



New Mexico Charter Schools Annual Report

New Mexico Public Education Department

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December 2013



The State of New Mexico

**New Mexico Charter Schools
Annual Report
December 2013**

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Governor

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2013 New Mexico Charter Schools Annual Report

Executive Summary

In 2011, the New Mexico legislature passed changes to the Charter School Act that provided more accountability for both charters and authorizers in New Mexico. As part of that law, the Public Education Department (PED) is asked to submit an annual report¹ on the status of charter schools in New Mexico. This is the first report submitted under that law.

Charter schools are public schools, and, like traditional public schools, they do not charge tuition for students to attend. However, they differ from traditional public schools in that they are authorized to open by presenting a charter proposal to one of the New Mexico charter school authorizers. If authorized, the school then operates under the charter which contains the school's vision and mission for their school and how the school intends to implement that vision. Charter schools are publicly funded under the same funding formula as regular public schools, less a 2% administrative fee and are subject to all of the same laws and regulations.

Charter schools offer a broad range of educational delivery models. For example, a school may choose to offer, or focus on a model that offers Montessori-based learning, Expeditionary Learning, Project-Based Learning, art-based learning, or STEM-based learning. IN addition, some charters school operators base their model on partnerships with the community or industries in which they are based. All charter schools are run by their own governing bodies. These governing bodies hire and fire the school's principal, and have control over their own budgets.

Charter schools are schools of choice. Students and their families can decide to enter into a lottery for submission to a charter school unless the school does not have a waiting list. In that case, admission is based on a first come, first serve basis or by lottery if more students apply than there are spots available. Many charter schools have waiting lists for students who want to attend them, but who were not selected in the lottery.

Many charter schools in New Mexico have a stated mission to serve target populations of students that are in need of specialized services. The PED has created a separate category for schools serving special student populations, called "SAM"² schools. These are schools that serve over 10% of older adult students or over 20% of students with special needs. Twelve percent of New Mexico charter schools are SAM schools.

There are presently 98 charter schools in New Mexico, serving over 15,000 students, or approximately 5% of New Mexico's public school students. These schools are authorized by either the state authorizer (the Public Education Commission or the PEC) or a local authorizer (the local school board). 57% of charter schools are authorized by the PEC, 16% are authorized by the Albuquerque Public School Board and 28% are authorized by all other local schools boards collectively.

¹ NMSA 22-8B-17.1

² Supplemental Accountability Model schools

Background

New Mexico's charter law provides a strong foundation of accountability and ranks 10th in the nation out of 42 states.³ In 2011, the legislature passed a law that requires charter schools and their authorizers to enter into legally-binding contracts that clarify each party's roles, responsibilities, and standards of performance.

A comparison of New Mexico charter schools and laws to others nationally is found at <http://dashboard.publiccharters.org/dashboardschools/state/NM/year/2011>.

At the same time as New Mexico's Legislature put stronger accountability measures into the charter school law, the A–F grading system for public schools was implemented through the No Child Left Behind Waiver. The new charter school accountability program has utilized the A–F grading system to look at improved outcomes for charter school students. All data provided in the school performance comparisons in this report come from the publicly available A–F grading data.

The charter school accountability law requires that charters and their authorizers enter into contracts when a new school is opened or once a school comes up for renewal. These contracts establish the working relationship between the school and its authorizer. The school is assessed annually under three negotiated performance frameworks—an academic framework which includes the school grade; an organizational framework which looks at school compliance with laws; and a financial framework that looks at information from the school audit.

Since the charter school accountability law applies to new and renewing schools, established charters in New Mexico will come under the law once renewed. In four years, all of New Mexico's charter schools will be monitored according to the new accountability law. By the start of the next school year term (2014–2015), more than half of all charter schools will have negotiated contracts with their authorizers.

Comparison of Performance between Charter and Non-Charter schools

A data report is attached to this Annual Report in two appendices. Appendix A contains a series of comparisons between charter and non-charter public schools for school years 2011–2012 and 2012–2013. Appendix B includes a comparison of all Albuquerque public schools—charter and non-charter—because that school district has the largest number of New Mexico students. It provides a comparison of schools among students in one geographic district. All of the comparisons use the A–F grading data that is publicly available. In many cases, the SAM schools (those schools serving special populations) are considered separately from schools serving more traditional students.

³ See "Measuring Up to the Model: The New State Rankings of Charter School laws." (January 2012) <http://www.publiccharters.org/law/>

The following are highlights from the data report:

- A. Final Grade Comparison. The final grade comparison compares all charter schools to all non-charter public schools:

Final Grades—all students	2012		2013	
	Charter	Public	Charter	Public
A and B Scores combined	36%	28%	52%	35%
C Scores	23%	34%	29%	27%
D and F Scores combined	41%	38%	19%	38%

- B. Q1 student comparison. The Q1 student comparison compares charter and non-charter schools in the growth of their lowest performing students (lowest 25% of students):

Q1 students	2012		2013	
	Charter	Public	Charter	Public
A and B Scores combined	41%	15%	59%	21%
C Scores	25%	21%	1%	3%
D and F Scores combined	34%	64%	40%	77%

- C. Q3 student comparison. The Q3 comparison compares charter schools with non-charter schools in the growth of their highest performing students (highest performing 75% of students):

Q3 students	2012		2013	
	Charter	Public	Charter	Public
A and B Scores combined	35%	29%	79%	50%
C Scores	29%	28%	7%	18%
D and F Scores combined	36%	34%	14%	32%

Assessment of Successes, Challenges, and Areas of Improvement

A. Success

Academic Success: Charter schools, while serving a small percentage of all public students, are generally obtaining strong outcomes for their students. 81% of all charter schools received a school grade of A, B, or C in 2013 for the 2012–2013 school year.

Innovation: Charter school innovation has begun to influence non-charter schools. Following this report, the Charter Schools Division (CSD) in the PED, will issue another report regarding the impact that charter schools have had on traditional public schools. This report will underscore the innovative, educational delivery models that charters have introduced to public education and how there is a trend of traditional schools borrowing those models in their own systems. The CSD will make this separate report available to the LESC per the request of Representative Rick Miera.

B. Challenges

Poor performance: A portion of charter schools continue to be poor performing. The PEC, local authorizers, and the CSD work closely with poor performing state charter schools to increase their success with students. For example, additional indicators are added to the Performance Frameworks for poor performing schools to target areas of improvement. If a school has not achieved much success with its Q1 or lowest performing students, as a condition of renewal, the PEC has added a performance indicator to the contract to improve this measure and improve academic outcomes for these students.

Unlike traditional public schools, chronically poor performing charter schools may have their charters revoked or not be approved for renewal.

C. Areas of Improvement

Numerous accountability requirements. Charter schools are created to provide innovation and choice in the public school system. They are granted autonomy to run themselves through a governing board and manage their own finances.

Many public school administrators of charter and non-charter schools are concerned with the numerous accountability measures that take time from the operation of a school. Charter schools are required to meet all accountability measures of traditional public schools and more. With the passage of the charter school accountability law in 2011, charter schools have been placed under a large number of accountability measures that many charter school operators believe impact the ability of charter schools to remain autonomous and innovative.

One of the next steps in the charter school movement will be to reduce reporting requirements for consistently high performing charter schools. Schools that routinely receive a total school grade of A or B and consistently operate efficiently and effectively in their organizational and financial performance could have some reporting requirements waived. Additionally, it would be possible to modify law and allow an authorizer to grant a longer charter term to deserving schools rather than the five year charter term presently allowed by law. Other states have allowed charters up to a ten year term.

Proposed changes to law.

As the charter school movement in New Mexico grew, the charter school law has evolved over time through a series of amendments. As a result of numerous amendments, the law could be improved through a more global review to ensure that it is internally consistent. Additionally, the provisions in the law should consider all ways in which charter schools are different from traditional public schools and should therefore be addressed differently than a traditional public school. Finally, the law could be improved by providing more autonomy to high performing schools and to more easily allow replication of those high-performers.

