	4
k. This school has high standards and expectation for students	4.9%	4.9%	12.4%	14.6%	63.3%	4.27	1.15	5	226	3	1
l. This school has small class sizes	3.6%	9.0%	16.2%	14.0%	57.2%	4.12	1.19	5	222	3	5
m. This school has good physical facilities	17.0%	16.1%	23.3%	18.4%	25.1%	3.18	1.42	3	223	4	3
n. This school has good administrative leadership	6.3%	3.6%	13.9%	23.3%	52.9%	4.13	1.17	5	223	4	3
o. Teachers and school leadership are accountable for student achievement/performance	5.6%	5.6%	18.3%	23.9%	46.5%	4.00	1.18	4	213	13	4

Appendix H: Comparison of Characteristics of Charter School Students with Host Districts

Charter School	Host District	Total Enrollment		Percent Students Qualifying for Free or Reduced Lunch		Percent Students That Are Bilingual or Limited English Proficiency	
		Charter School	Host District	Charter School	Host District	Charter School	Host District
Amistad Academy	NEW HAVEN SCHOOL DISTRICT	85	19,287	84.0	56.3	5.0	8.1
Ancestors Community Charter	WATERBURY SCHOOL DISTRICT	44	15,782	25.0	61.4	0.0	7.3
Breakthrough Charter School	HARTFORD SCHOOL DISTRICT	152	22,533	86.0	65.3	14.0	14.6
Brooklawn Academy	BRIDGEPORT SCHOOL DISTRICT	70	22,310	37.0	84.0	nd	9.1
Charter Oak Preparatory Academy	NEW BRITAIN SCHOOL DISTRICT	98	10,206	nd	58.0	13.3	10.1
Common Ground High School	NEW HAVEN SCHOOL DISTRICT	88	19,287	80.7	56.3	0.0	8.1
Explorations	GILBERT SCHOOL	55	527	15.0	13.1	nd	0.0
Highville Charter School	NEW HAVEN SCHOOL DISTRICT	216	19,287	69.0	56.3	4.0	8.1
Integrated Day Charter	NORWICH SCHOOL DISTRICT	240	2,184	17.5	43.7	0.0	0.0
Interdistrict School (ISAAC)	NEW LONDON SCHOOL DISTRICT	114	3,155	27.0	60.6	0.0	7.9
Jumoke Academy	HARTFORD SCHOOL DISTRICT	189	22,533	100.0	65.3	0.0	14.6
Odyssey Community School	MANCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT	105	7,703	0.0	25.6	0.0	0.0
Side by Side Community School	NORWALK SCHOOL DISTRICT	181	10,781	30.0	23.4	4.4	4.2
Sports Sciences Academy	HARTFORD SCHOOL DISTRICT	268	22,533	nd	65.3	nd	14.6
The Bridge Academy	BRIDGEPORT SCHOOL DISTRICT	164	22,310	57.3	84.0	1.8	9.1
Trailblazers Academy	STAMFORD SCHOOL DISTRICT	72	14,684	77.8	32.3	0.0	4.5

Note: The charter school data is from 1999-00 annual reports, and the host district data was obtained from the strategic school profiles for the same year.

Appendix I

Results from the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) and the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) by School and Year

Index Scores for the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT), Grades 4, 6, and 8 (1997-98 to 2001-02)

Subject	Charter School						Host District						Comparison AAD between charter & host districts (CS-HD)
	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	Ave. Annual Difference	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	Ave. Annual Difference	
Integrated Day (Norwich)													
Grade 4	n=22	n=33	n=30	n=32	n=31		n=366	n=399	n=377	n=349	n=341		
Grade 4 Reading	63.3	81.8	63.8	69.8	67.7	1.10	74.0	66.8	72.1	72.5	68.5	-1.38	2.48
Grade 4 Writing	82.9	80.3	67.9	74.2	73.5	-2.35	73	77.8	74.6	76.7	82.2	2.30	-4.65
Grade 4 Mathematics	72.7	86.9	67.8	72.9	77.4	1.18	81.8	80.2	80.8	79.5	79.1	-0.68	1.85
Grade 4 Overall Index	73.0	83.0	66.5	72.3	73.5	0.13	76.3	74.9	75.8	76.0	76.6	0.08	0.05
Grade 6	n=20	n=21	n=22	n=33	n=29		n=384	n=381	n=358	n=385	n=348		
Grade 6 Reading	90.4	83.3	86.4	85.9	86.2	-1.05	77.7	73.3	78.7	70.1	75.2	-0.63	-0.43
Grade 6 Writing	57.5	54.8	95.5	86.9	85.1	6.90	73.4	79.7	85.6	82.6	80.1	1.68	5.23
Grade 6 Mathematics	71.2	71.7	64.0	80.8	82.8	2.90	82.7	77.6	79.4	73.6	80.0	-0.68	3.58
Grade 6 Overall Index	73.0	69.9	82.0	84.5	84.7	2.93	77.9	76.9	81.2	75.0	78.4	0.13	2.80
Grade 8			n=2	n=12	n=17				n=383	n=387	n=334		
Grade 8 Reading			100.0	94.4	84.3	-7.85			73.7	71.0	79.5	2.90	-10.75
Grade 8 Writing			100	83.3	96.1	-1.95			74.9	74.8	80.7	2.90	-4.85
Grade 8 Mathematics			100	88.9	72.5	-13.75			78.7	68.0	79.3	0.30	-14.05
Grade 8 Overall Index			100	88.9	84.3	-7.85			75.8	71.0	79.8	2.00	-9.85

Note: The last column on the right refers to the difference in average annual change scores between charter schools and their host districts. In other words, this indicates the difference in difference. If the number is positive it indicates that charter schools are gaining more over time, if it's a negative number it indicates that charter schools are gaining less over time than their host districts. The CMT is administered in the fall of each year.

