

Final Evaluation Report
Arkansas Charter Schools
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Executive Summary

This is an evaluation of all of the charter schools, and the charter school system, in the State of Arkansas. It was conducted by Huron Mountain Research Services, LLC during the winter and spring of 2006. It covers a history and Arkansas legal basis for charter schools, an analysis of the scholastic performance of the Arkansas charter schools, a review of the disciplinary records for these schools, and an analysis of the School Climate, Student, Teacher, and Parent Surveys conducted among some of the charter schools.

The history of the charter school movement begins in 1991 with Minnesota's passage of the first charter school law, inaugurating its first charter schools during the 1992-93 school year. This law, and others following it, including the Arkansas charter school law of 1995, defined charter schools as public schools with their own charter to demonstrate innovative and effective pedagogy. Thus the autonomy and authority given to charter schools is to be redeemed by their producing a higher level of performance among their students.

In examining other state's charter school system we find that autonomy is often compromised, and that states have a variety of methods of financing their charter schools, most of them attempting to provide equitable financing.

Arkansas has two types of charter schools. Conversion Charter Schools, of which there were 9 in the 2005-06 school year, are a school within a district which is chartered by the State Board of Education as a charter school. Open Enrollment Charter Schools, of which there were 8 in the 2005-06 school year, are completely new schools chartered by the state. Conversion Charter Schools can only accept students from within the district. Open Enrollment Charter Schools can accept students from anywhere in the state.

An examination of scholastic performance produced uneven results. Four of the six Open Enrollment Charter Schools which teach seventh grade had average scores higher than the state average for proficiency and beyond in literacy, no data were available for one¹, and one had average scores much lower than the state average. This same pattern evidenced itself in mathematics scores. Among Conversion Charter Schools, most are devoted to teaching "at risk" students, but one school for which data were available, Osceola Academic Center of Excellence,

¹ For this school, and a number of Conversion Charter Schools, data were not available to the evaluators because of Arkansas rules under the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. section 1232g and the regulations that implement it (34 C.F.R. part 99). Under this act, and under Arkansas rules applying this act, data of grades in schools with insufficient numbers to ensure nondisclosure of identity are not made available to third parties, which included the evaluators.

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had average scores for literacy which were higher than the state average; its mathematics' scores were equal to the schools in its region.

With respect to disciplinary records, Open Enrollment Charter Schools recorded one assault among the eight schools. Three of the Conversion Charter Schools recorded assaults. Attendance records among Open Enrollment Charter Schools indicate that four of the eight charter schools had attendance rates higher than the state average; the lowest rate was 1.3% below the state average. Among Conversion Charter Schools the attendance range of four of the nine conversion charter schools was higher than the state average; the lowest rate was 11.9% below the state average.

The School Climate Survey, which includes School Satisfaction Surveys for Students, Teachers, and Parents, was analyzed for the following five schools which submitted their completed surveys in time for scanning and processing:

KIPP: Delta College Preparatory School
Lisa Academy
Arise Charter School
Blytheville Charter School
Cabot Academic Center for Excellence

A generally favorable school climate in the three Open Enrollment Schools, considered together, and in both Conversion Charter Schools, considered together. Regarding the Student Satisfaction Survey, students were at least generally satisfied with all the schools, considered in the two groups indicated just above.

Teachers were satisfied at all five of the charter schools. And Parents registered satisfaction with each school.

Finally, the following then recommendations were made:

1. Charters should be more critically reviewed. Particularly, greater scrutiny has to be devoted to performance goals, if only to accord with State law.
2. To eliminate discriminatory financing for Open Enrollment Charter Schools, the State should finance each such school with an annual payment equal to the state average public school district per pupil annual revenue. An additional payment for facilities should also be made.

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3. To provide more autonomy for Conversion Charter Schools, the state should finance them directly.
4. Consistent with the Koret Report, HMRS also recommends the authorization of separate school boards for each Conversion Charter School, to which that school would be answerable.
5. The current legal system of empowering only the State Board of Education to charter schools should be maintained. This allows for a clear channel of authority and oversight.
6. To adequately monitor charter schools, particularly the Open Enrollment Charter Schools, the Charter School Office should conduct at least two structured monitoring visits to each school.
7. The Charter School Office should ensure that all monitors use the same site visit protocol to structure each monitoring visit as additional staff is assigned to monitoring.
8. To conduct effective oversight and monitoring of the charter schools, the Director of the Charter School Office should be authorized and provided with two professional staff. The Director should be promoted to a rank consistent with such responsibility.
9. The Department of Education should conduct a financial analysis of all charter schools directly financed by the State.
10. The Charter School Office should publish a periodical newsletter for charter schools and charter school parents. This also requires that the Director have additional staff.

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Introduction

This is an evaluation of the entire set of charter schools in Arkansas operating during the 2005-06 school year. During the 2005-06 school year 17 charter schools were operating in the state of Arkansas. Eight of these are open enrollment charter schools; nine are conversion charter schools. They are distributed throughout the state, with the exception of the Southwest. There are concentrations of charter schools in Pulaski, Faulkner and Lonoke Counties, in the center of Arkansas. These three counties account for seven charter schools, Pulaski with four, Faulkner with two and Lonoke with one. Washington and Benton Counties in the Northwest are another area of concentration, with three charter schools; two in Washington County and one in Benton County. Mississippi County in the Northeast is the only other county with more than one charter school. Mississippi County hosts two conversion charter schools.

Although Title 6, Chapter 23, Section 404 of the Arkansas School Code requires the annual evaluation of the charter schools, this appears to be only the second evaluation since the first charters opened during the 2001-02 school year. The previous evaluation was conducted by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NREL) in Portland, Oregon, and was restricted to the Open Enrollment Charter Schools operating in the 2001-02 school year, of which there were two. These were Academics Plus in Maumelle and Benton County School of the Arts in Rogers, both of which continued to be operated during the 2005-06 school year. Why the evaluation did not include the four Conversion Charters Schools also operating during the 2001-02 school year is not explained.

This report will briefly discuss the methodology of the evaluation in the next section. After that, it will discuss Arkansas' charter schools legally and in the perspective of those of other states. Following that will be a suggested taxonomy of Arkansas' charter schools, following which will be a discussion of missions and operations of the charter schools. The discussion of operations will include a discussion of the financial factor. Then an extended discussion of the scholastic performance of each school will occur. The final section deals with the attitudes expressed by the sub-set of charter schools whose School Climate Survey data were able to be analyzed.

Methodology

Three methods were used to retrieve data on which to base this evaluation. The first is the structured site visit. Thus, each charter school was visited by a member of HMRS in which the Principal, or sometimes the Superintendent, was interviewed, one or more teachers were interviewed, and the physical structure was observed, in accordance with a fixed protocol. Additionally, in conversation with the Principal, the status of the school's mission, and any amendments to that were discussed, as well as other major issues affecting the school. The protocol for these visits is reproduced in Appendix A.

The second method used was the administration of the School Climate Survey, which consists of a student school climate questionnaire, and student, teacher, and parent school satisfaction questionnaires. The administration of this survey was done late in the school year, and eleven schools returned completed questionnaires, but only five in time for scanning and analysis. Both charter and open enrollment schools are represented among the five, and some limited findings can be made. These are reported below. Copies of the School Climate Survey instruments may be found in Appendix C.

The third method, productive of very copious data, is the statistical analysis of test and school data, managed by the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, and from which we derived the files for our analysis. This analysis is performed with the SPSS statistical system. And we use standard data management techniques, including the elimination of outliers.

Arkansas Charter Schools

Origin

The charter school movement in the United States began in 1988, when Albert Shanker, President of the American Federation of Teachers, called for the reform of the public schools by establishing “charter schools.”² As originally conceived

the ideal model of a charter school as a legally and financially autonomous *public* school (no tuition, religious affiliation, or selective student admissions) that would operate much like a private business—free from nonessential state laws and district regulations, and accountable more for student outcomes rather than for processes or inputs (such as Carnegie Units and teacher certification requirements).³

Minnesota was the first state to pass a charter school law, in 1991. California was second, in 1992. Arkansas passed its charter school law in 1995, by which time there were 19 states with charter school laws. The Arkansas charter school law⁴ was amended in 1999, and again in 2005. The 2005 amendment changed the funding guarantee for Open Enrollment Charter Schools⁵, and extended the period of the charter from three to five years.

² Resources on Minnesota Issues: Charter Schools, Minnesota Legislative Reference Library, <http://www.leg.state.mn.us/lrl/iswsues/charter.asp>.

³ Lori A Mulholland, Senior Research Specialist, “Charter schools: The Reform and the Research,” Morrison Institute for Public Policy, Policy Brief, March 1996, p.1.

⁴ Section 5-23 of the Arkansas School Code.

⁵ For funding, cf: §6-23-307(11); for extending the contract term cf: §6-23-103(1) & §6-23-307.

Legal Status

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The Arkansas School Code defines a charter school as “...a public school that is operating

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under the terms of a charter granted by the State Board of Education...”⁶ And a ‘charter’ is

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defined as

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performance-based contract for an initial five-year period that converts a public

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school to a charter school or authorized the creation and conditional operation of

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an open-enrollment charter school, which exempts the charter school for state and

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local rules, regulations, policies, and procedures specified in the contract and from

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the provisions of § 6-1-101 *et seq.* specified in the contract.⁷

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Chartering Process

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The chartering process in Arkansas is fairly straightforward. Any eligible entity in

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Arkansas can petition the State Board of Education for a charter. There are three types of

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eligible entities in Arkansas. These are 1) a public institution of higher education, 2) a private,

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nonsectarian institution of higher education, and 3) a nonprofit corporation which has been

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granted taxation exemption by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (Section 501(c)(3) of the

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Internal Revenue Code). If the State Board of Education finds that adequate provision for 1)

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improving student learning and for meeting or exceeding the state educational goals, 2) that it

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includes a set of performance-based objectives and student achievement objectives for the term

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of the charter, 3) includes a proposal to directly and substantially involve the parents in the

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process of carrying out the charter, and 4) includes an agreement to provide a yearly report to

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parent, the community, the local board, and the state board of the progress made by the school in

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meeting its performance objectives, then it will grant the charter. In procedural terms, the

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petitioners approach the Charter School Office in the Department of Education, which then

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prepares the petition for presentation to the Board. Any inadequacies in the petition may be

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identified by the Office, and the petitioner will have the opportunity to improve their charter

petition.