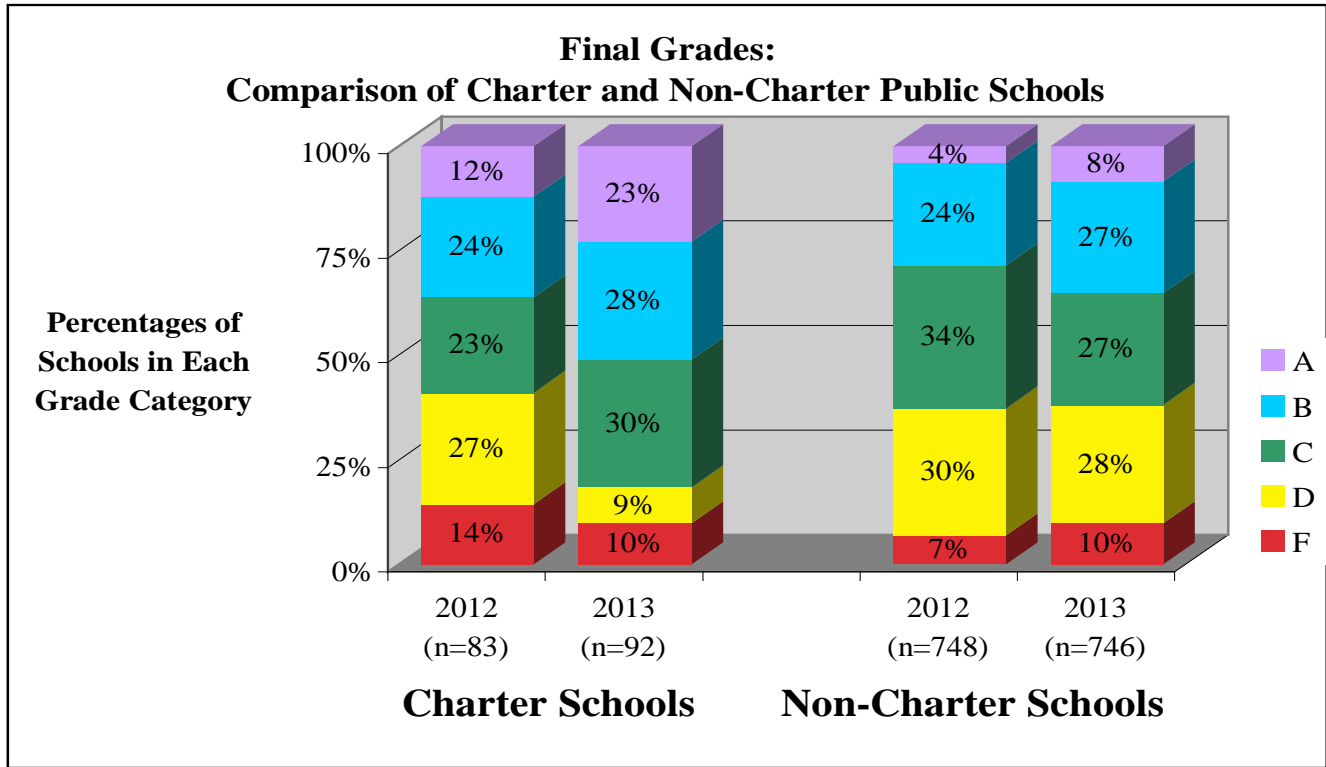
Conclusion

The successes and challenges facing New Mexico charter schools will be more fully revealed in once all charter schools negotiate contracts under the accountability law and as more and more data is collected through the A–F grading system. Within five years, the PED will have a full picture of how charter school accountability laws are working to promote better outcomes for students. However, the data are showing stronger and stronger performance by charter schools as each year is assessed. The trend is positive and the opportunity for more success is present.

Appendix A

Three View of Final Grades from School Grading from school year 2012–2013

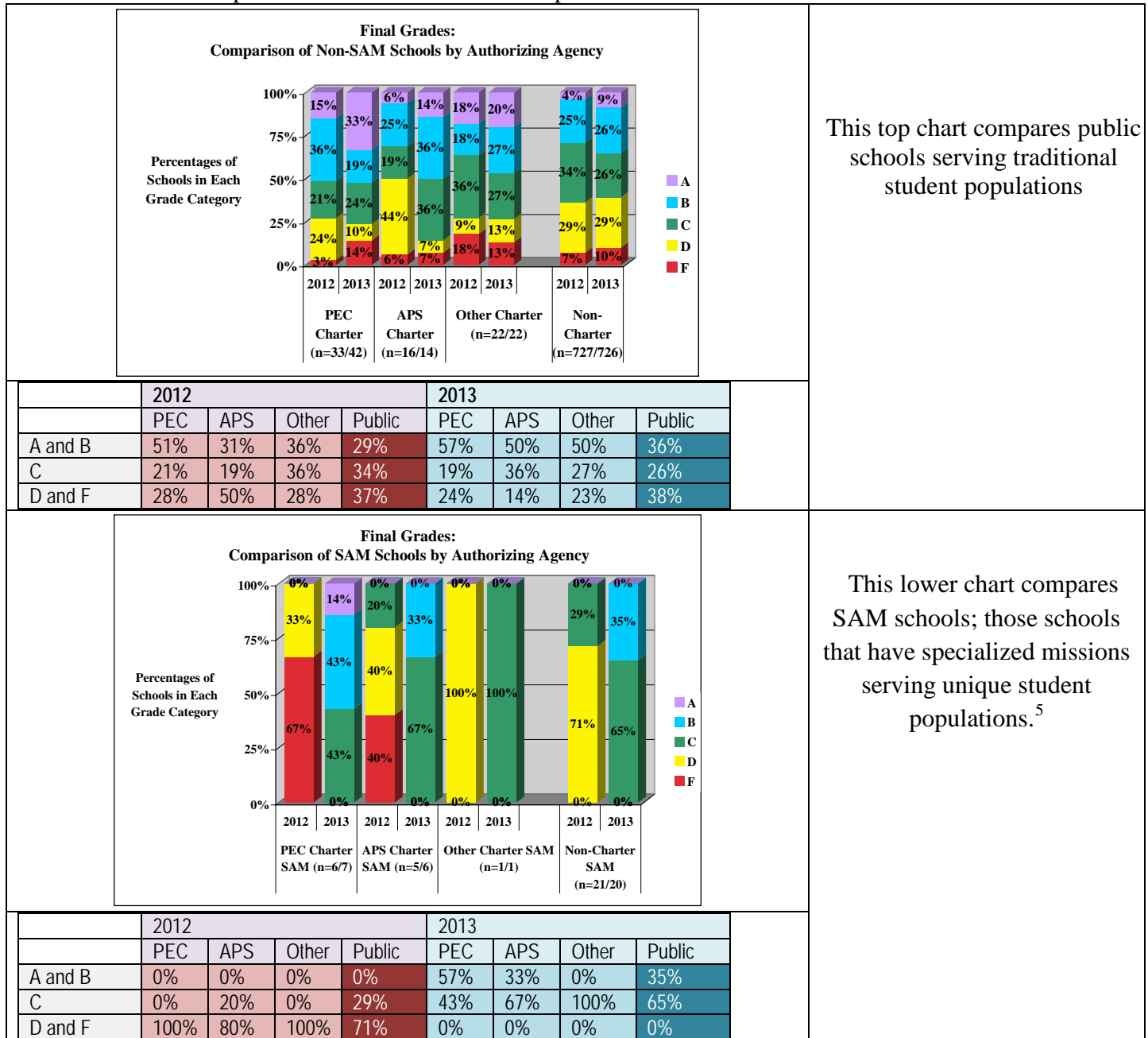
All Schools Compared



	2012		2013	
	Charter	Public	Charter	Public
A and B Scores combined	36%	28%	52%	35%
C Scores	23%	34%	29%	27%
D and F Scores combined	41%	38%	19%	38%

View of Final Grades by Charter School Authorizer Performance⁴

The following two charts divide the comparisons of schools between those schools serving traditional students (first) and those serving non-traditional students or those considered Supplemental Accountability Measure (SAM) schools (second). To make this chart, we took the schools from the previous page and split them into two categories. These two charts also look at performance of schools based on specific authorizers.