Subject	Charter School						Host District						Comparison AAD between charter & host districts (CS-HD)
	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	Ave. Annual Difference	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	Ave. Annual Difference	
ISAAC (New London)													
Grade 6	n=38	n=40	n=35	n=29	n=48		n=183	n=185	n=231	n=243	n=171		
Grade 6 Reading	67.6	55.0	42.9	69.0	71.4	0.95	46.9	47.5	46.1	43.9	59.3	3.10	-2.15
Grade 6 Writing	55.7	67.5	57.4	71.6	65.2	2.38	51.4	56.7	55.9	54.5	63.1	2.93	-0.55
Grade 6 Mathematics	57.7	59.2	39.4	70.0	71.7	3.50	48.3	53.3	49.3	52.7	67.8	4.88	-1.38
Grade 6 Overall Index	60.3	60.6	46.6	70.2	69.4	2.28	48.9	52.5	50.4	50.0	63.4	3.63	-1.35
Grade 8			n=41	n=30	n=27				n=208	n=204	n=203		
Grade 8 Reading			73.8	78.9	67.9	-2.95			52.3	43.6	63.4	5.55	-8.50
Grade 8 Writing			47.6	75.6	53.1	2.75			56.3	48.3	70.5	7.10	-4.35
Grade 8 Mathematics			64.2	68.9	38.5	-12.85			50.1	40.6	60.3	5.10	-17.95
Grade 8 Overall Index			61.9	74.5	53.2	-4.35			52.9	44.0	64.7	5.90	-10.25
Jumoke (Hartford)													
Grade 4		n=27	n=28	n=34	n=38			n=1605	n=1625	n=1495	n=1302		
Grade 4 Reading		25.9	22.4	47.1	30.7	1.60		24.8	33.4	31.8	39.5	4.90	-3.30
Grade 4 Writing		53.7	25.9	55.9	35.1	-6.20		55.2	57.9	34.3	69.0	4.60	-10.80
Grade 4 Mathematics		28.2	41.7	56.7	34.2	2.00		44.4	60.1	54.4	71.4	9.00	-7.00
Grade 4 Overall Index		35.9	30.0	53.2	33.3	-0.87		41.5	50.5	40.0	60.0	6.17	-7.03
Grade 6				n=20	n=19					n=1366	n=1374		
Grade 6 Reading				36.7	50.9	14.20				45.5	50.6	5.10	9.10
Grade 6 Writing				60.0	55.6	-4.40				62.3	70.3	8.00	-12.40
Grade 6 Mathematics				31.7	36.8	5.10				59.5	63.3	3.80	1.30
Grade 6 Overall Index				43.0	47.8	4.80				56.0	61.4	5.40	-0.60
Odyssey (Manchester)													
Grade 6	n=35	n=30	n=30	n=32	n=29		n=558	n=539	n=544	n=562	n=524		
Grade 6 Reading	73.5	83.3	73.3	66.7	61.9	-2.90	70.7	78.0	75.2	71.2	77.6	1.73	-4.63
Grade 6 Writing	54.4	55.2	66.7	67.7	74.1	4.93	67.6	69.2	77.9	69.2	83.7	4.03	0.90
Grade 6 Mathematics	71.6	82.2	82.2	70.5	80.2	2.15	72.6	73.8	72.4	79.0	82.0	2.35	-0.20
Grade 6 Overall Index	66.5	73.6	74.1	68.3	72.1	1.40	70.3	73.6	75.2	73.0	81.1	2.70	-1.30

Subject	Charter School						Host District						Comparison AAD between charter & host districts (CS-HD)
	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	Ave. Annual Difference	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	Ave. Annual Difference	
Grade 8		n=9	n=39	n=32	n=37			n=554	n=566	n=570	n=525		
Grade 8 Reading		44.4	87.8	83.9	71.9	9.17		69.8	72.5	66.8	69.2	-0.20	9.37
Grade 8 Writing		44.4	48.7	80.6	74.5	10.03		67.6	72.1	65.3	67.3	-0.10	10.13
Grade 8 Mathematics		59.3	87.4	71.0	72.1	4.27		72.7	70.4	63.1	71.0	-0.57	4.83
Grade 8 Overall Index		49.4	74.6	78.5	72.8	7.80		70.0	71.7	65.0	69.2	-0.27	8.07
Side by Side (Norwalk)													
Grade 4	n=20	n=22	n=20	n=20	n=19		n=752	n=812	n=807	n=787	n=740		
Grade 4 Reading	51.7	43.2	55.3	78.9	51.9	0.05	57.9	58.3	56.7	61.3	62.8	1.23	-1.18
Grade 4 Writing	35.0	79.6	57.9	86.0	63.2	7.05	66.1	74.7	65.7	75.1	77.7	2.90	4.15
Grade 4 Mathematics	51.7	36.4	53.3	78.6	64.9	3.30	71.4	72.4	70.6	70.0	66.3	-1.28	4.58
Grade 4 Overall Index	46.1	53.1	55.5	81.2	60.0	-1.63	65.1	68.5	64.3	69.0	68.9	0.95	-2.58
Grade 6		n=19	n=18	n=16	n=23			n=678	n=690	n=776	n=751		
Grade 6 Reading		71.1	52.8	70.8	62.3	-2.93		62.7	59.6	60.7	63.5	0.27	-3.20
Grade 6 Writing		73.7	41.7	70.6	69.6	-1.37		68.2	67.3	69.6	69.5	0.43	-1.80
Grade 6 Mathematics		66.7	46.3	57.8	82.6	5.30		65.0	62.1	63.2	61.1	-1.30	6.60
Grade 6 Overall Index		70.5	46.9	66.4	71.5	0.33		65.3	63.0	65.0	64.7	-0.20	0.53
Grade 8				n=15	n=11					n=653	n=615		
Grade 8 Reading				86.7	66.7	-20.00				70.5	74.3	3.80	-23.80
Grade 8 Writing				55.6	60.6	5.00				73.6	74.2	0.60	4.40
Grade 8 Mathematics				51.1	39.4	-11.70				66.3	70.0	3.70	-15.40
Grade 8 Overall Index				64.5	55.6	-8.90				70.0	72.8	2.80	-11.70
Breakthrough (Hartford)													
Grade 4		n=18	n=17	n=21	n=20			n=1605	n=1625	n=1495	n=1320		
Grade 4 Reading		30.6	31.3	49.2	61.7	10.37		24.8	33.4	31.8	39.5	4.90	5.47
Grade 4 Writing		44.4	59.4	63.5	61.7	5.77		55.2	57.9	34.3	69.0	4.60	1.17
Grade 4 Mathematics		51.9	68.6	55.0	55.0	1.03		44.4	60.1	54.4	63.5	6.37	-5.33
Grade 4 Overall Index		42.3	53.1	55.9	59.5	5.73		41.5	50.5	40.0	57.3	5.27	0.47