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The first state to authorize the creation of charter schools was Minnesota, passing its first

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charter school law in 1991, and launching its first charter schools during the 2002-03 school

year.

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The Minnesota Charter School law provides an applicant with an automatic waiver from most

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state and district education laws, regulations, and policies. Minnesota has multiple chartering

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authorities, including local school boards, post secondary educational institutions, charitable

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agencies with fund balances of at least \$2,000.000, and a non-profit corporation, if it has existed for at least 25 years. There are three types of charters, converted public schools, converted

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private schools, and new starts. There is a Charter School Advisory Council, appointed by the Commissioner, which acts as an ombudsman for the charters, and provides financial

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management training, and other assistance. Currently there are 120⁸ charter schools in Minnesota.

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The funding procedure for Minnesota charter schools is a bit complex. First, charter schools receive the same per pupil formula payment as do regular public schools. Second,

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charter schools get the average of aid payments to districts for “...sparsity, operating capital, training & experience, equity, [and for] gifted & talented.” Third, they receive compensatory aid

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for free and reduced lunch counts. Fourth, they receive LEP funding of \$14,000 for the first 20 or less LEP students, and additional \$700 per pupil for each LEP over 20. Fifth, charter schools

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receive the aid portion of the district referendum levy(ies) from the district of which their students are resident. And sixth, charter schools may apply for lease aid to rent facilities. Lease

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aid is paid at the lesser of \$1,200 per pupil or \$50,000. And charter schools receive state startup aid in their first 2 years of operation, with the payment being the greater of \$500 per pupil or

\$50,000.⁹

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Texas passed its charter school law in 1995 and was amended in 2001. That law provides for no automatic waivers, but requires the applicant to petition for specific waivers. There are

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two chartering authorities in Texas, the State Board of Education and local school boards. There are three types of charters, converted public schools, converted private schools, and new starts.

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All converted public and private school charters are authorized by local school boards. New starts are authorized by the State Board of Education. Texas law limits the number of charters to

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215, not including charters applied for by public universities. Texas currently has 259 charter schools.

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Charter schools in Texas receive the same per pupil expenditure for maintenance and operations as other Texas public schools, but they do not receive capital funding.¹⁰

Utah

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Utah passed its charter school authorization law in 1998, with amendments in 2004. The law does not grant automatic waivers; rather, the applicant has to indicate which waivers it

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wants. All charter schools have to be “approved” by the State Board of Education, and they must be “authorized” by local school boards or the State Charter School Board. There are two

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types of charter schools in Utah, converted public schools and new starts. State law has also created a State Charter School Board. It has seven members and one chair. The seven members

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are appointed by the Governor, and the chair is appointed by the State Superintendent, with the approval of the seven members. This State Charter School Board has the authority to authorize and promote new charter schools, and to review, monitor, and evaluate charter schools which it has authorized. Utah currently has 50 charter schools.

The funding of each charter school in Utah is determined by the fiscal situation of the district in which it is located. Thus, the charter school receives for each of its pupils the sum of the school district's operations and maintenance revenues derived from local property taxes, the capitol project revenues derived from local property taxes, and the expenditures for interest on debt, this sum then divided by school district membership. The result is the per pupil payment for the charter school or schools resident in that district. The law's further proviso is that 10% of the monies received by the charter school must be expended for funding school facilities only.¹¹

Colorado

Colorado passed its charter school law in 1993, with the first charter schools starting in the 1994-95 school year. The law was amended in 2001 and in 2004. Charter schools in Colorado are authorized only by local school districts, and they remain a semi-autonomous part of that school district. Although the state grants waivers from state law, any waiver from district regulations or procedures has to be negotiated with the school district. There are two types of charter school, a converted public school or a new start, but both types are organized and authorized under aegis of the local school district. In 2004 the Colorado Charter School Institute was created.¹² The mission of the Institute Board is to foster high quality public school education through charter schools and to provide an alternative mode of authorizing charter schools. The bill also authorizes the Institute to assist school districts in utilizing best practices for chartering schools and to approve and oversee charter schools in districts not desiring to do so themselves, usually small districts. Colorado had 110 charter schools in school year 2004-05.

Charter schools in Colorado are funded by their authorizing local district, at the rate of 95% of the district's per pupil revenue. School districts with 500 or fewer members may pay 85% of their per pupil revenue. Charter schools may also issue bonds through the municipal bonding authority.

Michigan

Michigan passed its charter school law in 1993, and amended it in 2003. The law provides for no automatic waivers. Charter schools, as with regular public schools, have to seek waivers on a case by case basis. The law, and many educators, do not use the term "charter school," but instead refer to "public school academies." Michigan's public school academies (PSA) are authorized by local school boards, intermediate school boards, community colleges, or

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state public universities. The three types of PSAs are converted public schools, converted private schools, and new starts. Unlike most states with charter schools, a large proportion of the PSAs in Michigan are administered by for profit companies. Because many of these companies have multiples schools under the same administration, the count of PSAs in Michigan is ambiguous. Thus, there are 216 chartered PSAs in Michigan as of December 8, 2005. There were also 272 separate schools.

Michigan PSAs receive 100% of the average per pupil revenue of all of the state's districts directly from the state. This ensures the fiscal autonomy of each PSA from the district in which it is located.

Types of Charter Schools

Legal Definitions

Thus, as alluded to in the definition of a charter, the School Code defines two types of charter schools in Arkansas, a Conversion Charter School and an Open Enrollment Charter School

Conversion Charter Schools

A Conversion Charter School is a school building or buildings of a school district for which the district school board has petitioned and has been granted a charter by the State Board of Education. A Conversion Charter School remains fully funded by the district, and under the administrative authority of the district superintendent. Thus, it is a charter only in the sense that certain waivers have been granted. The Koret Task Force report of 2005 cites the legal inadequacy of the legal definition of Conversion Charter Schools.¹³ Of the 17 charter schools currently operating, nine are Conversion Charter Schools

Open Enrollment Charter Schools

An Open Enrollment Charter School is a school approved and chartered by the State Board of Education upon petition for such approval by a public institution of higher education, a private nonsectarian institution of higher education, or a nonsectarian and nonprofit organization or corporation which has received 501(c)(3) status from the federal Internal Revenue Service. The petitioners are required to provide notice to the board(s) of the district or districts from which the charter school is expected to draw students. No Open Enrollment Charter School may be established in a district which has a total enrollment less than 500. No more than 24 Open Enrollment Charter Schools may be approved, and no more than six in a single congressional district in the state. At the current time, there are eight Open Enrollment Charter Schools in Arkansas.

A Service Typology

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The eight Open Enrollment charter schools, more so than the nine Conversion charter schools, vary considerably with respect to goals, curriculum, and scholastic performance. Compared with the non-charter public schools there is variation among Conversion charter schools as well. To more appropriately analyze scholastic performance, it is useful to develop a taxonomy which groups similar charter schools with each other, and differentiates them from others. Following is the taxonomy used in this evaluation, based on school missions and on observations and interviews during site visits .

Academically Oriented, College Preparatory

First, there are Academically Oriented, College Preparatory schools. Schools qualify for this category on the basis of their commitment expressed in their charter, as well as observations of the school and interviews with school personnel. Thus, among the Open Enrollment charter schools, Lisa Academy has the following mission statement in its charter:

The mission of LISA Academy is to provide an academically rigorous college preparatory program, in partnership with students, families, and the community, and guide all students in gaining knowledge, skills, and the attitude necessary to direct their lives, improve a diverse society, and excel in a changing world by providing dynamic resource-rich learning environments.

The mission of Academics Plus (A+) Charter School states that the “A+ mission is to provide an academically rigorous college preparatory program for all students regardless of race, ethnic origin, national background, or socioeconomic level.” The mission statement of Haas Hall Academy is:

To provide an aggressive alternative to the traditional learning environment of scholars with high intensity of purpose seeking an aggressive, rigorous, college preparatory curriculum focusing in the engineering, technology, mathematics, and science fields, enabling them to succeed in the nations’s prestigious universities and to become pillars of their communities.

And the mission statement of KIPP: Delta College Preparatory School “is to inculcate our students with the knowledge, skills, an character traits that will enable them to succeed in the nation’s finest high schools and colleges and to become exemplary citizens of their community , country, and world.”

So, charter schools which are Academically Oriented, College Preparatory are schools which are committed to preparing their students for college, and, therefore, providing a rigorous

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academic curriculum. We should expect high performance from such schools. There are no Academically Oriented, College Preparatory schools among the Conversion Charter Schools.

Technology Oriented

Schools in this category are committed to the use of electronic technological devices in education to enhance learning. Evidence of this commitment has been observed during site visits, and it is also expressed in each school's mission statement. Thus, "The mission of Vilonia's Academy of Technology is to improve the achievement of every student through a diversified means of challenging, technology enhanced instruction." And within the mission statement of the Greenland District Charter School, Arkansas School for Information Systems and Technology (ASIST) is the sentence:

The role of technology in the Greenland Charter High School will be to enhance learning through the use of innovative methods and materials that will provide and individual student with what he or she needs, when it is needed, and in what form it is needed.

Both of these schools are Conversion charter schools; there are no Open Enrollment charter schools in the Technology Oriented category.