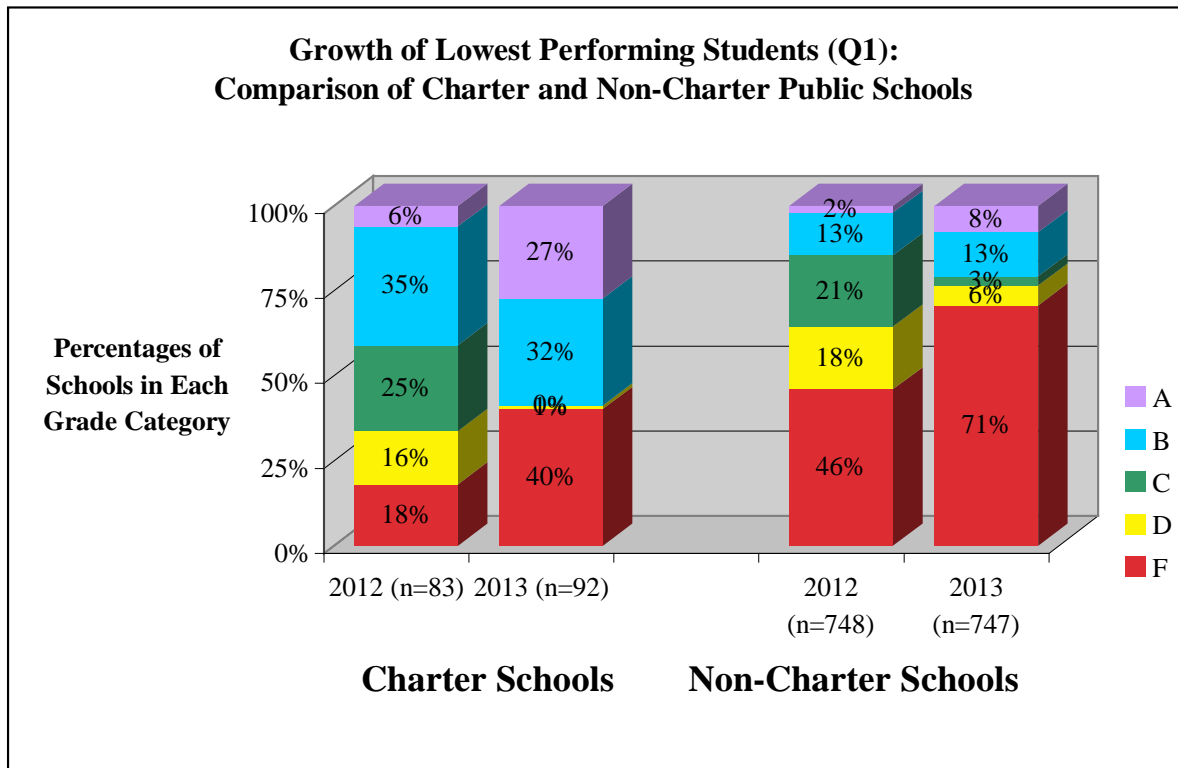


⁴The charter schools shown on the graphs on this page are separated by authorizers. The Public Education Commission (PEC) authorizes over 50 of the charter schools; the Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) authorizes approximately 15 schools; and other local authorizers authorize 22 schools combined. Due to changes in authorizers by renewing schools, these numbers can vary year to year. No other authorizer other than PEC and APS authorize enough schools to warrant being broken out separately and all others are combined and accounted for in "Other Charters."

⁵Please note that the PED worked to more correctly assess high schools from 2012 to 2013. School year 2012-2013 was the first year that student growth could be assessed at a student level rather than at a school level because more data were available. The student level data caused the scores to vary substantially. Because virtually all SAM schools are high schools, the data for SAM schools varied substantially from school years 2011-2012 to 2012-2013. Please also note that only one SAM charter school is authorized by an authorizer other than PEC or APS. Therefore, the Other Charter category only shows data from one school.

View of Growth Scores of Lowest Performing Students from 2012–2013

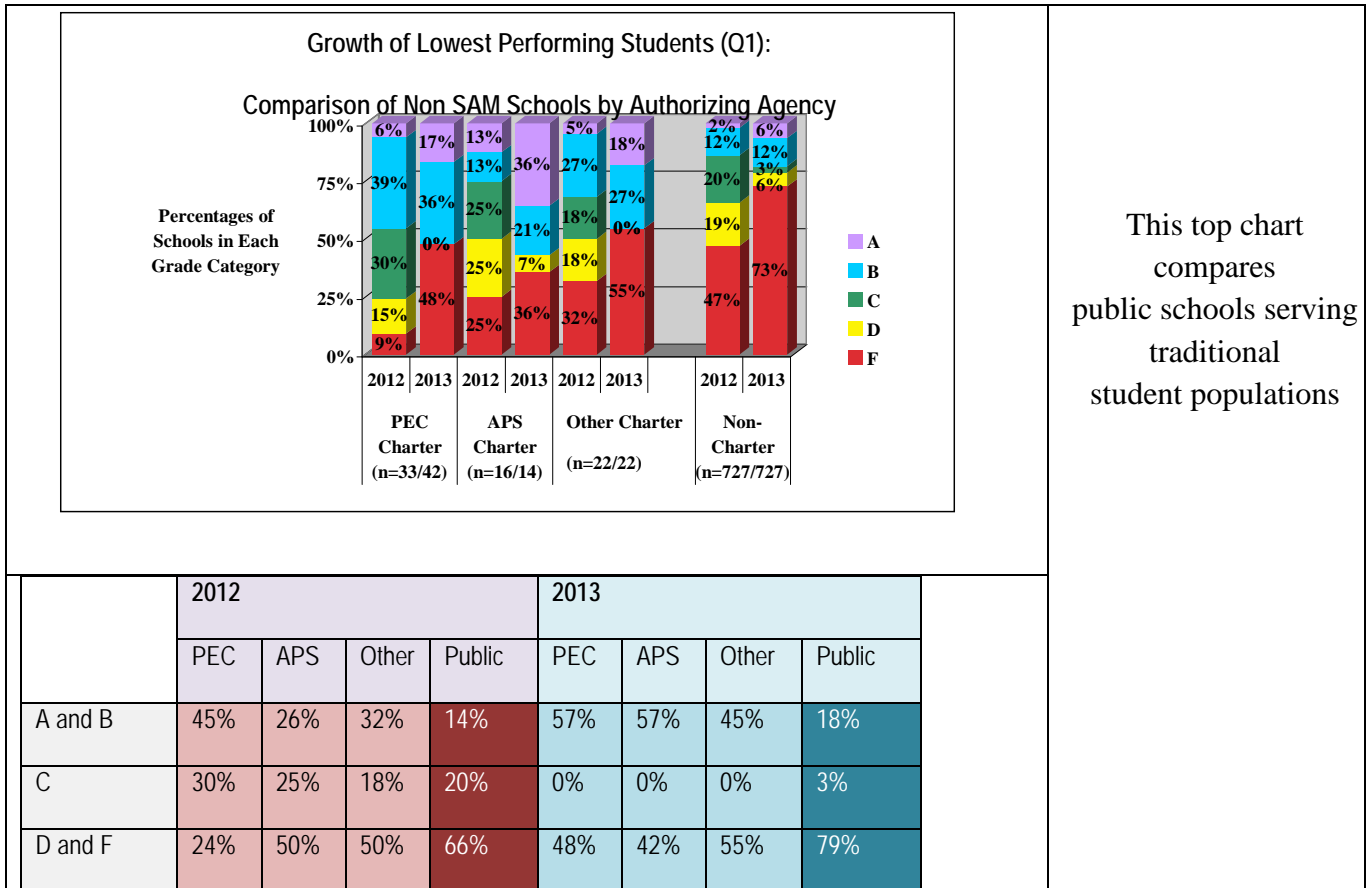
Q1 Students: All Schools Compared



	2012		2013	
	Charter	Public	Charter	Public
A and B Scores combined	41%	15%	59%	21%
C Scores	25%	21%	1%	3%
D and F Scores combined	34%	64%	40%	77%