Subject	Charter School						Host District						Comparison AAD between charter & host districts (CS-HD)
	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	Ave. Annual Difference	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	Ave. Annual Difference	
Grade 6		n=18	n=17	n=20	n=19			n=1331	n=1330	n=1366	n=1263		
Grade 6 Reading		33.3	55.9	48.3	50.9	5.87		32.4	45.3	45.5	50.6	6.07	-0.20
Grade 6 Writing		63.9	82.4	71.9	77.2	4.43		52.4	58.6	62.3	70.3	5.97	-1.53
Grade 6 Mathematics		51.9	72.5	65.1	80.7	9.60		37.2	59.1	59.5	71.4	11.40	-1.80
Grade 6 Overall Index		49.7	70.3	61.8	69.6	6.63		40.7	54.3	56.0	64.1	7.80	-1.17
Brooklawn (Bridgeport)													
Grade 6		n=24	n=23	n=24	n=13			n=1501	n=1506	n=1593	n=1538		
Grade 6 Reading		52.1	54.3	45.8	46.2	-1.97		65.1	64.6	40.5	45.1	-6.67	4.70
Grade 6 Writing		54.5	52.4	36.1	69.2	4.90		67.9	70.7	59.6	59.7	-2.73	7.63
Grade 6 Mathematics		48.6	56.5	45.8	56.4	2.60		64.95	67.6	50.5	60.2	-1.58	4.18
Grade 6 Overall Index		51.7	54.4	42.6	57.3	1.87		66.0	67.6	50.0	52.4	-4.53	6.40
Grade 8		n=19	n=19	n=26	n=24			n=1305	n=1397	n=1433	n=1489		
Grade 8 Reading		57.9	89.5	60.3	68.1	3.40		66.8	70.1	41.1	45.1	-7.23	10.63
Grade 8 Writing		63.9	44.7	46.2	62.5	-0.47		74.25	73.85	43.3	58.9	-5.12	4.65
Grade 8 Mathematics		43.9	57.9	48.7	63.9	6.67		68	69.95	53.7	46.0	-7.33	14.00
Grade 8 Overall Index		55.2	64.0	51.7	64.8	3.20		69.7	71.3	46.0	51.8	-5.97	9.17
Charter Oak (New Britain)													
Grade 6		n=32	n=15	n=9	n=20			n=614	n=615	n=649	n=595		
Grade 6 Reading		17.2	23.3	29.6	35.1	5.97		45.6	49.2	47.0	49.3	1.23	4.73
Grade 6 Writing		46.8	32.1	14.8	42.1	-1.57		53.2	54.7	62.6	66.7	4.50	-6.07
Grade 6 Mathematics		26	48.9	14.8	35.1	3.03		42.0	48.7	53.9	64.6	7.53	-4.50
Grade 6 Overall Index		30	34.8	19.7	37.4	2.47		46.9	50.9	55.0	60.2	4.43	-1.97
Grade 8			n=44	n=31	n=27				n=579	n=570	n=521		
Grade 8 Reading			25.6	7.1	22.2	-1.70			50.6	48.0	60.0	4.70	-6.40
Grade 8 Writing			14.8	17.2	25.9	5.55			59.8	53.3	63.4	1.80	3.75
Grade 8 Mathematics			24.8	6.9	25.6	0.40			45.2	41.1	51.6	3.20	-2.80
Grade 8 Overall Index			21.7	10.4	24.6	1.45			51.9	47.0	58.3	3.20	-1.75