Distinctive Focus

A charter school with a distinctive focus is one which uses a nontraditional and/or an innovative curriculum and/or pedagogical method. Two Open Enrollment and one Conversion charter schools are included in this category. An Open Enrollment charter school in this category is Benton County School of the Arts. Its mission statement is:

The Benton County School of the Arts mission will be to provide an excellent, basic education for students in grades K-7 (It now teaches grades K-8), with the influence of an arts-based curriculum (art, drama, dance, music, etc.), for the purpose of accomplishing higher education through the fullest, possible development of the skills and talents of the students attending its programs.

Consistent with this mission, the school devotes one and one-half (1 ½) hours of arts education daily.

The mission of Imboden Area Charter School states:

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It is the mission of Imboden Area Charter School, Inc. To promote restructuring of the existing educational system by demonstrating **‘all students can learn and achieve at high levels.’**¹⁴ when teachers utilize a rigorous and challenging academic program, along with the flexibility to accommodate different rates of learning and different styles of learning in a democratic environment.

“Democratic” is operationalized at the school by the high level of respect each student is treated. Among the nontraditional pedagogy is the multi grade classrooms and the high degree of practical, ‘hands on,’ material used in conjunction with instruction. However, as will become evident in the discussion of school performance below, the state data base provided no scores to the evaluator for the Imboden Area Charter School, because their numbers in each grade were too small; therefore, no conclusions about performance can be drawn.

Mountain Home High School Career Academies is the one Conversion charter school which also fits in this category. Their mission statement states:

Using the career academy model, Mountain Home Conversion Charter High School will provide the student the opportunity to focus on his/her specific strengths and interests, exposure to broad career themes within each academy, and a strong connection to other students, staff, and community partners. Through faculty teams housed in specific locations on campus, career academies will create a strong support system for each individual student.

The three academies, ACME ACADEMY (architecture, construction, manufacturing, & engineering), CAB ACADEMY (communications, arts, and business), and HHS ACADEMY (health and human services) are each the curricular focus of its students.

Service to At Risk Students

Inclusion in this category are schools devoted to serving students who are “at risk” as demonstrated in their prior scholastic performance. These are generally high needs students, with a very high FRL percentage, who have already demonstrated deficiencies in their school performance. Arise Charter School belongs in this category. Its mission says:

The mission of The Arise Charter School is to intervene in the lives of “at-risk” individuals, to empower them with knowledge, to equip them with skills and acceptable behaviors, to build them up in areas of deficiency, and to encourage them to

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utilize the skills and motivation necessary to return to the mainstream as knowledgeable, productive, self-sustaining citizens.

The Focus Learning Academy states that it will concentrate on “high-needs” students, and on those students performing “below the proficient level in the Arkansas District Performance Reports.” Raider Open Door Academy Charter School serves students in grades 5-8 who are “...two or more grade levels behind in reading and/or mathematics.” Ridgeroad Charter Middle School targets students “...11 - 14 year olds, entering grades seven and eight, who are lacking academic success as demonstrated by performance on the standardized achievement tests and the primary/intermediate benchmark exams administered as part of the ACTAAP program.” Ridgeroad Charter Middle School also states:

The results of the 2002 ACTAAP program strongly suggest a correlation between poverty and the lack of academic achievement. Ninety-seven percent (97%) of the eight grade students qualifying for free or reduced lunches scored less than proficient in mathematics. Ninety-one percent (91%) of these same students scored less than proficient in literacy.

Thus, “at risk” students are also high needs students who have already demonstrated scholastic deficiency. There are two Open Enrollment charter schools and six Conversion charter schools in this category.

School Missions, Objectives, and Operations

Missions and Objectives

Along with its mission statement, each charter is legally required to have “...a set of performance-based objectives and student achievement objectives for the term of the charter and the means for measuring those objectives on at least a yearly basis.”¹⁵ The charters of all of the charter schools were examined for compliance with this statutory provision.

With respect to the statutorily required “performance-based objectives and student achievement objectives” it was found, first of all, that most were not performance based, in the sense that specific scholastic performances, in a specified time period, on the basis of a specified criterion, were not provided. Objectives were often not specific with respect to subject, class, or time of attainment. The criterion of attainment were often very modestly stated.

With respect to the “means for measuring those objectives” most simply specify tests. At least one charter listed a logically non-existent test. Often the metric of the test as specified, generally Grade Improvement Units, is not the typical way the test is reported to the school or to the public.

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The objectives as stated in charter petitions need much closer, critical scrutiny by the Department of Education.

Operations

Huron Mountain Research Services, LLC staff made site visits of all charters schools, and observed their operation. The schools vary considerably. To discuss these observations in an orderly fashion, they will be anchored to financial factors, specifically, to per pupil expenditures and average teacher salary. Thus, to begin, pupil expenditures will be reviewed among the Conversion charter schools, the data of which are in Table 1, on the following page.

Table 1			
Per Pupil Expenditures By School and Demographic and Region Conversion Charters 2003-04 School Year			
School	School Average Per Pupil Expenditure	Demographic Group Average*	Regional Average**
Statewide – Non-Charters	\$6,421.00		

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TECHNOLOGY ORIENTED			
Academy of Technology		\$6,197.00	\$6,154.00
Arkansas School for Info Sys & Tech		\$6,197.00	\$5,983.00
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS			
Mtn Home H. S. Academies	\$6,161.00	\$6,197.00	\$6,158.00
Osceola Academic Center of Excellence	\$6,897.00	\$7,027.00	\$6,170.00
AT RISK STUDENTS			
Blytheville Charter School		\$7,027.00	\$6,170.00
Cabot Academic Center of Excellence		\$6,197.00	\$6,154.00
Felder Alternative Academy		\$7,027.00	\$5,930.00
Raider Open Door Academy	\$5,729.00	\$6,505.00	\$6,533.00
Ridgeroad Charter Middle School	\$7,616.00	\$7,027.00	\$5,930.00
ALL CONVERSION CHARTERS AVG.	\$6,600.75		
* Demographic Group refers to all of the non-charter schools in the state in which the percentage of Free or Reduced Lunch recipients is in the same quintile as the charter school of comparison. ** The Region of Regional Average refers to the non-charter schools in the county of the school plus all of the non-charter schools in the contiguous counties.			

As may be seen, the data are from the 2003-04 school year, the most recent year from which such data are available. The per pupil expenditures among the Conversion charters varied from \$7,616 for Ridgeroad Charter Middle School to \$5,729 for Raider Open Door Academy, producing a difference of \$1,887. Aside from Raider, the other seem to correspond with the state average, and, for the most part, with the demographic group and regional averages. The average per pupil expenditures for Conversion charter schools was \$6,601.

Table 2 displays these data for the Open Enrollment charter schools.

Table 2			
Per Pupil Expenditures By School and Demographic and Region Open Enrollment Charters 2003-04 School Year			
School	School Average Per Pupil Expenditure	Demographic Group Average*	Regional Average**
Statewide – Non-Charters	\$6,421.00		
COLLEGE PREPARATORY			

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Academics Plus	\$5,966.00	\$6,256.00	\$5,930.00
Haas Hall Academy		\$6,197.00	\$5,983.00
KIPP: Delta College Preparatory	\$7,109.00	\$7,027.00	\$6,584.00
Lisa Academy		\$6,197.00	\$5,930.00
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS			
Benton County School of the Arts	\$4,614.00	\$6,197.00	\$6,456.00
Imboden Area Charter School	\$7,165.00	\$7,027.00	\$5,853.00
AT RISK STUDENTS			
Arise Charter		\$7,027.00	\$6,320.00
Focus Learning Academy	\$9,256.00	\$7,027.00	\$5,930.00
ALL O.E. CHARTER SCHOOLS AVG.	\$6,822.00		
<p>* Demographic Group refers to all of the non-charter schools in the state in which the percentage of Free or Reduced Lunch recipients is in the same quintile as the charter school of comparison.</p> <p>** The Region of Regional Average refers to the non-charter schools in the county of the school plus all of the non-charter schools in the contiguous counties</p>			

The average per pupil expenditure for all Open Enrollment charter schools is \$6,822, \$221 higher than the Conversion charter school average. The range of expenditures is from \$9,256 for Focus Learning to \$4,514 for the Benton County School of the Arts, a difference of \$4,642, more than twice the corresponding difference among the Conversion charter schools. Except for Benton County School of the Arts and Focus Learning Academy, the other schools' per pupil expenditures correspond to their demographic group or regional averages.

Benton County School of the Arts, despite its low per pupil expenditure, benefits from its large enrollment. It has over 300 students. It has a full complement of teachers and facilities. This includes its music rooms, a well stocked gymnasium, and basically equipped classrooms with adequate libraries and fundamental implements of instruction. There is a school library as well. But the low per pupil expenditure does evidence itself in the lack of maintenance personnel, deferred maintenance of the physical plant, lack of computers in the classroom, and other 'efficiencies.' Consensual care is made to not deprive students of any of their educational and social experience.

The very high per pupil expenditure of Focus Learning Academy, on the other hand, show little evidence of its having purchased either facilities of educational supplies. Its very high per pupil expenditure seem also to have very little effect on the educational process or performance. And, as is seen in Tables 5 and 6 below, test scores for Focus Learning Academy are well below the state average score, although they are of only the second year of operation, and these should be visited again in the future.

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The other main indicator of a school's financial operations is the average teacher salary, as salaries, and benefits, represent over 80% of a school's entire budget. Table 3 displays the average teacher salaries of the Conversion charter schools.

The range of average salaries is from \$45,451 for Ridgeroad to \$38,258 for the Arkansas School for Information Systems and Technology. That is a difference of \$7,193, a small difference. The Conversion Charter Schools correspond, generally, to their regional average, and less so with the demographic average. The average for all Conversion charter Schools is \$41,211.62.