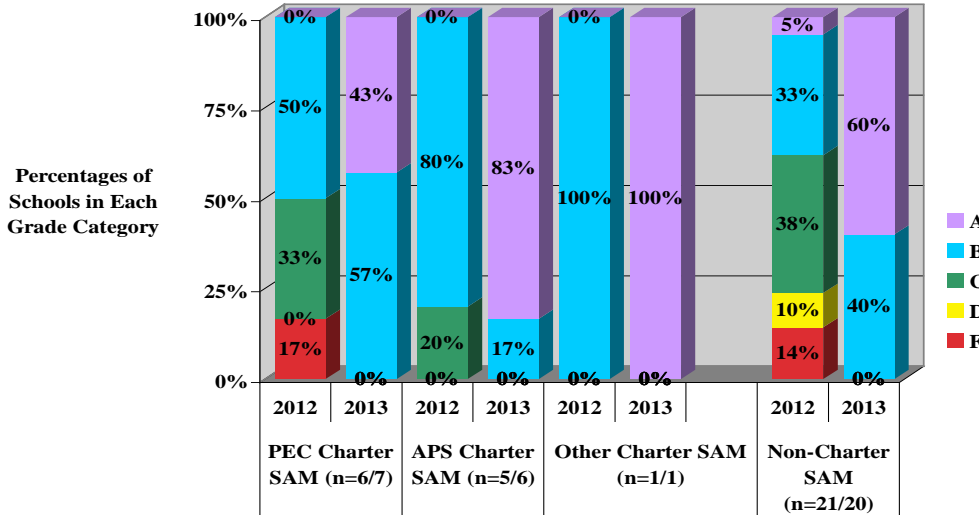
View of Growth Scores of Lowest Performing Students by Charter School Authorizer Performance⁶: All Q1 Students

The following two charts divide the comparisons of schools between those schools serving traditional students (first) and non-traditional students in SAM schools (second). To make this chart, we took the schools from the previous page and split them into two categories. These two charts also look at specific authorizers.



⁶ The charter schools shown on the graphs on this page are separated by authorizers. The Public Education Commission (PEC) authorizes over 50 of the charter schools; the Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) authorizes approximately 15 schools; and other local authorizers authorize 22 schools combined. Due to changes in authorizers by renewing schools, these numbers can vary year to year. No other authorizer other than PEC and APS authorize enough schools to warrant being broken out separately and are all combined and accounted for in "Other Charters."

**Growth of Lowest Performing Students (Q1):
Comparison of SAM Schools by Authorizing Agency**



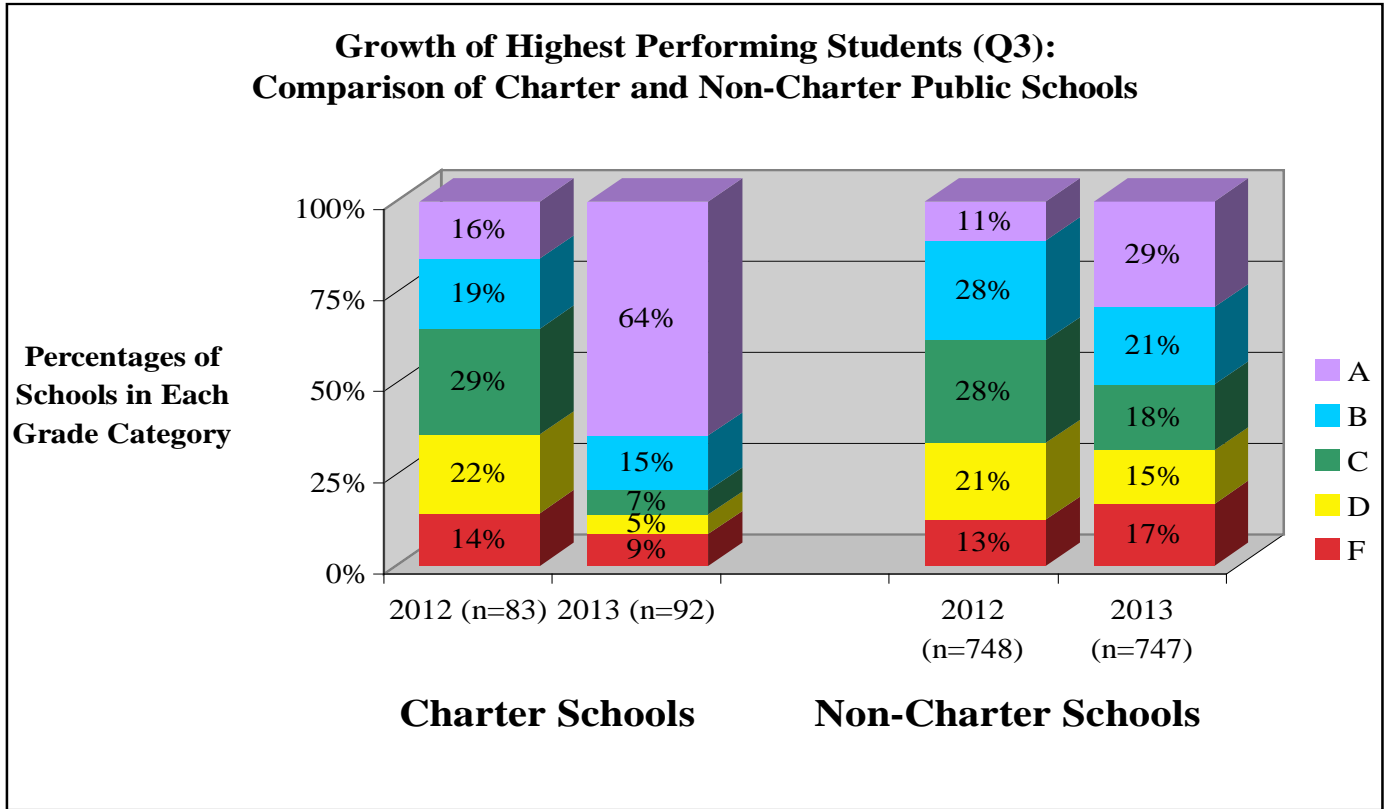
This lower chart compares SAM schools those schools that have specialized missions serving unique student populations.⁷

	2012				2013			
	PEC	APS	Other	Public	PEC	APS	Other	Public
A and B	50%	80%	100%	38%	100%	100%	100%	100%
C	33%	20%	0%	38%	0%	0%	0%	0%
D and F	17%	0%	0%	24%	0%	0%	0%	0%

⁷ Please note that PED worked to more correctly assess high schools from school years 2011–2012 to 2012–2013. School year 2012–2013 was the first year that student growth could be assessed at a student level rather than at a school level because more data were available. The student level data caused the scores to vary substantially. Because virtually all SAM schools are high schools, the data for SAM schools varied substantially from school years 2011–2012 to 2012–2013. Please also note that only one SAM charter school is authorized by an authorizer other than PEC or APS. Therefore, the Other Charter category only shows data from one school.