Subject	Charter School						Host District						Comparison AAD between charter & host districts (CS-HD)
	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	Ave. Annual Difference	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	Ave. Annual Difference	
Highville (New Haven)													
Grade 4		n=22	n=16	n=20	n=27			n=1386	n=1330	n=1428	n=1209		
Grade 4 Reading		22.7	37.5	21.7	34.6	3.97		43.2	47	33.8	38.1	-1.70	5.67
Grade 4 Writing		55	25.0	33.3	56.4	0.47		58.95	61.65	58.6	64.8	2.00	-1.53
Grade 4 Mathematics		36.4	54.2	26.7	45.7	3.10		57.2	62.35	55.0	61.4	1.40	1.70
Grade 4 Overall Index		38	38.9	27.2	45.6	2.53		53.1	57.0	49.0	54.8	0.50	2.03
Grade 6			n=19	n=25	n=21				n=1196	n=1350	n=1191		
Grade 6 Reading			57.5	30.7	42.4	-7.55			37.0	35.6	42.8	2.90	-10.45
Grade 6 Writing			76.3	64.0	46.7	-14.80			58.5	53.0	58.5	0.00	-14.80
Grade 6 Mathematics			63.2	45.3	47.6	-7.80			39.2	42.1	52.5	6.65	-14.45
Grade 6 Overall Index			65.7	46.7	45.6	-10.05			44.9	44.0	51.3	3.20	-13.25
Amistad (New Haven)													
Grade 6			n=35	n=45	n=38				n=1196	n=1350	n=1201		
Grade 6 Reading			55.7	35.6	54.4	-0.65			37.0	35.6	42.8	2.90	-3.55
Grade 6 Writing			58.6	60.6	67.5	4.45			58.5	53.0	58.5	0.00	4.45
Grade 6 Mathematics			40.4	45.9	65.8	12.70			39.2	42.1	52.5	6.65	6.05
Grade 6 Overall Index			51.6	47.4	62.6	5.50			44.9	43.6	53.3	4.20	1.30
Trailblazers (Stamford)													
Grade 6			n=25	n=36	n=32				n=867	n=1017	n=959		
Grade 6 Reading			25.0	36.1	14.6	-5.20			68.9	69.6	74.5	2.80	-8.00
Grade 6 Writing			44	37.3	22.6	-10.70			64.5	68.7	74.5	5.00	-15.70
Grade 6 Mathematics			24.6	35.3	41.7	8.55			62.6	67.2	77.1	7.25	1.30
Grade 6 Overall Index			31.2	36.2	26.3	-2.45			65.3	69.0	75.4	5.05	-7.50
Grade 8				n=30	n=36					n=369	n=788		
Grade 8 Reading				21.8	15.2	-6.60				68.2	76.1	7.90	-14.50
Grade 8 Writing				15.6	23.1	7.50				69.7	71.4	1.70	5.80
Grade 8 Mathematics				25.6	18.5	-7.10				60.1	67.3	7.20	-14.30
Grade 8 Overall Index				21.0	18.9	-2.10				66.0	71.6	5.60	-7.70

Percent Meeting State Goals for the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT), Grades 4, 6, and 8 (1997-98 to 2001-02)

Subject	Charter School						Host District					
	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	Average Annual Difference	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	Average Annual Difference
Integrated Day (Norwich)												
Grade 4	n=22	n=33	n=30	n=32	n=31		n=366	n=399	n=377	n=349	n=340	
Grade 4 Reading	55.0	76.0	59.0	59.0	58.0	0.8	64.0	57.0	59.0	56.0	54.0	-2.5
Grade 4 Writing	64.0	67.0	50.0	55.0	52.0	-3.0	54.0	63.0	56.0	55.0	64.0	2.5
Grade 4 Mathematics	55.0	64.0	53.0	56.0	52.0	-0.8	67.0	66.0	63.0	61.0	62.0	-1.3
Grade 6	n=20	n=21	n=22	n=33	n=29		n=384	n=381	n=358	n=385	n=342	
Grade 6 Reading	55.0	81.0	82.0	82.0	72.0	4.3	66.0	62.0	72.0	60.0	62.0	-1.0
Grade 6 Writing	25.0	24.0	91.0	73.0	69.0	11.0	55.0	63.0	73.0	66.0	62.0	1.8
Grade 6 Mathematics	55.0	45.0	64.0	61.0	55.0	0.0	64.0	56.0	58.0	55.0	60.0	-1.0
Grade 8			n=2	n=12	n=17				n=383	n=387	n=331	
Grade 8 Reading			100.0	92.0	76.0	-12.0			65.0	60.0	71.0	3.0
Grade 8 Writing			100.0	58.0	88.0	-6.0			58.0	57.0	65.0	3.5
Grade 8 Mathematics			100.0	75.0	41.0	-29.5			61.0	47.0	58.0	-1.5
ISAAC (New London)												
Grade 6	n=38	n=40	n=35	n=29	n=46		n=183	n=185	n=231	n=243	n=169	
Grade 6 Reading	57.0	43.0	29.0	62.0	59.0	0.5	34.0	36.0	35.0	31.0	45.0	2.8
Grade 6 Writing	29.0	53.0	35.0	41.0	45.0	4.0	28	28.0	33.0	26.0	41.0	3.3
Grade 6 Mathematics	32.0	33.0	15.0	43.0	52.0	5.0	26	25.0	23.0	28.0	44.0	4.5
Grade 8			n=41	n=30	n=26				n=208	n=204	n=203	
Grade 8 Reading			60.0	67.0	54.0	-3.0			38.0	33.0	48.0	5.0
Grade 8 Writing			24	47.0	26.0	1.0			37.0	29.0	47.0	5.0
Grade 8 Mathematics			39	43.0	19.0	-10.0			28.0	18.0	32.0	2.0