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Table 3			
Average Teacher Salary By School and Demographic and Region Conversion Charters 2004-05 School Year			
School	School Average Teacher Salary	Demographic Group Average*	Regional Average**
Statewide – Non-Charters	\$40,641.00		
TECHNOLOGY ORIENTED			
Academy of Technology	\$44,761.00	\$43,001.00	\$38,282.00
Arkansas School for Info Sys & Tech	\$38,258.00	\$43,001.00	\$42,716.00
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS			
Mtn Home H. S. Academies	\$40,619.00	\$43,001.00	\$36,170.00
Osceola Academic Center of Excellence	\$38,748.00	\$40,465.00	\$39,892.00
AT RISK STUDENTS			
Blytheville Charter School	\$39,453.00	\$40,465.00	\$39,892.00
Cabot Academic Center of Excellence	\$43,708.00	\$43,001.00	\$43,694.00
Felder Alternative Academy	.	\$40,465.00	\$41,892.00
Raider Open Door Academy	\$38,695.00	\$39,048.00	\$37,348.00
Ridgeroad Charter Middle School	\$45,451.00	\$40,465.00	\$41,892.00
ALL CONVERSION CHARTERS	\$41,211.62		
<p>* Demographic Group refers to all of the non-charter schools in the state in which the percentage of Free or Reduced Lunch recipients is in the same quintile as the charter school of comparison.</p> <p>** The Region of Regional Average refers to the non-charter schools in the county of the school plus all of the non-charter schools in the contiguous counties.</p>			

Table 4 displays these same type of data for the Open Enrollment charter schools. The range of average salaries is from \$38,095 for Focus Learning Academy to \$18,321 for Haas Hall

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Academy, for a difference of \$19,774, a very large difference. Haas Hall was in its first year in 2004-05, the school year of the data, as a technological high school. It focuses on science, mathematics, and engineering, and it has equipped its plant with laboratories and equipment which are very expensive. Given the school's limited income, at least some of these expenses had to come out of salaries. But Focus Learning has an average salary higher than any other Open Enrollment charter school, despite inadequacies in their physical plant, libraries, and services.

Table 4			
Average Teacher Salary By School and Demographic and Region Open Enrollment Charters 2004-05 School Year			
School	School Average Teacher Salary	Demographic Group Average*	Regional Average**
Statewide – Non-Charters	\$40,641.00		
COLLEGE PREPARATORY			
Academics Plus	\$34,215.00	\$39,616.00	\$41,892.00
Haas Hall Academy	\$18,321.00	\$43,001.00	\$42,716.00
KIPP: Delta College Preparatory	\$28,118.00	\$40,465.00	\$39,892.00
Lisa Academy	\$21,768.00	\$43,001.00	\$41,892.00
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS			
Benton County School of the Arts	\$33,185.00	\$43,001.00	\$46,026.00
Imboden Area Charter School	\$31,454.00	\$40,465.00	\$38,354.00
AT RISK STUDENTS			
Arise Charter	\$25,988.00	\$40,465.00	\$35,025.00
Focus Learning Academy	\$38,095.00	\$40,465.00	\$38,282.00
ALL O.E. CHARTER SCHOOLS	\$28,893.00		
<p>* Demographic Group refers to all of the non-charter schools in the state in which the percentage of Free or Reduced Lunch recipients is in the same quintile as the charter school of comparison.</p> <p>** The Region of Regional Average refers to the non-charter schools in the county of the school plus all of the non-charter schools in the contiguous counties</p>			

Performance of Charter Schools

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Of necessity, the scholastic performance of the charter schools will be gauged with reported Benchmark and ITBS test scores. Most of the charter schools have reported such scores to the state, and are therefore available for analysis. The interpretation of such scores will be done on the basis of the comparison of their averages with comparable groups, specifically demographic groups and regional, and the statewide comparisons. These will be explicated in the next section, below.

Scholastic Performance

Charter schools are, of course, public schools. They are part of the scholastic group that the state is responsible for educating. Their distinction from the other public schools is that they are authorized, by charter, to offer innovative pedagogical methods and to concentrate on educational outcomes, meaning whether the students have learned, and learned at the rate, they were projected to have. Again, the only practical way to indicate this learning is with test scores.

Tables 5, 6, 7 and 8 display the performance levels in grades 3 through 8, in literature and mathematics respectfully, for the Open Enrollment charter schools. These tables also demonstrate the distribution of schools according to their service classification.

Table 5, on the following page, displays the literacy scores for grades 3 through 5 on the Benchmark test for the Open Enrollment schools which teach in those grades, and which reported scores to the state. Note that Academics Plus and Benton County scores exceed state averages. Arise and Focus Learning display scores well below the state average.

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Table 5			
Benchmark: Literacy Elementary Grades 3 - 5 By School and Statewide Open Enrollment Charters 2004-05 School Year			
School	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
	Percent Proficient	Percent Proficient	Percent Proficient
Statewide – Non-Charter	50.1	51.4	46.1
COLLEGE PREPARATORY			
Academics Plus	-	81.0	65.0
Haas Hall Academy	NA	NA	NA
KIPP: Delta College Preparatory	NA	NA	34.0
Lisa Academy	NA	NA	NA
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS			
Benton County School of the Arts	57.0	66.0	73.0
Imboden Area Charter School	-	-	-
AT RISK STUDENTS			
Arise Charter	NA	8.3	5.6
Focus Learning Academy	23.0	8.3	10.0
ALL O.E. CHARTER SCHOOLS	40.0	40.9	37.5
NA means "Not Applicable," because the grade is not taught at the school. - means data not available			

Table 6, on the following page displays scores for the same grades and same schools as Table 5, but for mathematics. Here note that only Benton County School exceeds state averages in each of the grades. Academics Plus does so only in the fifth grade. Arise Charter and Focus Learning have scores well below the state average.

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Table 6			
Benchmark: Mathematics Elementary Grades 3 - 5 By School and Statewide Open Enrollment Charters 2004-05 School Year			
School	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
	Percent Proficient	Percent Proficient	Percent Proficient
Statewide – Non-Charter	57.8	50.1	39.2
COLLEGE PREPARATORY			
Academics Plus	-	43.0	43.0
Haas Hall Academy	NA	NA	NA
KIPP: Delta College Preparatory	NA	NA	16.0
Lisa Academy	NA	NA	NA
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS			
Benton County School of the Arts	67.0	74.0	62.0
Imboden Area Charter School	-	-	-
AT RISK STUDENTS			
Arise Charter	NA	0.0	0.0
Focus Learning Academy	7.7	8.3	0.0
ALL O.E. CHARTER SCHOOLS	37.4	31.3	24.2
NA means "Not Applicable," because the grade is not taught at the school. - means data not available			

Table 7, on the following page, shows that all of the college preparatory schools, with KIPP only in the 7th grade, as well as Benton County School of the Arts, exceed the state averages. Arise Charter School exceeds the state average in the eighth grade.

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Table 7			
Benchmark: Literacy Middle School Grades 6 - 7 By School and Statewide Open Enrollment Charters 2004-05 School Year			
School	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
	Percent Proficient	Percent Proficient	Percent Proficient
Statewide – Non-Charter	56.5	48.8	32.7
COLLEGE PREPARATORY			
Academics Plus	61.0	53.0	56.0
Haas Hall Academy	NA	NA	NA
KIPP: Delta College Preparatory	52.0	60.0	-
Lisa Academy	63.0	69.0	68.0
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS			
Benton County School of the Arts	67.0	65.0	87.0
Imboden Area Charter School	-	-	NA
AT RISK STUDENTS			
Arise Charter	17.0	19.0	40.0
Focus Learning Academy	-	NA	NA
ALL O.E. CHARTER SCHOOLS	52.0	53.2	62.8
NA means "Not Applicable," because the grade is not taught at the school. - means data not available			

Table 8, on the following page, displays the mathematics scores for grade 6 - 8 for the Open Enrollment charter schools. The college preparatory schools, for which we have data, exceed the state averages in all three grades. Benton County School exceeds state averages in the 7th and 8th grades.

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Table 8			
Benchmark: Mathematics Middle School Grades 6 - 8 By School and Statewide Open Enrollment Charters 2004-05 School Year			
School	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
	Percent Proficient	Percent Proficient	Percent Proficient
Statewide – Non-Charter	43.7	42.1	32.7
COLLEGE PREPARATORY			
Academics Plus	50.0	50.0	35.0
Haas Hall Academy	NA	NA	NA
KIPP: Delta College Preparatory	52.0	60.0	-
Lisa Academy	-	-	-
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS			
Benton County School of the Arts	43.0	58.0	65.0
Imboden Area Charter School	-	-	NA
AT RISK STUDENTS			
Arise Charter	0.0	19.0	0.0
Focus Learning Academy	-	NA	NA
ALL O.E. CHARTER SCHOOLS	33.8	47.6	36.2
NA means "Not Applicable," because the grade is not taught at the school. - means data not available			

Table 9, on the following page, displays the average scores for literacy for grades 4 - 8 for the Conversion charter schools. None of the Conversion charter schools teaches grade 3, except the Academy of Technology, for which we have no scores. And, as you will note, more than half, five out the nine, of the Conversion charter schools focus on teaching At Risk students. Also, in five of the schools, no test score data were available. This is probably due to insufficient number of students in each grade, the reporting for whom, therefore, is prohibited by the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. section 1232g and the regulations that implement it (34 C.F.R. part 99).

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Table 9					
Benchmark: Literacy Grades 4 - 8 By School and Statewide Conversion Charters 2004-05 School Year					
School	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
	Percent Proficient*				
Statewide – Non-Charters	51.4	46.1	56.5	48.9	57.0
TECHNOLOGY ORIENTED					
Academy of Technology	-	NA	NA	NA	NA
Arkansas School for Info & Tech	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS					
Mtn Home H. S. Academies	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Osceola Academic Center of Exc.	38.0	42.0	59.0	53.0	63.0
AT RISK STUDENTS					
Blytheville Charter School	NA	NA	NA	-	-
Cabot Academic Center of Exc.	NA	NA	NA	-	-
Felder Alternative Academy	NA	NA	-	-	-
Raider Open Door Academy	NA	63.0	-	7.7	-
Ridgeroad Charter Middle School	NA	NA	NA	15.0	14.0
ALL CONVERSION CHARTERS	38.0	52.5	59.0	25.2	38.5
<p>* The numbers use are for "Proficient and Beyond," which represent the sum of "Proficient" and "Advanced." NA means "Not Applicable," because the grade is not taught at the school. - means data not available</p>					

Table 10 displays the mathematics average scores for the Conversion charter schools' same grades. In six schools data were unavailable to report test scores for at least some of the grades they teach. Osceola's Academy of Excellence is the only school which data were available for all of the grades it teaches.