View of Growth Scores of Highest Performing Students from 2012-2013

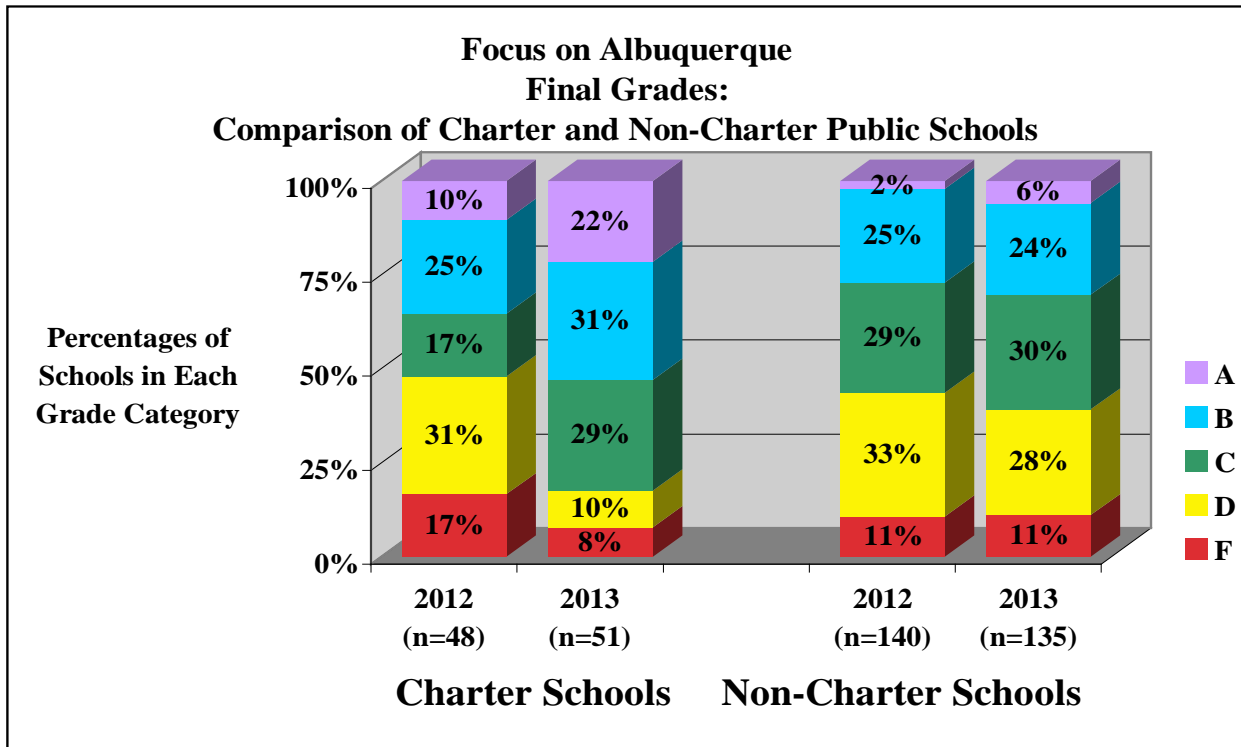
Q3 Students: All Schools Compared



	2012		2013	
	Charter	Public	Charter	Public
A and B Scores combined	35%	29%	79%	50%
C Scores	29%	28%	7%	18%
D and F Scores combined	36%	34%	14%	32%

Appendix B

Three Views of A-F School Grades from 2012–2013 Albuquerque Schools Compared

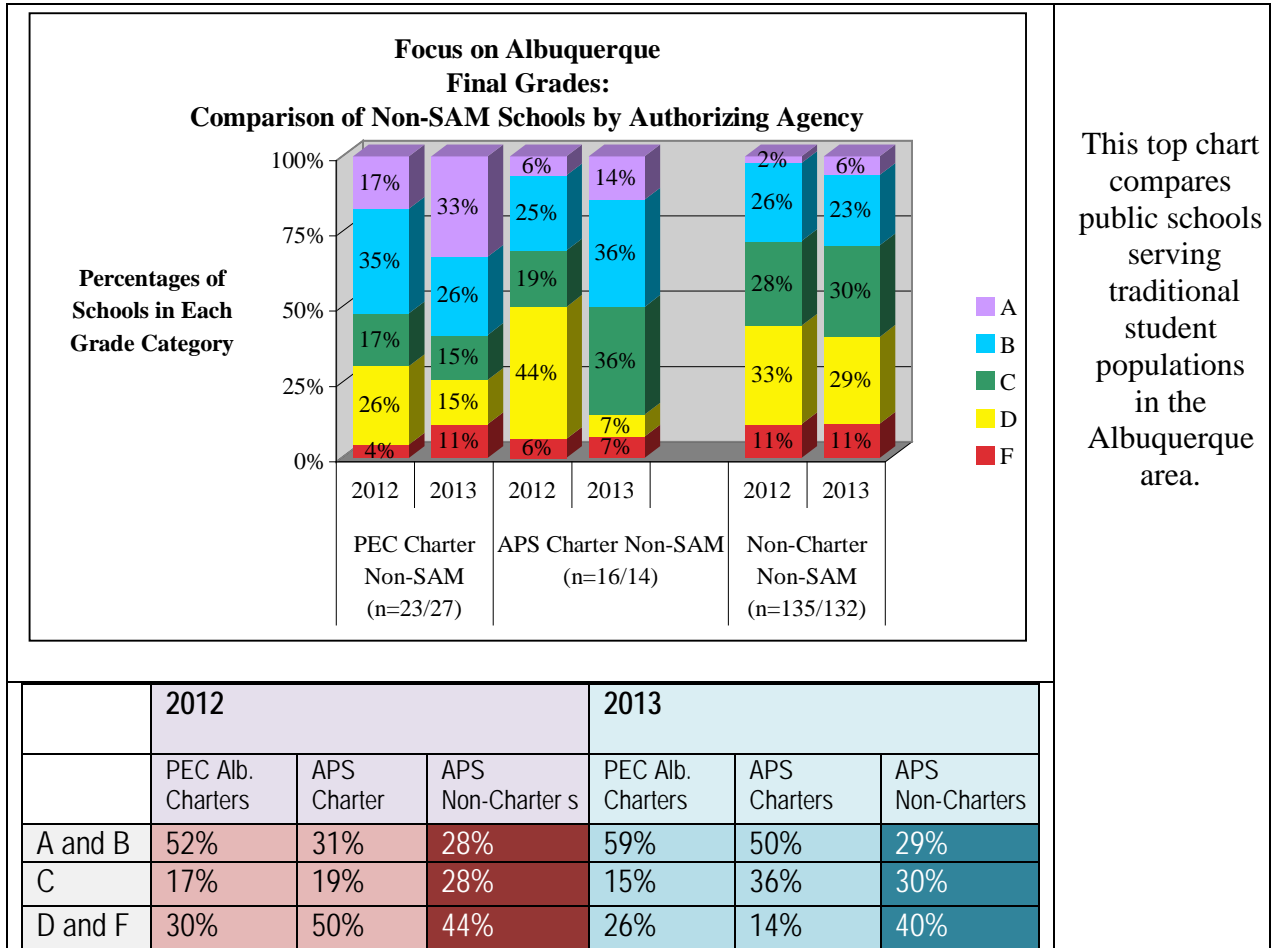


	2012—Albuquerque schools		2013—Albuquerque schools	
	Charter	Non-Charter	Charter	Non-Charter
A and B Scores combined	35%	27%	53%	30%
C Scores	17%	29%	29%	30%
D and F Scores combined	48%	44%	18%	39%

Focus on Albuquerque

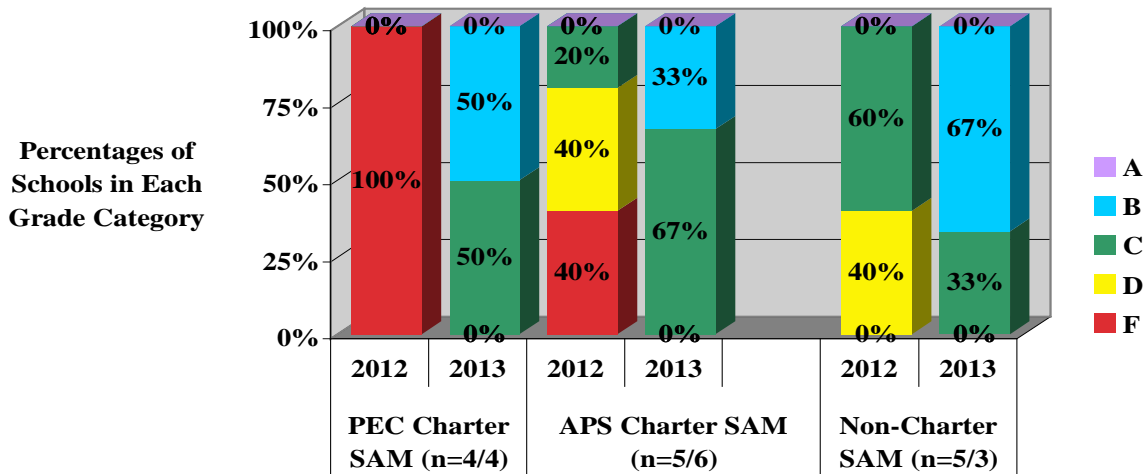
View of A–F Scores by Charter School Authorizer Performance⁸

The following charts look at schools in Albuquerque authorized by the PEC as state charter schools, authorized by APS as district charter schools, and all other public schools in APS. The following two charts divide the comparisons of schools between those schools serving traditional students (first) and non-traditional students in Supplemental Accountability Mea schools (second).