Subject	Charter School						Host District					
	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	Average Annual Difference	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	Average Annual Difference
Jumoke (Hartford)												
Grade 4		n=27	n=28	n=34	n=38			n=1605	n=1625	n=1495	n=1324	
Grade 4 Reading		11.0	7.0	29.0	21.0	3.3		13.0	20.0	17.0	22.0	3.0
Grade 4 Writing		22	10.0	29.0	14.0	-2.7		33.0	32.0	30.0	42.0	3.0
Grade 4 Mathematics		19	14.0	24.0	18.0	-0.3		23.0	36.0	28.0	36.0	4.3
Grade 6				n=20	n=19					n=1366	n=1265	
Grade 6 Reading				25	26	1				30	35	5
Grade 6 Writing				30	22	-8				35	43	8
Grade 6 Mathematics				0	16	16				33	45	12
Odyssey (Manchester)												
Grade 6	n=35	n=30	n=30	n=32	n=28		n=558	n=539	n=544	n=562	n=524	
Grade 6 Reading	71.0	73.0	67.0	53.0	50.0	-5.3	61.0	68.0	67.0	57.0	65.0	-1.0
Grade 6 Writing	32.0	24.0	43.0	45.0	56.0	6.0	46	48.0	61.0	60.0	63.0	4.7
Grade 6 Mathematics	53.0	63.0	63.0	46.0	61.0	2.0	51	54.0	50.0	50.0	61.0	-0.3
Grade 8		n=9	n=39	n=32	n=37			n=554	n=566	n=570	n=515	
Grade 8 Reading		33.0	81.0	74.0	61.0	9.3		60.0	62.0	55.0	57.0	-1.0
Grade 8 Writing		22.0	26.0	55.0	59.0	12.3		47.0	56.0	44.0	45.0	-0.7
Grade 8 Mathematics		33	68.0	52.0	41.0	2.7		51.0	50.0	43.0	50.0	-0.3
Side by Side (Norwalk)												
Grade 4	n=20	n=22	n=20	n=19	n=18		n=752	n=812	n=807	n=787	n=758	
Grade 4 Reading	35.0	32	47.0	68.0	22.0	-3.3	47.0	47.0	45.0	48.0	48.0	0.3
Grade 4 Writing	5.0	68	26.0	74.0	42.0	9.3	44	56.0	43.0	53.0	44.0	0.0
Grade 4 Mathematics	35.0	27	35.0	64.0	32.0	-0.8	55	54.0	54.0	47.0	51.0	-1.0
Grade 6		n=19	n=18	n=16	n=23			n=678	n=690	n=776	n=708	
Grade 6 Reading		58.0	39.0	63.0	43.0	-5.0		53.0	49.0	49.0	51.0	-0.7
Grade 6 Writing		58.0	22.0	38.0	30.0	-9.3		45.0	45.0	46.0	45.0	0.0
Grade 6 Mathematics		42.0	11.0	27.0	61.0	6.3		45.0	41.0	41.0	42.0	-1.0

Subject	Charter School						Host District					
	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	Average Annual Difference	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	Average Annual Difference
Breakthrough (Hartford)												
Grade 4		n=18	n=17	n=21	n=20			n=1605	n=1625	n=1495	n=1534	
Grade 4 Reading		17.0	25.0	38.0	50.0	11.0		13.0	20.0	17.0	22.0	3.0
Grade 4 Writing		17.0	38.0	38.0	30.0	4.3		33.0	32.0	30.0	42.0	3.0
Grade 4 Mathematics		39.0	41.0	2.0	35.0	-1.3		23.0	36.0	28.0	26.0	1.0
Grade 6		n=18	n=17	n=20	n=19			n=1331	n=1330	n=1366	n=1265	
Grade 6 Reading		22.0	35.0	40.0	26.0	1.3		20.0	31.0	30.0	35.0	5.0
Grade 6 Writing		33.0	65.0	42.0	53.0	6.7		28.0	34.0	35.0	43.0	5.0
Grade 6 Mathematics		22.0	41.0	48.0	53.0	10.3		14.0	35.0	33.0	45.0	10.3
Brooklawn (Bridgeport)												
Grade 6		n=24	n=23	n=24	n=13			n=1501	n=1506	n=1593	n=1543	
Grade 6 Reading		42.0	43.0	33.0	38.0	-1.3		56	55	25	30.0	-8.7
Grade 6 Writing		36	29.0	8.0	46.0	3.3		44.5	50.5	30	30.0	-4.8
Grade 6 Mathematics		17	30.0	13.0	31.0	4.7		43.5	47	25	31.0	-4.2
Grade 8		n=19	n=19	n=26	n=24			n=1305	n=1397	n=1433	n=1349	
Grade 8 Reading		42.0	79.0	50.0	50.0	2.7		56.5	59.5	30	30.0	-8.8
Grade 8 Writing		39.0	11.0	27.0	42.0	1.0		57	58.5	30	32.0	-8.3
Grade 8 Mathematics		21.0	26.0	19.0	38.0	5.7		48	52	17	19.0	-9.7
Charter Oak (New Britain)												
Grade 6		n=32	n=15	n=9	n=19			n=614	n=615	n=649	n=589	
Grade 6 Reading		9.0	7.0	11.0	26.0	5.7		33.0	35.0	32.0	36.0	1.0
Grade 6 Writing		16.0	0.0	11.0	26.0	3.3		28.0	30.0	34.0	39.0	3.7
Grade 6 Mathematics		9.0	27.0	0.0	11.0	0.7		17.0	22.0	28.0	37.0	6.7
Grade 8			n=44	n=31	n=26				n=579	n=570	n=514	
Grade 8 Reading			14.0	4.0	11.0	-1.5			36.0	33.0	44.0	4.0
Grade 8 Writing			2.0	3.0	4.0	1.0			37.0	31.0	39.0	1.0
Grade 8 Mathematics			0.0	0.0	4.0	2.0			19.0	16.0	24.0	2.5