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Table 10

**Benchmark: Mathematics
Grades 4 - 8
By School and Statewide
Conversion Charters
2004-05 School Year**

School	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
	Percent Proficient*				
Statewide – Non-Charters	50.1	39.2	43.7	42.1	32.7
TECHNOLOGY ORIENTED					
Academy of Technology	-	NA	NA	NA	NA
Arkansas School for Info & Tech	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS					
Mtn Home H. S. Academies	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Osceola Academic Center of Exc.	31.0	30.0	48.0	35.0	17.0
AT RISK STUDENTS					
Blytheville Charter School	NA	NA	NA	-	-
Cabot Academic Center of Exc.	NA	NA	NA	-	-
Felder Alternative Academy	NA	NA	-	-	-
Raider Open Door Academy	NA	13.0	-	7.7	-
Ridgeroad Charter Middle School	-	NA	NA	15.0	14.0
ALL CONVERSION CHARTERS	31.0	21.5	48.0	19.2	15.5

* The numbers use are for "Proficient and Beyond," which represent the sum of "Proficient" and "Advanced."
 NA means "Not Applicable," because the grade is not taught at the school.
 - means data not available

As has been said above, the primary justification for charter schools is that they implement innovative and effective pedagogy. But, if such innovative pedagogical methods are effective, it will have to be demonstrated against the non-innovative methods, which is to say, against the other, non-charter, public schools. The charter schools, however, vary considerably with respect to both the socio-economic status groups and with respect to the geographical region within Arkansas. At least the former, particularly the At Risk student group, imposes different educational challenges to charter school teachers, than those who are not At Risk. So, the fair

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comparison of charter school performance would be with school with similar demographic populations and with schools in their geographical region.

¹⁶Compared to Demographically Similar Schools

One comparison is with demographically similar schools. “Demographically similar” is defined here as have students in the same quintile of percentage of Free or Reduced Lunch (FRL) recipients. Each charter school has been identified with respect to which quintile of FRL recipients they are, and they are then compared with school in the same quintile of FRL recipients.

Compared to Schools in Their Region¹⁷

A second comparison is done with non-charter schools in their geographic region. Region is here defined as the county in which the charter school is located, plus all contiguous counties. Culture is geographically situated. And even if there is a small anomaly in the level of scholastic performance, it would be evident in this comparison.

Compared with all Schools in the State (Non-Charter)

The comparison with the statewide average score refers to all of the schools in the state, particularly the grade in those schools, excluding all charter schools. This renders a comparison with regular public schools.

The scholastic performance of the charter schools will now be examined, first of the Open Enrollment charter schools, examining literacy scores before mathematics scores. Further, grades 3, 5, and 7, for Open Enrollment Charter Schools and grades 5 and 7 for Conversion Charter Schools will be examined for each area. Tables for each grade, 3 through 8, for both types of charter school are included in the Appendix B.

Table 11 displays the literacy scores for the Open Enrollment charter schools, grade 3, in comparison with the same demographic group of each school, their region, and with the non-charter statewide average third grade literacy score.

Note that only two schools have reported data for this grade, Benton County School of the Arts and Focus Learning Academy. Imboden also teaches this grade, but had insufficient numbers of students for each grade for scores to be included in the State data base.

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Table 11			
Benchmark: Literacy			
Grade 3			
By School and Demographic and Region			
Open Enrollment Charters			
2004-05 School Year			
School	Grade 3	Grade 3	Grade 3
	School Average Proficiency	Demographic Group* Average	Regional** Average
Statewide – Non-Charters	50.1		
COLLEGE PREPARATORY			
Academics Plus	-	55.7	57.6
Haas Hall Academy	NA	NA	NA
KIPP: Delta College Preparatory	NA	NA	NA
Lisa Academy	NA	NA	NA
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS			
Benton County School of the Arts	57.0	63.9	58.3
Imboden Area Charter School	-	35.6	57.8
AT RISK STUDENTS			
Arise Charter School	NA	NA	NA
Focus Learning Academy	23.0	35.6	52.2
ALL O.E. CHARTER SCHOOLS	40.0		
* Demographic Group refers to all of the non-charter schools in the state in which the percentage of Free or Reduced Lunch recipients is in the same quintile as the charter school of comparison. ** The Region of Regional Average refers to the non-charter schools in the county of the school plus all of the non-charter schools in the contiguous counties. NA means "Not Applicable," because the grade is not taught at the school. - means data not available			

Table 12 displays the same type of scores for the 5th grade. Here we see the scores of five schools. Benton County School of the Arts has the highest score, followed by Academics Plus. This is the earliest grade taught by KIPP: Delta College Preparatory School; so, its educational treatment is not yet evident. Although it exceeds its demographic group, it has not exceeded its region, nor the state.

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Table 12			
Benchmark: Literacy			
Grade 5			
By School and Demographic and Region			
Open Enrollment Charters			
2004-05 School Year			
School	Grade 5	Grade 5	Grade 5
	School Average Proficiency	Demographic Group Average	Regional Average
Statewide – Non-Charters	46.1		
COLLEGE PREPARATORY			
Academics Plus	65.0	51.6	53.0
Haas Hall Academy	NA	NA	NA
KIPP: Delta College Preparatory	34.0	32.2	35.1
Lisa Academy	NA	NA	NA
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS			
Benton County School of the Arts	73.0	60.7	51.8
Imboden Area Charter School	-	32.2	44.5
AT RISK STUDENTS			
Arise Charter School	5.6	32.2	35.4
Focus Learning Academy	10.0	32.2	52.3
ALL O.E. CHARTER SCHOOLS	37.5		
<p>* Demographic Group refers to all of the non-charter schools in the state in which the percentage of Free or Reduced Lunch recipients is in the same quintile as the charter school of comparison.</p> <p>** The Region of Regional Average refers to the non-charter schools in the county of the school plus all of the non-charter schools in the contiguous counties.</p> <p>NA means "Not Applicable," because the grade is not taught at the school.</p> <p>- means data not available</p>			

Table 13 reports the average literacy scores of the 7th grade. At this grade all of the college preparatory schools and Benton County School of the Arts have average scores which exceed both of their comparison groups and the non-charter state average score. Only Arise Charter School has an average score much lower than the state average, but it is still a fairly new school, and seventh grade literacy scores may increase in the next couple of years.

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Table 13			
Benchmark: Literacy			
Grade 7			
By School and Demographic and Region			
Open Enrollment Charters			
2004-05 School Year			
School	Grade 7	Grade 7	Grade 7
	School Average Proficiency	Demographic Group Average	Regional Average
Statewide – Non-Charters	48.8		
COLLEGE PREPARATORY			
Academics Plus	53.0	50.2	52.0
Haas Hall Academy	NA	NA	NA
KIPP: Delta College Preparatory	60.0	29.3	41.0
Lisa Academy	69.0	57.2	52.0
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS			
Benton County School of the Arts	65.0	57.2	56.6
Imboden Area Charter School	-	29.3	53.3
AT RISK STUDENTS			
Arise Charter	19.0	29.3	35.4
Focus Learning Academy	NA	NA	NA
ALL O.E. CHARTER SCHOOLS	53.2		
<p>* Demographic Group refers to all of the non-charter schools in the state in which the percentage of Free or Reduced Lunch recipients is in the same quintile as the charter school of comparison.</p> <p>** The Region of Regional Average refers to the non-charter schools in the county of the school plus all of the non-charter schools in the contiguous counties.</p> <p>NA means "Not Applicable," because the grade is not taught at the school.</p> <p>- means data not available</p>			

Table 14 is the 3rd grade mathematics scores for Open Enrollment charter schools. Again, data are available for two schools, Benton County School of the Arts and Focus Learning Academy. Benton County School's average score has exceeded the state and its demographic group, but not its region, which includes Washington County, home of Fayetteville. Focus

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Learning has an average score lower than its demographic group, its region, and the state average.

Table 14 Benchmark: Mathematics Grade 3 By School and Demographic and Region Open Enrollment Charters 2004-05 School Year			
School	Grade 3	Grade 3	Grade 3
	School Average Proficiency	Demographic Group Average	Regional Average
Statewide – Non-Charter	57.8		
COLLEGE PREPARATORY			
Academics Plus	-	63.6	67.3
Haas Hall Academy	NA	NA	NA
KIPP: Delta College Preparatory	NA	NA	NA
Lisa Academy	NA	NA	NA
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS			
Benton County School of the Arts	67.0	63.6	71.0
Imboden Area Charter School	-	41.0	64.2
AT RISK STUDENTS			
Arise Charter	NA	NA	NA
Focus Learning Academy	7.7	41.0	61.0
ALL O.E. CHARTER SCHOOLS	37.4		
* Demographic Group refers to all of the non-charter schools in the state in which the percentage of Free or Reduced Lunch recipients is in the same quintile as the charter school of comparison. ** The Region of Regional Average refers to the non-charter schools in the county of the school plus all of the non-charter schools in the contiguous counties. NA means "Not Applicable," because the grade is not taught at the school. - means data not available			

Table 15 displays the mathematics average scores for the 5th grade. The scores of five schools are displayed. No scores are available for Imboden. The one exemplary score is that of the Benton County School of the Arts, which exceeds both comparison groups and the state.