⁸ The charter schools shown on the graphs on this page are separated by authorizers in the Albuquerque area. The Public Education Commission (“PEC”) authorizes over 25 schools located in the Albuquerque area as state charter schools; Albuquerque Public Schools (“APS”) authorizes approximately 20. The other schools are non-charter schools operated by APS.

**Focus on Albuquerque
Final Grades:
Comparison of SAM Schools by Authorizing Agency**



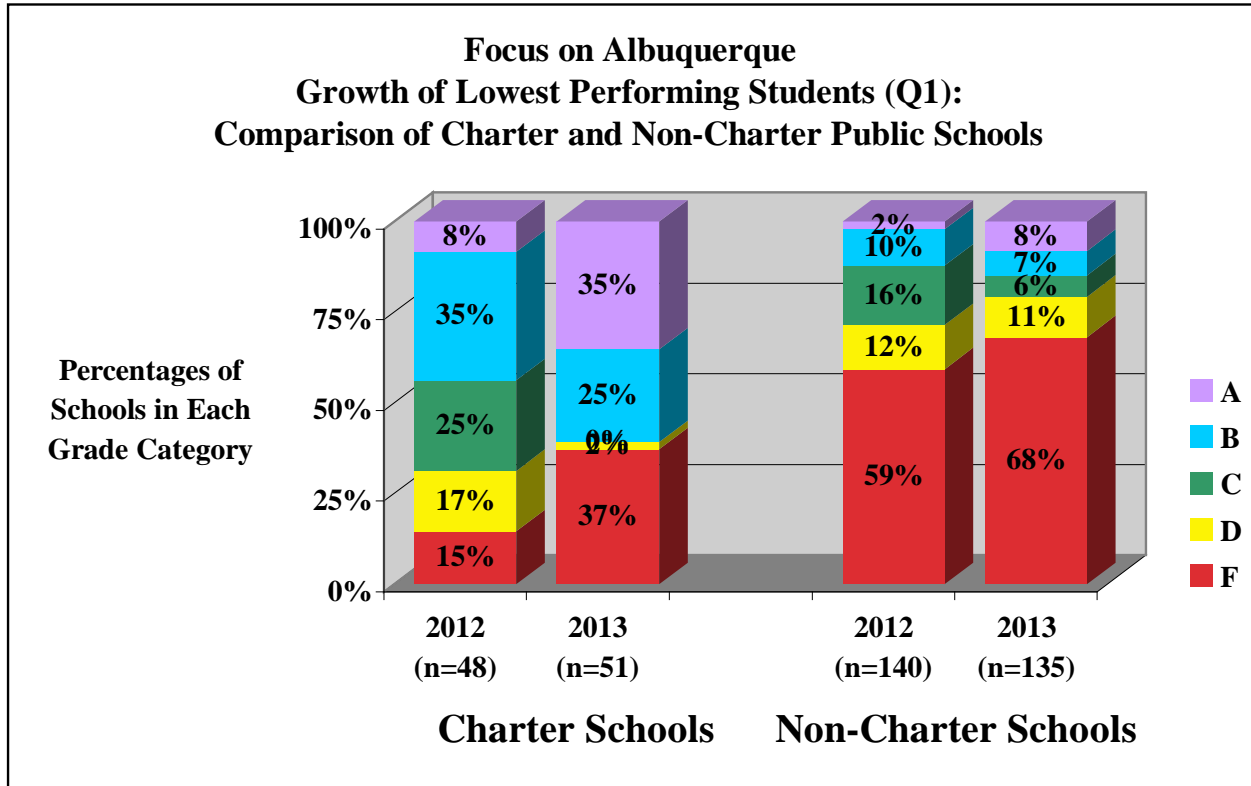
This lower chart compares SAM schools those schools that have specialized missions serving unique student populations in the Albuquerque area.⁹

	2012			2013		
	PEC Alb. Charters	APS Charter	APS Non-Charter	PEC Alb. Charters	APS Charters	APS Non-Charter
A and B	0%	0%	0%	50%	33%	67%
C	0%	20%	60%	50%	67%	33%
D and F	100%	80%	40%	0%	0%	0%

⁹ Please note that PED worked to more correctly assess high schools from school years 2011–2012 to 2012–2013. School year 2012–2013 was the first year that student growth could be assessed at a student level rather than at a school level because more data were available. The student level data caused the scores to vary substantially. Because virtually all SAM schools are high schools, the data for SAM schools varied substantially from school years 2011–2012 to 2012–2013. Please also note that only one SAM charter school is authorized by an authorizer other than PEC or APS. Therefore, the Other Charter category only shows data from one school.