Subject	Charter School						Host District					
	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	Average Annual Difference	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	Average Annual Difference
Highville (New Haven)												
Grade 4		n=22	n=16	n=20	n=26			n=1386	n=1330	n=1428	n=1209	
Grade 4 Reading		14.0	19.0	5.0	19.0	1.7		31.0	35.0	21.0	22.0	-3.0
Grade 4 Writing		40.0	0.0	5.0	31.0	-3.0		37.0	38.5	34.0	37.0	0.0
Grade 4 Mathematics		18.0	38.0	0.0	15.0	-1.0		36.5	40.0	31.0	35.0	-0.5
Grade 6			n=19	n=25	n=21				n=1196	n=1350	n=1175	
Grade 6 Reading			45.0	16.0	23.0	-11.0			45.5	22.0	28.0	-8.8
Grade 6 Writing			63.0	36.0	30.0	-16.5			42.5	27.0	31.0	-5.8
Grade 6 Mathematics			32.0	20.0	19.0	-6.5			40.0	21.0	28.0	-6.0
Amistad (New Haven)												
Grade 6			n=35	n=45	n=38				n=1196	n=1350	n=1175	
Grade 6 Reading			43.0	22.0	39.0	-2.0			25.0	22.0	28.0	1.5
Grade 6 Writing			40.0	34.0	45.0	2.5			35.0	27.0	31.0	-2.0
Grade 6 Mathematics			15.0	22.0	37.0	11.0			18.0	21.0	28.0	5.0
Trailblazers (Stamford)												
Grade 6			n=25	n=36	n=32				n=867	n=1017	n=955	
Grade 6 Reading			17.0	14.0	3.0	-7.0			60.0	58.0	65.0	2.5
Grade 6 Writing			36.0	12.0	6.0	-15.0			42.0	45.0	50.0	4.0
Grade 6 Mathematics			13.0	9.0	19.0	3.0			40.0	50.0	60.0	10.0
Grade 8				n=30	n=36					n=369	n=787	
Grade 8 Reading				14.0	11.0	-3				57.0	65.0	8.0
Grade 8 Writing				0.0	6.0	6				50.0	49.0	-1.0
Grade 8 Mathematics				13.0	3.0	-10				39.0	45.0	6.0

Note: All CMT tests are administered during the fall of each year.

Index Scores for the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT), Grade 10 (1997-98 to 2000-01)

	Charter School					Host District					Difference on AAD (Charter-HD)
	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	Average Annual Difference	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	Average Annual Difference	
Ancestors (Waterbury)	n=4	n=15	n=10	n=2		n=469	n=498	n=500	n=493		
Language Arts	53.3	11.9	15.2	33.3	-6.67	40.2	52.5	49.9	54.6	4.80	-11.47
Mathematics	50.0	2.2	3.3	33.3	-5.57	43.4	48.2	45.0	42.1	-0.43	-5.13
Science		6.3	6.1	16.7	5.20		46.3	51.8	49.6	1.65	3.55
Interdisciplinary	66.7	18.7	16.7	66.7	0.00	47.8	53.3	55.9	73.9	8.70	-8.70
Overall Index	56.7	9.8	10.3	37.5	-6.40	44.5	50.1	50.7	55.1	3.53	-9.93
Bridge Academy (Bridgeport)	n=32	n=35	n=36	n=33		n=701	n=759	n=672	n=678		
Language Arts	58.1	53.3	61.1	55.6	-0.83	47.0	57.8	55.6	55.7	2.90	-3.73
Mathematics	26.0	37.1	29.6	32.3	2.10	43.9	44.0	39.1	37.0	-2.30	4.40
Science	21.9	16.2	27.8	39.4	5.83	38.0	38.1	40.5	40.4	0.80	5.03
Interdisciplinary	66.7	45.7	67.6	69.8	1.03	60.1	57.7	60.4	68.6	2.83	-1.80
Overall Index	43.2	38.1	46.5	49.3	2.03	47.3	49.4	48.9	50.4	1.03	1.00
Common Ground (New Haven)	n=11	n=14	n=18	n=10		n=707	n=711	n=787	n=780		
Language Arts	24.2	31.0	10.0	40.0	5.27	41.0	48.6	53.8	59.3	6.10	-0.83
Mathematics	33.3	31.0	29.6	46.7	4.47	39.7	45.6	42.1	42.4	0.90	3.57
Science	40.0	33.3	35.2	43.3	1.10	37.3	37.4	43.5	44.5	2.40	-1.30
Interdisciplinary	33.3	38.1	41.2	56.7	7.80	50.7	49.3	58.8	72.6	7.30	0.50
Overall Index	32.7	33.3	29.0	46.7	4.67	42.2	45.2	49.6	54.7	4.17	0.50
Explorations (Gilbert School)	n=13	n=19	n=16	n=12		n=123	n=100	n=118	n=112		
Language Arts	45.5	28.1	19.0	51.3	1.93	73.5	78.2	76.4	68.2	-1.77	3.70
Mathematics	66.7	71.9	56.3	73.8	2.37	78.3	76.7	77.7	77.8	-0.17	2.53
Science	63.9	66.7	70.4	84.6	6.90	70.4	71	72.8	72.6	0.73	6.17
Interdisciplinary	61.5	54.9	53.7	72.7	3.73	70.8	69.0	87.9	81.4	3.53	0.20
Overall Index	59.4	55.4	49.9	70.6	3.73	73.3	73.7	78.7	75.0	0.57	3.17

	Charter School					Host District					Difference on AAD (Charter-HD)
	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	Average Annual Difference	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	Average Annual Difference	
Sports Sciences (Hartford)		n=67	n=75	n=62			n=618	n=655	n=633		
Language Arts		40.8	43.3	39.9	-0.45		47.5	48.9	46.6	-0.45	0.00
Mathematics		47.5	44.7	36.9	-5.30		41.9	35.9	35.2	-3.35	-1.95
Science		30.3	36.4	44.1	6.90		32.4	39.1	38.2	2.90	4.00
Interdisciplinary		37.3	63.7	71.0	16.85		51	57.7	70.5	9.75	7.10
Overall Index		39	47.0	48.0	4.50		43.2	45.4	47.6	2.20	2.30

Note: The last column on the right refers to the difference in average annual change scores between charter schools and their host districts. In other words, this indicates the difference in difference. If the number is positive it indicates that charter schools are gaining more over time, if it's a negative number it indicates that charter schools are gaining less over time than their host districts. The CAPT is administered during the spring of each year.