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Arise Charter School and Focus Learning Academy both report average scores of zero for “Proficiency and Beyond,” the only scores used in these tables. For an average of zero to be attained, every score had to be zero; no child’s test score was above “Basic.”

Table 15 Benchmark: Mathematics Grade 5 By School and Demographic and Region Open Enrollment Charters 2004-05 School Year			
School	Grade 5	Grade 5	Grade 5
	School Average Proficiency	Demographic Group Average	Regional Average
Statewide – Non-Charters	39.2		
COLLEGE PREPARATORY			
Academics Plus	43.0	43.2	44.2
Haas Hall Academy	NA	NA	NA
KIPP: Delta College Preparatory	16.0	24.6	22.7
Lisa Academy	NA	NA	NA
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS			
Benton County School of the Arts	62.0	54.1	48.9
Imboden Area Charter School	-	24.6	37.1
AT RISK STUDENTS			
Arise Charter	0.0	24.6	28.2
Focus Learning Academy	0.0	24.6	43.3
ALL O.E. CHARTER SCHOOLS	24.2		
* Demographic Group refers to all of the non-charter schools in the state in which the percentage of Free or Reduced Lunch recipients is in the same quintile as the charter school of comparison. ** The Region of Regional Average refers to the non-charter schools in the county of the school plus all of the non-charter schools in the contiguous counties. NA means “Not Applicable,” because the grade is not taught at the school. - means data not available			

Table 16 is the average 7th grade mathematics scores. Note that all of the college preparatory schools and Benton County School of the Arts have average scores which exceed

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their demographic group, region, and state average. Benton County School has the highest average.

Table 16 Benchmark: Mathematics Grade 7 By School and Demographic and Region Open Enrollment Charters 2004-05 School Year			
School	Grade 7	Grade 7	Grade 7
	School Average Proficiency	Demographic Group Average	Regional Average
Statewide – Non-Charterers	42.1		
COLLEGE PREPARATORY			
Academics Plus	50.0	43.2	45.0
Haas Hall Academy	NA	NA	NA
KIPP: Delta College Preparatory	56.0	20.5	30.8
Lisa Academy	55.0	50.3	45.0
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS			
Benton County School of the Arts	58.0	50.3	55.2
Imboden Area Charter School	-	20.5	42.6
AT RISK STUDENTS			
Arise Charter	19.0	20.5	28.1
Focus Learning Academy	NA	NA	NA
ALL O.E. CHARTER SCHOOLS	47.6		
* Demographic Group refers to all of the non-charter schools in the state in which the percentage of Free or Reduced Lunch recipients is in the same quintile as the charter school of comparison. ** The Region of Regional Average refers to the non-charter schools in the county of the school plus all of the non-charter schools in the contiguous counties. NA means "Not Applicable," because the grade is not taught at the school. - means data not available			

Table 17 displays the 5th grade literacy scores for Conversion charter schools. Only Vilonia's Academy of Technology teaches the third grade among the Conversion Charter

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Schools, and its scores were unavailable; thus, there were no data for a Grade 3 table. Only two schools' scores are in this table. Raider Open Door Charter has an average which exceeds its demographic group, its region, and the state average. Osceola Academic Center of Excellence score exceeds only its demographic average score.

Table 17 Benchmark: Literacy Grade 5 By School and Demographic and Region Conversion Charters 2004-05 School Year			
School	Grade 5	Grade 5	Grade 5
	School Average Proficiency*	Demographic Group Average	Regional Average
Statewide – Non-Charters	46.1		
TECHNOLOGY ORIENTED			
Academy of Technology	NA	NA	NA
Arkansas School for Info & Tech	NA	NA	NA
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS			
Mtn Home H. S. Academies	NA	NA	NA
Osceola Academic Center of Exc.	42.0	32.2	48.6
AT RISK STUDENTS			
Blytheville Charter School	NA	NA	NA
Cabot Academic Center of Exc.	NA	NA	NA
Felder Alternative Academy	NA	NA	NA
Raider Open Door Academy	63.0	44.6	44.2
Ridgeroad Charter Middle School	NA	NA	NA
ALL CONVERSION CHARTERS	52.5		
* Demographic Group refers to all of the non-charter schools in the state in which the percentage of Free or Reduced Lunch recipients is in the same quintile as the charter school of comparison. ** The Region of Regional Average refers to the non-charter schools in the county of the school plus all of the non-charter schools in the contiguous counties. NA means "Not Applicable," because the grade is not taught at the school. - means data not available			

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Table 18 displays the literacy average scores for the 7th grade. The scores of three schools are displayed. Note that Osceola, again, has the highest score, and one which exceeds its demographic group, region, and state averages.

Table 18 Benchmark: Literacy Grade 7 By School and Demographic and Region Conversion Charters 2004-05 School Year			
School	Grade 7	Grade 7	Grade 7
	School Average Proficiency*	Demographic Group Average	Regional Average
Statewide – Non-Charters	48.8		
TECHNOLOGY ORIENTED			
Academy of Technology	NA	NA	NA
Arkansas School for Info & Tech	NA	NA	NA
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS			
Mtn Home H. S. Academies	NA	NA	NA
Osceola Academic Center of Exc.	53.0	29.3	45.5
AT RISK STUDENTS			
Blytheville Charter School	-	29.3	45.5
Cabot Academic Center of Exc.	-	57.2	45.6
Felder Alternative Academy	-	29.3	52.0
Raider Open Door Academy	7.7	44.2	46.7
Ridgeroad Charter Middle School	27.0	29.3	52.0
ALL CONVERSION CHARTERS	29.2		
<p>* Demographic Group refers to all of the non-charter schools in the state in which the percentage of Free or Reduced Lunch recipients is in the same quintile as the charter school of comparison.</p> <p>** The Region of Regional Average refers to the non-charter schools in the county of the school plus all of the non-charter schools in the contiguous counties.</p> <p>NA means "Not Applicable," because the grade is not taught at the school.</p> <p>- means data not available</p>			

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Table 19 displays the mathematics scores for the 5th grade. Osceola has the higher average, but it exceeds only its demographic group. Raider has an average score below its demographic comparison group, below its regional average, and below the state average.

Table 19 Benchmark: Mathematics Grade 5 By School and Demographic and Region Conversion Charters 2004-05 School Year			
School	Grade 5	Grade 5	Grade 5
	School Average Proficiency	Demographic Group Average	Regional Average
Statewide – Non-Charters	39.2		
TECHNOLOGY ORIENTED			
Academy of Technology	NA	NA	NA
Arkansas School for Info & Tech	NA	NA	NA
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS			
Mtn Home H. S. Academies	NA	NA	NA
Osceola Academic Center of Exc.	30.0	24.6	39.1
AT RISK STUDENTS			
Blytheville Charter School	NA	NA	NA
Cabot Academic Center of Exc.	NA	NA	NA
Felder Alternative Academy	NA	NA	NA
Raider Open Door Academy	13.0	38.1	36.8
Ridgeroad Charter Middle School	NA	NA	NA
ALL CONVERSION CHARTERS	21.5		
<p>* Demographic Group refers to all of the non-charter schools in the state in which the percentage of Free or Reduced Lunch recipients is in the same quintile as the charter school of comparison.</p> <p>** The Region of Regional Average refers to the non-charter schools in the county of the school plus all of the non-charter schools in the contiguous counties.</p> <p>NA means "Not Applicable," because the grade is not taught at the school.</p> <p>- means data not available</p>			

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Table 20 displays the mathematics scores of three schools. Osceola exceeds its demographic group and equals its regional average, but fails to exceed the state average. The other two charter schools have scores lower than regular public schools in their region, their demographic group, or statewide.

Table 20 Benchmark: Mathematics Grade 7 By School and Demographic and Region Conversion Charters 2004-05 School Year			
School	Grade 7	Grade 7	Grade 7
	School Average Proficiency	Demographic Group Average*	Regional Average**
Statewide – Non-Charter	42.1		
TECHNOLOGY ORIENTED			
Academy of Technology	NA	NA	NA
Arkansas School for Info & Tech	NA	NA	NA
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS			
Mtn Home H. S. Academies	NA	NA	NA
Osceola Academic Center of Exc.	35.0	20.5	35.0
AT RISK STUDENTS			
Blytheville Charter School	-	20.5	35.0
Cabot Academic Center of Exc.	-	50.3	33.0
Felder Alternative Academy	-	20.5	45.0
Raider Open Door Academy	7.7	40.1	39.6
Ridgeroad Charter Middle School	15.0	20.5	45.0
ALL CONVERSION CHARTERS	19.2		
* Demographic Group refers to all of the non-charter schools in the state in which the percentage of Free or Reduced Lunch recipients is in the same quintile as the charter school of comparison. ** The Region of Regional Average refers to the non-charter schools in the county of the school plus all of the non-charter schools in the contiguous counties. NA means "Not Applicable," because the grade is not taught at the school. - means data not available			

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The record with respect to discipline will now be examined. An analysis of attitudinal data will follow.

Regarding Discipline

Four data items are subsumed under discipline. These are student expulsions, staff assaults, student assaults, and student attendance. These will be discussed in that order.

Expulsions

Throughout the United States there is incomplete reporting of disciplinary data by school districts to the state. One can speculate as to the reason. But for the evaluator, who typically does not know which schools have accurately reported and which schools have selectively reported, the problem is interpretation. Should equal credence be given to the data of all schools. Practically and ethically, there is no alternative. But prudence dictates that comments about the known practice might be offered, and although all schools' data will be treated equally, overall credence will be limited.

This applies to the reported expulsion rates of the charter schools. With respect to Open Enrollment charter schools there is an alternative, or another, factor which must be considered. Although the compulsory attendance law applies to Open Enrollment charter schools, no child is required to enroll in such a school. Moreover, to some degree, students are selectively enrolled, if only it is by appealing to student and parents who are interested in its program. Further, continued enrollment in an Open Enrollment charter school is by mutual consent. Because of the autonomy held particularly by Open Enrollment Charter Schools, such schools may opt to dismiss a student because of violation of some rule or nonperformance of an educational task. Regular public schools do not have this option. And such dismissal is not referred to as an expulsion. Thus, with the exception of the violation of specific state laws referencing expulsion, expulsions are rare among Open Enrollment charter Schools.