Focus on Student Growth for Lowest Performing Students in Albuquerque

View of Q1 Scores by Charter School Authorizer Performance

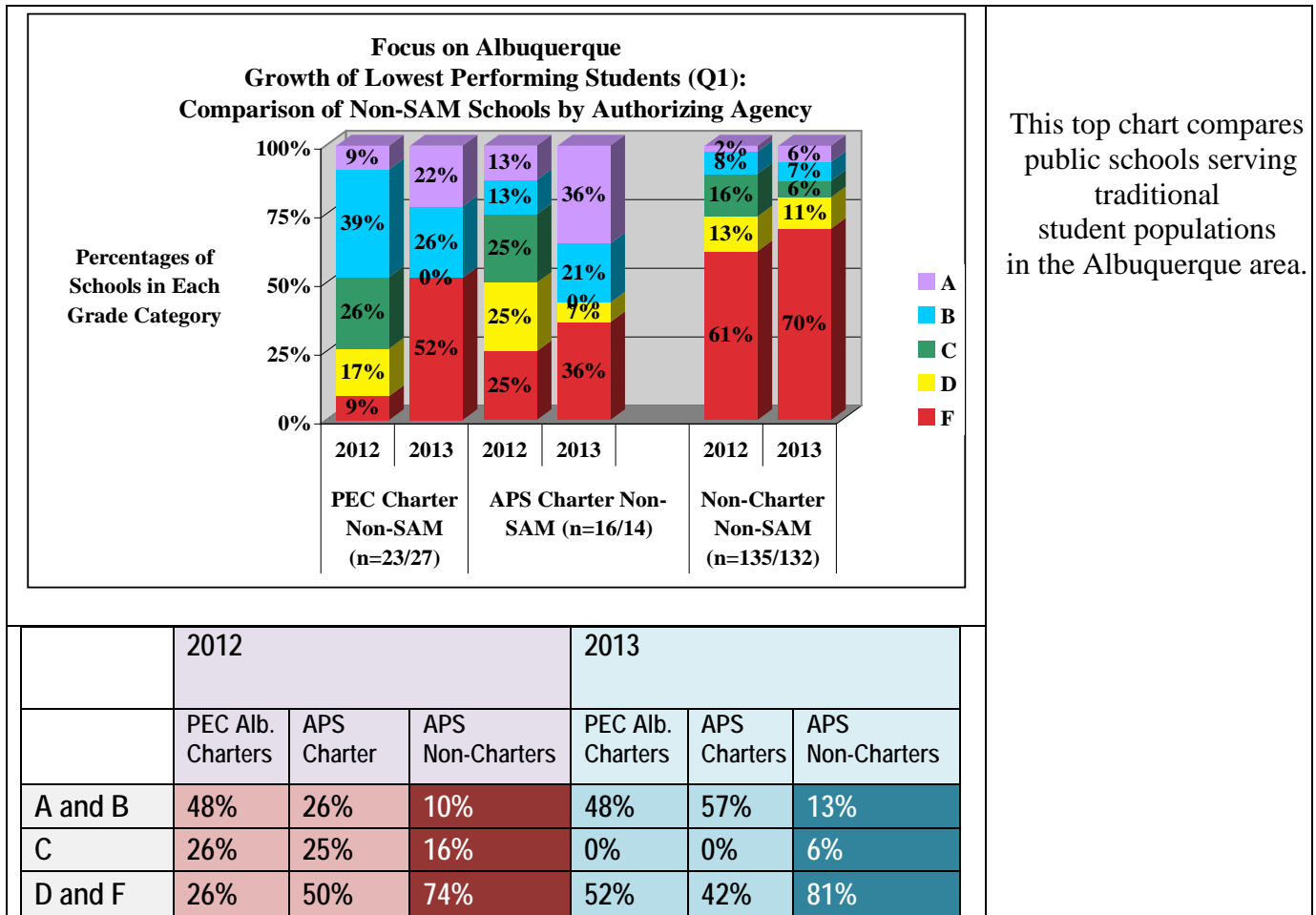


	2012—Albuquerque schools		2013—Albuquerque schools	
	Charter	Non-Charter	Charter	Non-Charter
A and B Scores combined	43%	12%	60%	15%
C Scores	25%	16%	0%	6%
D and F Scores combined	32%	71%	39%	79%

Focus on Student Growth for Lowest Performing Students in Albuquerque

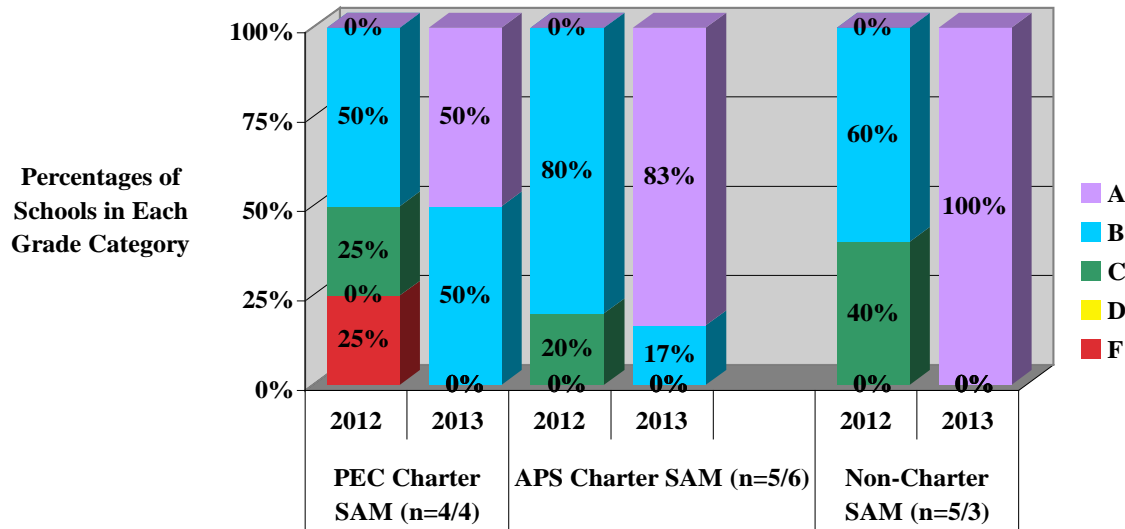
View of Q1 Scores by Charter School Authorizer Performance¹⁰

The following charts looks at schools in Albuquerque authorized by the PEC as state charter schools, authorized by APS as district charter schools, and public schools in APS. “Q1” refers to the lowest performing 25% of students in a given school, and the growth those students made during the year and over three years. The following two charts divide the comparisons of schools between those schools serving traditional students (first) and non-traditional students in SAM schools (second).



¹⁰ The charter schools shown on the graphs on this page are separated by authorizers in the Albuquerque area. The Public Education Commission (“PEC”) authorizes over 25 schools located in the Albuquerque area as state-chartered charters; Albuquerque Public Schools (“APS”) authorizes approximately 20. The other schools are non-charter schools operated by APS.

**Focus on Albuquerque
Growth of Lowest Performing Students (Q1):
Comparison of SAM Schools by Authorizing**



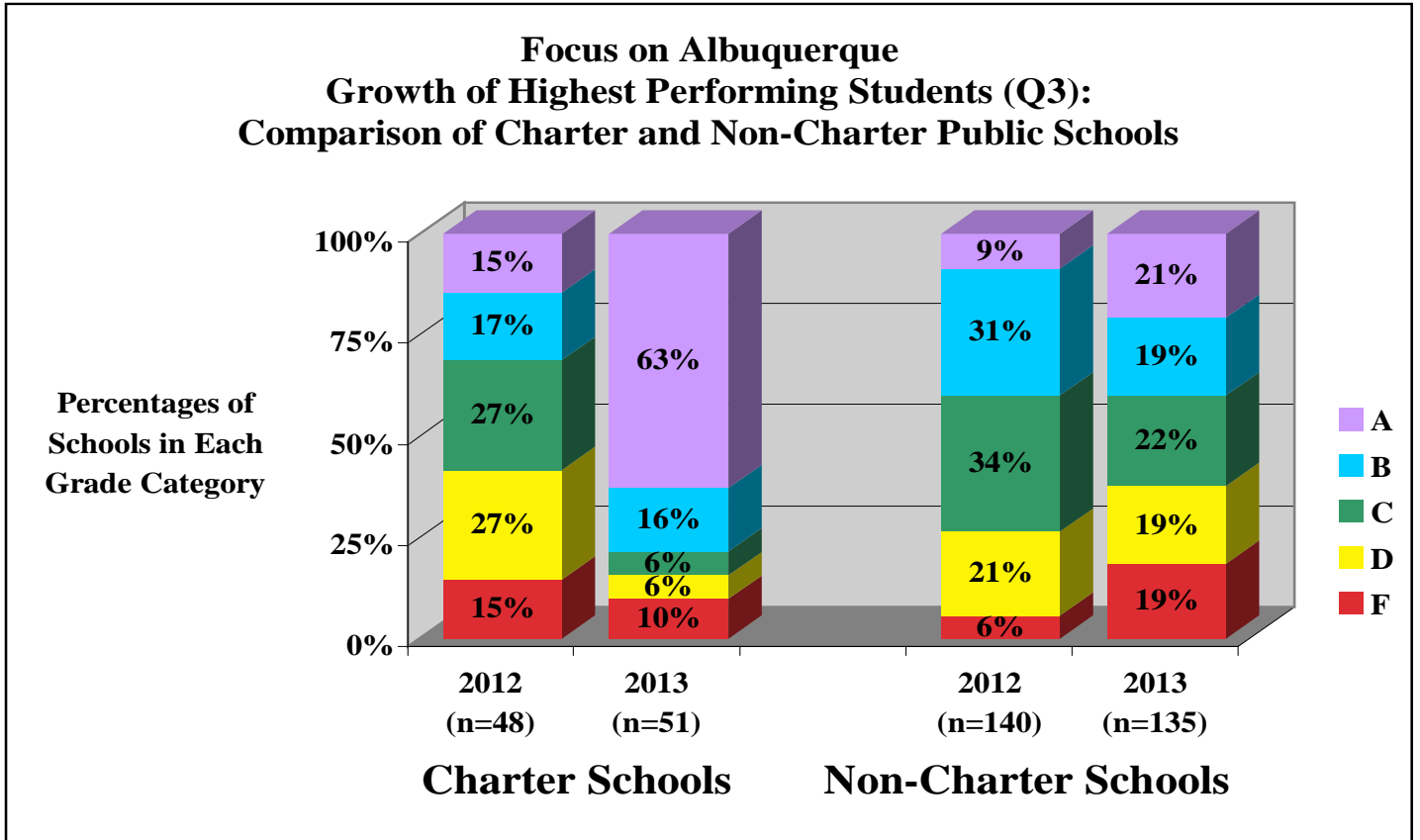
This lower chart compares SAM schools those schools that have specialized missions serving unique student populations in the Albuquerque area.¹¹

	2012			2013		
	PEC Alb. Charters	APS Charter	APS Non-Charters	PEC Alb. Charters	APS Charters	APS Non-Charters
A and B	50%	80%	60%	100%	100%	100%
C	25%	20%	40%	0%	0%	0%
D and F	25%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

¹¹ Please note that PED worked to more correctly assess high schools from school years 2011–2012 to 2012–2013. School year 2012–2013 was the first year that student growth could be assessed at a student level rather than at a school level because more data were available. The student level data caused the scores to vary substantially. Because virtually all SAM schools are high schools, the data for SAM schools varied substantially from school years 2011–2012 to 2012–2013.