Percent Meeting State Goals for the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) Grade 10 (1997-98 to 2000-01)

Subject	Charter School					Host District				
	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	Average Annual Difference	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	Average Annual Difference
Ancestors (Waterbury)										
	n=4	n=15	n=10	n=2		n=469	n=498	n=500	n=493	
Language Arts	40.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-13.3	9.0	13.0	18.0	16	2.3
Mathematics	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-8.3	10.0	14.0	15.0	15.0	1.7
Science	N/A	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.0	13.0	14.0	14.0	0.7
Interdisciplinary	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-8.3	12.0	15.0	23.0	28.0	5.3
Bridge Academy (Bridgeport)										
	n=32	n=35	n=36	n=33		n=701	n=759	n=672	n=678	
Language Arts	6.0	11.0	6.0	9.0	1	13.0	23.0	18.0	20.0	2.3

Subject	Charter School					Host District				
	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	Average Annual Difference	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	Average Annual Difference
Mathematics	0.0	0.0	3.0	0.0	0	11.0	10.0	10.0	12.0	0.3
Science	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	0.0
Interdisciplinary	32.0	6.0	25.0	13.0	-6.3	24.0	26.0	27.0	19.0	-1.7
Common Ground (New Haven)										
	n=11	n=14	n=18	n=10		n=707	n=711	n=787	n=780	
Language Arts	9.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	0.3	12.0	13.0	20.0	24.0	4.0
Mathematics	9.0	0.0	11.0	20.0	3.7	9.0	11.0	13.0	13.0	1.3
Science	20.0	0.0	11.0	10.0	-3.3	8.0	8.0	10.0	10.0	0.7
Interdisciplinary	9.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	0.3	17.0	15.0	22.0	26.0	3.0
Explorations (Gilbert School)										
	n=13	n=19	n=16	n=12		n=123	n=100	n=118	n=112	
Language Arts	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.0	5.0	44	59	53	34.0	-3.3
Mathematics	31.0	42.0	25.0	36.0	1.7	47	46	51	49.0	0.7
Science	33.0	28.0	28.0	54.0	7.0	31	34	36	36.0	1.7
Interdisciplinary	31.0	6.0	22.0	18.0	-4.3	37	32	73	50.0	4.3
Sports Sciences (Hartford)										
		n=67	n=75	n=62			n=618	n=655	n=633	
Language Arts		4.0	9.0	7.0	2.3		10.0	11	12.0	4.0
Mathematics		12.0	12.0	5.0	1.7		7.0	9	8.0	2.7
Science		6.0	3.0	6.0	2.0		4.0	6	4.0	1.3
Interdisciplinary		1.0	9.0	22.0	7.3		17.0	25	22.0	7.3

Note: All CAPT tests are administered during the spring of each year.

Appendix J
Sample Structures of the Governing Boards in Connecticut Charter Schools

We contacted all schools and asked directors to submit current bylaws and the handbooks used by the board. Additionally, we requested an appointment—either face to face, by telephone, or through e-mail—to ask board members questions regarding school governance and policy perceptions. With the exception of Jumoke and Brooklawn, all schools responded. We also collected information by attending board meetings at a number of schools, and we conducted focus groups with board members at three schools. The following passages provide an overview of school governance perceptions provided by board members or parents.

Breakthrough Charter School

This school has an advisory board and several standing committees: Bylaws, nominating, personnel, physical plant, and parent concerns. An annual meeting is held to elect board members in May (chair, vice-chair, treasurer, and secretary). The advisory board is comprised of parents, teachers, and community members. Additionally, there are two professors, two prominent Hartford leaders, a lawyer, and a financial planner. The bylaws state that representatives must be from institutes of higher learning and community organizations. The minimum number of board members is seven. Aside from parents who vote, other representatives are nominated by the Nominating Committee. Parents, community members, and teachers are elected if there are more people interested than there are positions (five open for parents/two for teachers). Parents must make up 25 percent of the board. All parents are members, but their voting rights are limited to selecting a representative to do the voting.

Bridge Academy

The director and board member noted that Bridge Academy is governed by two boards, though CSDE considers both as one board. The governing board, comprised of parents, teachers, students, and community representatives, focuses on matters of curriculum, discipline, and teacher evaluation. The finance board, on which a lawyer who specializes in school law sits, addresses all matters that strictly pertain to the school's NGO/501C status, finances, hiring, and other state and federal regulatory matters. The finance team uses minutes and notes from governing board meetings as part of its meeting. Overall, both of these groups fit under a single board of directors. CSDE did not approve of the two boards working conjointly and suggested they dissolve into one. Members of the two groups think that part of the beauty of being a charter school is having the autonomy to have the two boards in operation. The model has been extremely effective. No issues have had to be referred from the governing board to the full board of directors for resolution. Members believe their model is one that should be adopted by other charter schools. It is a smooth process that works for all necessary stakeholders.

Common Ground High School

This board has a mission beyond the school itself: ecology. The common core of interest of board members is ecological education and awareness. The board exhibits a warm, nurturing, friendly environment. Governance duties are shared with the New Haven Ecology Project, which is a community-based nonprofit organization. The faculty elects a school coordinator who maintains a light teaching schedule with the remainder of his or her time devoted to serving as the head teacher or school administrator. The other administrator is the business manager who works for both the school and the nonprofit organization.