Table 21 indicates that there are no reported expulsions among the Open Enrollment charter schools during the 2004-05 school year.

Table 21						
Expulsion Rates By School and Service Type Open Enrollment Charters 2004-05 School Year						
School	Within School		Within Demography*		Within Region**	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Statewide – Non-Charters	447,164	.15				
COLLEGE PREPARATORY						
Academics Plus	249	.00	90,428	.10	42,477	.14
Haas Hall Academy	16	.00	131,780	.14	43,961	.09
KIPP: Delta College Preparatory	171	.00	67,161	.25	9,486	.09
Lisa Academy	163	.00	131,780	.14	42,477	.14
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS						
Benton County School of the Arts	360	.00	131,780	.14	34,027	.12
Imboden Area Charter School	36	.00	67,161	.25	12,608	.10
AT RISK STUDENTS						
Arise Charter	78	.00	67,161	.25	11,303	.97
Focus Learning Academy	96	.00	67,161	.25	9,093	.03
ALL OPEN ENROLLMENT CHARTERS	1,169	.00				
<p>* Demographic Group refers to all of the non-charter schools in the state in which the percentage of Free or Reduced Lunch recipients is in the same quintile as the charter school of comparison.</p> <p>** The Region of Regional Average refers to the non-charter schools in the county of the school plus all of the non-charter schools in the contiguous counties.</p>						

But it is a different matter among Conversion charter schools. As part of a public school district, they may be subject to rules pertaining to expulsion. Of course, a waiver pertaining to expulsion could be requested. Disciplinary waivers are typically not requested; none were seen in examining the charters of the Conversion charter schools.

Referring to Table 22, we see that there were reported expulsions in two of the Conversion charter schools, Ridgeroad Charter Middle School and Blytheville Charter School. Both exceed the state average expulsion rate. Blytheville charter reported an exceptionally high percentage of expulsions, 4.6%, equivalent to one in almost every 22 students.

Table 22

**Expulsion Rates
By School and by Service Type
Conversion Charter Schools
2004-05 School Year**

School	Within School		Within Demography*		Within Region**	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Statewide – Non-Charter	447,164	.15				
TECHNOLOGY ORIENTED						
Academy of Technology	43	.00	131,780	.14	9,093	.03
Arkansas School for Info & Tech		.00	131,780	.14	43,961	.09
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS						
Mtn Home H. S. Academies	930	.00	131,780	.14	9,702	.09
Osceola Academic Center of Exc.	347	.00	67,161	2.58	30,049	.10
AT RISK STUDENTS						
Blytheville Charter School	65	4.6	67,161	2.58	30,049	.10
Cabot Academic Center of Exc.	43	.00	131,780	.14	9,093	.12
Felder Alternative Academy			67,161	2.58	42,477	.14
Raider Open Door Academy	51	.00	70,186	.09	14,127	.09
Ridgeroad Charter Middle School	511	.20	67,161	2.58	42,477	.14
ALL CONVERSION CHARTERS	1,990	.00				

* Demographic Group refers to all of the non-charter schools in the state in which the percentage of Free or Reduced Lunch recipients is in the same quintile as the charter school of comparison.

** The Region of Regional Average refers to the non-charter schools in the county of the school plus all of the non-charter schools in the contiguous counties.

Staff Assaults

Staff assaults will now be examined. Among the Open Enrollment charter schools, one school reported staff assaults for the year 2004-05. Arise Charter School a percentage of 1.28, which is higher than their demographic group, region, or state percentage. Arise was the only Open Enrollment charter school to report staff assaults for school year 2004-05.

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Table 23

**Staff Assault Rates
By School and Service Type
Open Enrollment Charters
2004-05 School Year**

School	Within School		Within Demography*		Within Region**	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Statewide – Non-Charters	447,164	.51				
COLLEGE PREPARATORY						
Academics Plus	249	0.00	90,428	.41	42,477	.05
Haas Hall Academy	16	0.00	131,780	.39	43,961	.02
KIPP: Delta College Preparatory	171	0.00	67,161	.55	9,486	.07
Lisa Academy	163	0.00	131,780	.39	42,477	.05
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS						
Benton County School of the Arts	360	0.00	131,780	.39	34,027	.05
Imboden Area Charter School	36	0.00	67,161	.55	12,608	.03
AT RISK STUDENTS						
Arise Charter School	78	1.28	67,161	.55	11,303	.15
Focus Learning Academy	96	0.00	67,161	.55	9,093	.09
ALL OPEN ENROLLMENT CHARTERS	1,169	0.08				

* Demographic Group refers to all of the non-charter schools in the state in which the percentage of Free or Reduced Lunch recipients is in the same quintile as the charter school of comparison.

** The Region of Regional Average refers to the non-charter schools in the county of the school plus all of the non-charter schools in the contiguous counties.

Table 24 reports these data for the Conversion charter schools. Among these, two schools reported staff assaults during 2004-05. These were Mountain Home Career Academies and Ridgeroad Charter Middle School. Although the percentage of each was excessive for their respective regions, it was within the percentages for the demographic group and the state average.

Table 24

**Staff Assault Rates
By School and by Service Type
Conversion Charter Schools
2004-05 School Year**

School	Within School		Within Demography*		Within Region**	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Statewide – Non-Charters	447,164	.51				
TECHNOLOGY ORIENTED						
Academy of Technology	43	0.00	131,780	.39	9,093	.09
Arkansas School for Info & Tech			131,780	.39	43,961	.02
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS						
Mtn Home H. S. Academies	930	0.11	131,780	.39	9,702	.01
Osceola Academic Center of Exc.	347	0.00	67,161	.55	30,049	.06
AT RISK STUDENTS						
Blytheville Charter School	65	0.00	67,161	.55	30,049	.06
Cabot Academic Center of Exc.	43	0.00	131,780	.39	9,093	2.99
Felder Alternative Academy			67,161	.55	42,477	.05
Raider Open Door Academy	51	0.00	71,186	.81	14,127	.09
Ridgeroad Charter Middle School	511	0.39	67,161	.55	42,477	.05
ALL CONVERSION CHARTERS	1,990	0.02				

* Demographic Group refers to all of the non-charter schools in the state in which the percentage of Free or Reduced Lunch recipients is in the same quintile as the charter school of comparison.

** The Region of Regional Average refers to the non-charter schools in the county of the school plus all of the non-charter schools in the contiguous counties.

Student Assaults

Student assaults are next to be examined. Table 25 provides these data for the Open Enrollment charter schools for the school year 2004-05. The only school reporting a student assault is Arise Charter School, which was the only school reporting a staff assault. And the percentage for the student assaults is the same as for the staff assault. This may have been the same incident.

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Table 25						
Student Assault Rates By School and Service Type Open Enrollment Charters 2004-05 School Year						
School	Within School		Within Demography*		Within Region**	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Statewide – Non-Charters	447,164	1.36				
COLLEGE PREPARATORY						
Academics Plus	249	0.00	90,428	1.02	42,477	1.64
Haas Hall Academy	16	0.00	131,780	.83	43,961	0.70
KIPP: Delta College Preparatory	171	0.00	67,161	2.58	9,486	2.11
Lisa Academy	163	0.00	131,780	.83	42,477	1.64
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS						
Benton County School of the Arts	360	0.00	131,780	.83	34,027	0.92
Imboden Area Charter School	36	0.00	67,161	2.58	12,608	0.35
AT RISK STUDENTS						
Arise Charter	78	1.28	67,161	2.58	11,303	1.92
Focus Learning Academy	96	0.00	67,161	2.58	9,093	1.15
ALL OPEN ENROLLMENT CHARTERS	1,169	0.08				
<p>* Demographic Group refers to all of the non-charter schools in the state in which the percentage of Free or Reduced Lunch recipients is in the same quintile as the charter school of comparison.</p> <p>** The Region of Regional Average refers to the non-charter schools in the county of the school plus all of the non-charter schools in the contiguous counties.</p>						

Table 26, on the following page, provides these same data for the Conversion charter schools. Three schools reported student assaults. These figures were checked against the data file more than once. While Raider Open Door Academy and Mountain Home High School Academies have figures which compare to regional, demographic group, or the state, Ridgeroad Charter Middle School has a rate which is questionable. The percentage 18.59 would mean that almost one in five of Ridgeroad's students have engaged in an assault. The Ridgeroad Charter Middle School was contacted with respect to this number; no response was provided.