Focus on Student Growth for Highest Performing Students in Albuquerque

View of Q3 Scores by Charter School Authorizer Performance

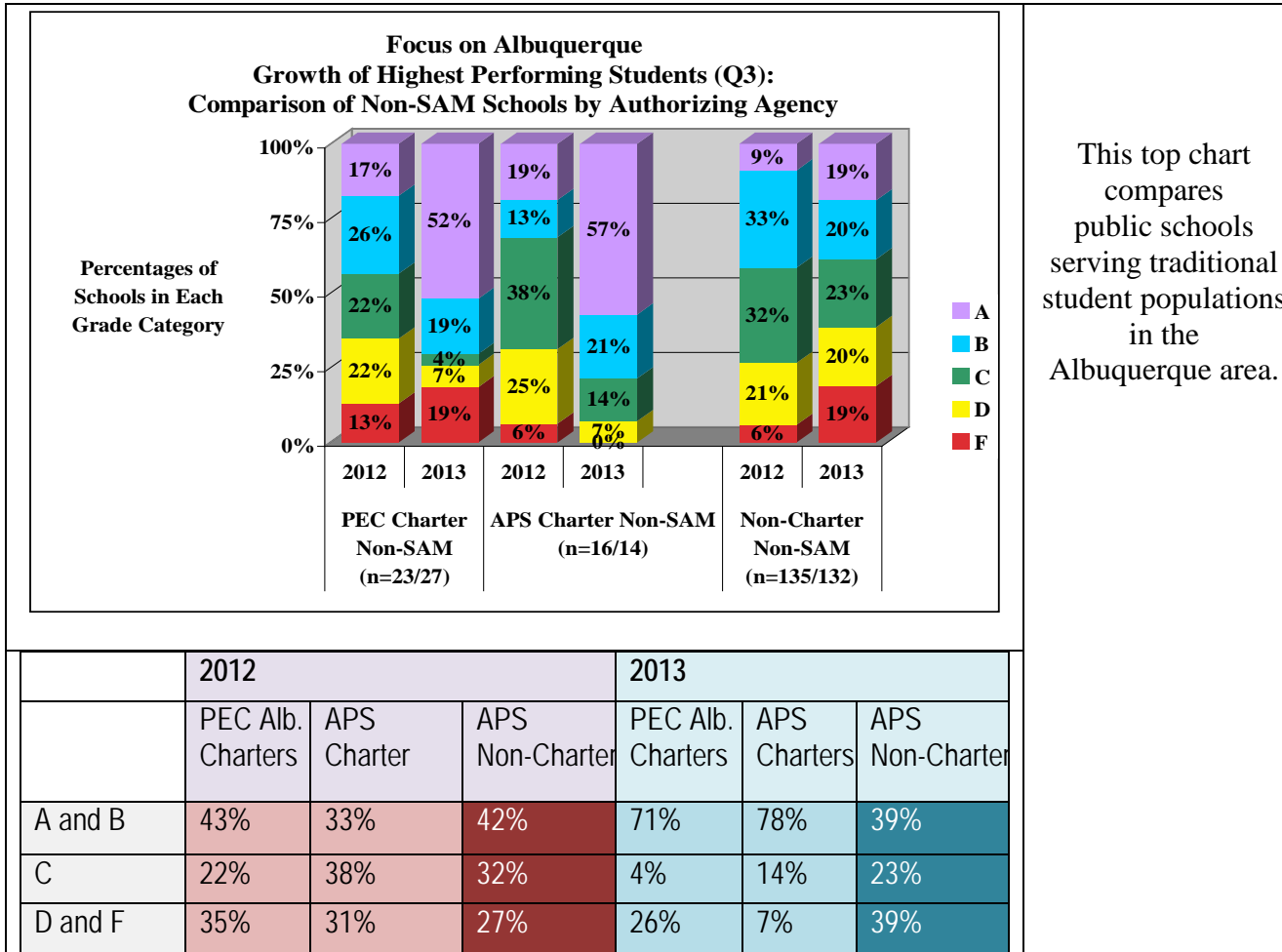


	2012— Albuquerque schools		2013— Albuquerque schools	
	Charter	Non- Charter	Charter	Non- Charter
A and B scores combined	32%	40%	79%	40%
C scores	27%	34%	6%	22%
D and F scores combined	42%	27%	16%	36%

Focus on Student Growth for Highest Performing Students in Albuquerque

View of Q3 Scores by Charter School Authorizer Performance¹²

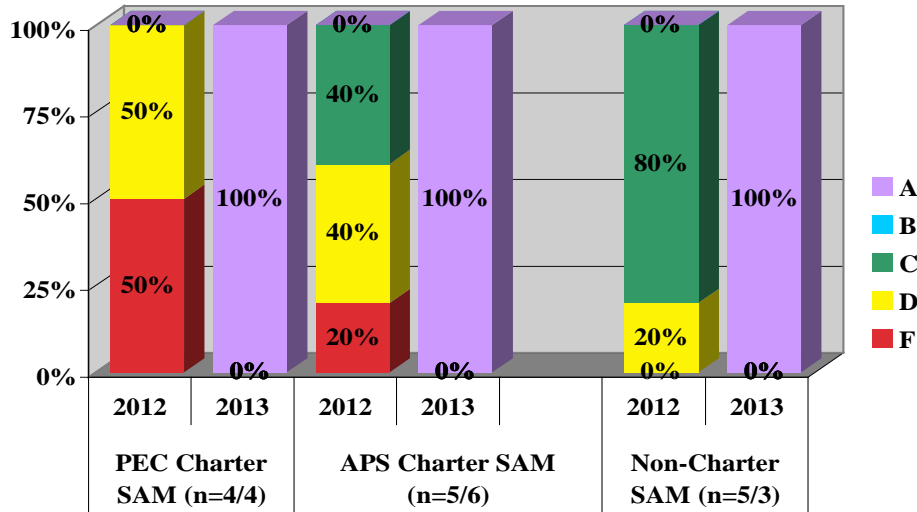
The following charts look at schools in Albuquerque authorized by the PEC as state charter schools, authorized by APS as district charter schools, and public schools in APS. “Q3” refers to the highest performing 75% of students in any given school, and the growth those students made during the year and over three years. The following two charts divide the comparisons of schools between those schools serving traditional students (first) and non-traditional students in SAM schools (second).



¹² The charter schools shown on the graphs on this page are separated by authorizers in the Albuquerque area. The Public Education Commission (“PEC”) authorizes over 25 schools located in the Albuquerque area as state charter schools; Albuquerque Public Schools (“APS”) authorizes approximately 20. The other schools are non-charter schools operated by APS.

**Focus on Albuquerque
Growth of Highest Performing Students (Q3):
Comparison of SAM Schools by Authorizing Agency**

Percentages of Schools in Each Grade Category



This lower chart compares SAM schools; those schools that have specialized missions serving unique student populations in the Albuquerque area.¹³

	2012			2013		
	PEC Alb. Charters	APS Charter	APS Non-Charters	PEC Alb. Charters	APS Charters	APS Non-Charters
A and B	0%	0%	0%	100%	100%	100%
C	0%	40%	80%	0%	0%	0%
D and F	100%	60%	20%	0%	0%	0%

¹³ Please note that PED worked to more correctly assess high schools from school years 2011–2012 to 2012–2013. School Year 2012–2013 was the first year that student growth could be assessed at a student level rather than at a school level because more data were available. The student level data caused the scores to vary substantially. Because virtually all SAM schools are high schools, the data for SAM schools varied substantially from school years 2011–2012 to 2012–2013.