Explorations

Nine members served on the board in 2001. Of the 16 schools, this board is one of the more formal boards, adhering to Robert's Rules of Order, clear-cut and timely agendas, and consistent roles and responsibilities. According to one board member, "The council is composed of bright, experienced, knowledgeable individuals whose only interest in serving on the council is the satisfaction of having given time, energy, and responsible decision making to the benefit of educating young people. The level of reflection and the depth and richness of the backgrounds of the individuals who serve make the council an innovative body by the way it functions." At a focus group with the board, the following was expressed unanimously: "We have spent a tremendous amount of time rounding the rough edges that existed initially and formulating policies and strategies to cope with problems and challenges. We've paid attention to the detail by processing feedback from students, teachers, administrators, and parents. We've also paid attention to the community and money. Today, Explorations is on sound footing in the community. The Board is still essential to the functioning of the school. The director needs us in a variety of ways, only one of which is as a policy-setting body."

Integrated Day Charter School

Two primary figures answer to the board of directors: the director and the business manager. The board comprises faculty, founders, community members, and businesspeople. The bylaws state that there shall be no more that nine members and a director. There are three classes of initial members; the first class serves for one year, the second class for two years, and the third class for three years. Originally, the board included only the school's founders. These original founders, most of whom are still involved, developed all policies currently in place. A more consensus-based model of governance has evolved. One parent noted that the use of a "feedback loop" is critical in everything done at IDCS. When the board wants to make modifications to a program or to the curriculum, it does a good job of soliciting feedback from parents. For instance, when teachers developed a rubric for the student research project, there was a parent meeting to introduce the nature of the rubric and show examples of how it would be used. Board members solicited parent feedback.

Interdistrict School for Arts and Communication

When one parent explored joining the board, she was struck by the great representation of well-known and well-respected community people from the New London area. All members were recruited through word of mouth. The parent liked what she saw evolving in the governance structure and committed

herself to the role. The parent explained that she is part of the board and management teams. George Cohan and the President of the board of directors serve on both as well. The two groups tend to meet separately, since they deal with separate issues. There is student representation for both groups and at least two parents on each team. The two teams have separate roles and responsibilities. A parent member serves as a liaison between the two. The board deals with budget, all hires, and firing when necessary. The management team is responsible for fund-raising, student discipline, and engaging parents to become volunteers.

Jumoke Academy

This school has a governance triad comprising a director, a business manager, and the board of directors. Of the nine board members, one is a parent representative. Teachers are admitted to the board as voting members.

Odyssey Community School

Article VIII states the primary functions of the board of trustees are to define policy and provide sound management of Odyssey. The board's role on paper is reviewing the mission, approving diplomas, approving employment policies, and all financial issues. The ongoing management of daily operations is given to the director, subject to the direction and supervision of the board. When asked what makes a board member, trustees responded with the following characteristics: willingness to work, connections to education and/or social service, experience with racial and ethnic diversity, and a connection to those with money. The board includes two parent representatives, one teacher representative, the executive director, and six community members. Committee reports include trusteeship, finance and budget, and personnel/principle search. In 2001, seven new members needed to be in place before the end of the school year. At that time, the board members set goals to actively phone and recruit new members. The board's plan also included having a new member breakfast and tour of the school before the end of the school year. The board wanted to work on a more sensible board structure and needed more members to do this (for example, the board needed additional members to complete the current committees and to put in place other committees they desperately needed).

Side By Side Community School

The school's annual report indicated that the board meets over dinner; and the minutes are often submitted with a casual header, indicating a communal and casual interaction. The board of directors consists of more than a dozen members including founders, parents and teachers. Five of the board members are community representatives who are neither parents nor founders. The board reviews legal issues three times a year.

Sport Sciences Academy

This board stands out because each member's background matches the theme of sport sciences. The board of directors has ten members plus the school's general manager. The members include a fire fighter, higher education instructors, athletic directors, a hospital administrator, budget analysts, an allied health specialist, and a health insurance executive. Meeting agendas allot time for student presentations, interdistrict planning, and school reports, facilities reports, general management concerns, and a parent report.

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

ERIC Educational Resources Information Center

REPRODUCTION RELEASE

(Specific Document)

UD 035877

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title:

Evaluation of Connecticut Charter Schools And the Charter School Initiative: Final Report

Author(s): Gary Miron and Jerry Horn

Corporate Source:	Publication Date:
The Evaluation Center Western Michigan University	September 2002

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to each document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified documents, please CHECK ONE of the following three options and sign at the bottom of the page.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

SAMPLE

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

Level 1 ☒

Check here for Level 1 release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic) *and* paper copy.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2A documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

SAMPLE

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2A

Level 2A ☐

Check here for Level 2A release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2B documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

SAMPLE

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2B

Level 2B ☐

Check here for Level 2B release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche only

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits.
If permission to reproduce is granted, but no box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate these documents as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries.

Sign here, please

Signature: Gary J Miron	Printed Name/Position/Title: Gary Miron	
Organization/Address: The Evaluation Center, WMU	Telephone:	FAX:
	E-Mail Address:	Date:

III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, *or*, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of these documents from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of these documents. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS.)

Publisher/Distributor:
Address:
Price:

IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant this reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

Name:
Address:

V. WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM:

Send this form to the following ERIC Clearinghouse: **ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education**
Teachers College Box 40, Columbia University
525 West 120th Street
New York, New York 10027-6696

EFF-088 (Rev. 2/2000)