Table 26						
Student Assault Rates By School and by Service Type Conversion Charter Schools 2004-05 School Year						
School	Within School		Within Demography*		Within Region**	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Statewide – Non-Charter	447,164	1.36				
TECHNOLOGY ORIENTED						
Academy of Technology	43	0.00	131,780	.83	9,093	1.12
Arkansas School for Info & Tech			131,780	.83	43,961	0.70
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS						
Mtn Home H. S. Academies	930	1.51	131,780	.83	9,702	0.64
Osceola Academic Center of Exc.	347	0.00	67,161	2.58	30,049	2.55
AT RISK STUDENTS						
Blytheville Charter School	65	0.00	67,161	2.58	30,049	2.55
Cabot Academic Center of Exc.	43	0.00	131,780	.83	9,093	1.62
Felder Alternative Academy			67,161	2.58	42,477	1.64
Raider Open Door Academy	51	1.96	70,186	1.22	14,127	1.82
Ridgeroad Charter Middle School	511	18.59	67,161	2.58	42,477	1.64
ALL CONVERSION CHARTERS	1,990	5.53				
<p>* Demographic Group refers to all of the non-charter schools in the state in which the percentage of Free or Reduced Lunch recipients is in the same quintile as the charter school of comparison.</p> <p>** The Region of Regional Average refers to the non-charter schools in the county of the school plus all of the non-charter schools in the contiguous counties.</p>						

Attendance

Attendance will now be examined. This is something for which many charters have goals or objectives, though it is not easily controlled. Only two school had attendance rates in the 2004-05 school year above 95%, KIPP: Delta College Preparatory School and Imboden Charter School. The lowest rate was 92.2%, for Lisa Academy. KIPP had the highest rate, with 96.7%

Table 27

**Attendance Rates
By School and Service Type
Open Enrollment Charters
2004-05 School Year**

School	Within School		Within Demography [‡]		Within Region ^{‡‡}	
	N*	Rate**	N*	Rate**	N*	Rate**
Statewide – Non-Charters	447,164	93.4				
COLLEGE PREPARATORY						
Academics Plus	249	92.3	90,428	93.6	42,477	93.4
Haas Hall Academy	16	92.8	131,780	93.5	43,961	94.0
KIPP: Delta College Preparatory School	171	96.7	67,161	93.2	9,486	93.7
Lisa Academy	163	92.2	131,780	93.5	42,477	93.4
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS						
Benton County School of the Arts	360	93.6	131,780	93.5	34,027	94.0
Imboden Area Charter School	36	95.9	67,161	93.2	12,608	93.6
AT RISK STUDENTS						
Arise Charter School	78	94.2	67,161	93.2	11,303	93.7
Focus Learning Academy	96	93.1	67,161	93.2	9,093	93.7
ALL OPEN ENROLLMENT CHARTERS	1,169	93.7				

‡ Demographic Group refers to all of the non-charter schools in the state in which the percentage of Free or Reduced Lunch recipients is in the same quintile as the charter school of comparison.

‡‡ The Region of Regional Average refers to the non-charter schools in the county of the school plus all of the non-charter schools in the contiguous counties.

* N refers to enrollment.

** Rate is the percentage of enrolled students.

Table 28 presents the attendance rates for the Open Enrollment charter schools for the three year period between 2002-03 and 2004-05. The high point for attendance generally was the 2003-04 school year. The 2004-05 school year is the low point. This trend is also evident with the state average attendance rate. Although with less data, the trend is also evident among the Conversion charter schools as displayed in Table 30.

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Table 28						
Attendance Rates By School and Statewide 3 Year Trend Open Enrollment Charters 2002-05 School Years						
School	2002-03		2003-04		2004-05	
	N*	Rate**	N*	Rate**	N*	Rate**
Statewide – Non-Charter	425,200	94.2	428,129	94.5	447,164	93.5
COLLEGE PREPARATORY						
Academics Plus	148	94.8	176	95.0	249	92.3
Haas Hall Academy					16	92.8
KIPP: Delta College Preparatory	69	98.1	126	96.9	171	96.7
Lisa Academy					163	92.2
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS						
Benton County School of the Arts	311	95.0	336	95.7	360	93.6
Imboden Area Charter School	45	93.7	36	94.0	36	95.9
AT RISK STUDENTS						
Arise Charter School					78	94.2
Focus Learning Academy			97	96.8	96	93.1
ALL O. E. CHARTER SCHOOLS	573	95.4	771	95.6	1,169	93.7
* N refers to enrollment. ** Rate is the percentage of enrolled students.						

Table 29, on the following page, displays the 2004-05 average attendance rates for the Conversion charter schools. There is more of range among these than there was for the Open Enrollment charter schools. The lowest rate is 82.95, for Blytheville Charter School. The highest is Osceola Center of Excellence, with 95.4%.

Table 29

**Attendance Rates
By School and by Service Type
Conversion Charter Schools
2004-05 School Year**

School	Within School		Within Demography [‡]		Within Region ^{‡‡}	
	N*	Rate**	N*	Rate**	N*	Rate**
Statewide – Non-Charters	447,164	93.5				
TECHNOLOGY ORIENTED						
Academy of Technology	78	94.8	131,780	93.5	9,093	93.7
Arkansas School for Info & Tech			43,961	93.5	43,961	94.0
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS						
Mtn Home H. S. Academies	930	89.9	131,780	93.5	9,702	94.0
Osceola Academic Center of Exc.	347	95.4	67,161	93.2	30,049	93.1
AT RISK STUDENTS						
Blytheville Charter School	65	82.9	67,161	93.2	30,049	93.1
Cabot Academic Center of Exc.	43	97.3	131,780	93.5	9,093	93.0
Felder Alternative Academy			67,161	93.2	42,477	93.4
Raider Open Door Academy	51	93.9	70,186	93.3	14,127	93.3
Ridgeroad Charter Middle School	511	90.0	67,161	93.2	42,477	93.4

ALL CONVERSION CHARTERS	2,025	92.9																	
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‡ Demographic Group refers to all of the non-charter schools in the state in which the percentage of Free or Reduced Lunch recipients is in the same quintile as the charter school of comparison.
 ‡‡ The Region of Regional Average refers to the non-charter schools in the county of the school plus all of the non-charter schools in the contiguous counties.
 * N refers to the number enrolled.
 ** Rate refers to the percent of enrolled.

Table 30 displays the three year absentee trend for the Conversion charter schools. The data are more incomplete than the Open Enrollment charter school data, and a trend pattern is not as evident. What is evident is the consistently high attendance rate for the Osceola Center of Excellence. The rate of that school has been consistently above 95% from 2002-03 through 2004-05.

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Table 30

**Attendance Rates
By School and Statewide
3 Year Trend
Conversion Charter Schools
2002-2005 School Years**

School	2002-03		2003-04		2004-05	
	N*	Rate**	N*	Rate**	N*	Rate**
Statewide – Non-Charters	425,200	94.2	428,129	94.5	447,164	93.5
TECHNOLOGY ORIENTED						
Academy of Technology					78	94.8
Arkansas School for Info & Tech						
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS						
Mtn Home H. S. Academies	922	94.3	899	94.3	930	89.9
Osceola Academic Center of Exc.	215	95.1	248	96.2	347	95.4
AT RISK STUDENTS						
Blytheville Charter School					65	82.9
Cabot Academic Center of Exc.					43	97.3
Felder Alternative Academy						
Raider Open Door Academy			44	96.5	51	93.9
Ridgeroad Charter Middle School	589	92.5	554	95.9	511	90.0
ALL CONVERSION CHARTERS	1,726	94.0	1,745	95.5	2,025	92.9

* N refers to the enrollment.

** Rate is the percentage of enrolled students.

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Attitude Toward the Charter School and Learning

On May 5, 2006, the instruments for the School Climate Survey¹⁸ were distributed at the Charter School Conference held in Little Rock. Each school was given a package with the number of instruments corresponding to the students enrolled in the even numbered grades starting with grade 6, a return envelope and a paid shipping label. Instructions were to administer the survey the following week, the week of May 8 - 12. By May 31, the following five schools had returned completed survey instruments:

Arise Charter School
KIPP: Delta College Preparatory School
Lisa Academy
Blytheville Charter School
Cabot Academic Center for Excellence

These completed surveys were then sent off to The Evaluation Center at Western Michigan University, where they were to be scanned and processed. These five schools, then, are the basis for this discussion of attitudes toward school environment and the degree of satisfaction with the school.

The Evaluation Center required that forms to be processed arrive at its offices by June 1, as were the five which arrived by May 31. Subsequent to May 31 the completed forms of six additional schools arrived. These six schools are:

Benton County School of the Arts
Cabot Academic Center for Excellence
Focus Learning Academy
Haas Hall Academy
Mountain Home High School Academies
Osceola Academic Center of Excellence

The forms of these last six schools could not be scanned and processed in time for this report. These forms may be scanned and processed as a basis for subsequent surveys.

The request had been made to also survey four regular school district schools. Arrangements were made at the Charter School Conference for this to be done; however, HMRS received no completed forms from a regular school district school. Thus, the analysis will compare the responses of the five schools against national mean responses.

Copies of the entire set of the School Climate Survey are in Appendix C.

Student: School Climate Survey

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The School Climate Survey, completed by students, has ten scales. Before results are presented, these ten scales will be described.

Teacher-Student Relationships

The first school climate scale is Teacher-Student Relationships. This asks the student about all of the teachers in the school. It asks whether the teachers “like their students.” It further asks whether the student considers the teachers as behaving fairly, friendly, concerned, helpful, patient, and considerate. The second question in the scale asks whether “Teachers in this school are on the side of their students.”

Security and Maintenance

This scale concerns whether students and other persons feel safe in the school building. It further concerns whether people are not afraid to come to the school for meetings or events. Further probed are whether the classrooms are neat and clean, whether the school building is in good repair and whether the grounds are neat and attractive.

Administration

This scale asks students whether the administrators listen to student ideas, whether they talk often to teachers and parents, whether they set high standards and let students, teachers and parents know what they are. Students are also asked whether administrators set a good example by working hard themselves, whether they are willing to hear student complaints, and, finally, whether they permit the participation of teachers and students in decisions about “what happens in this school.”

Student Academic Orientation

For Student Academic Orientation the student is asked whether students understand why they are in school, whether students are interested in learning new things, whether students have fun but also work hard, and whether student work hard to complete their assignments.

Student Behavioral Values

Three statements represent this scale. The first is: “If one student makes fun of someone, other students do not join in.” The second is: “students in this school are well-behaved even when the teachers are not watching them.” Finally, it asks students to react to the statement: “Most students would do their work even if the teacher stepped out of the classroom.”

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Guidance

Students are asked to agree, or disagree, with statements that teachers or counselors help them think about their future, help them plan future classes, and help them with their personal problems. Finally they are asked to agree, or disagree, with the statement: “Students in this school can get help and advice from teachers or counselors.”

Student-Peer Relationships

The statements constituting this scale are that students care, respect, and want to be friends with one another, and that students have a sense of belonging in this school.

Parent and Community-School Relationships

This scale deals with whether “community groups honor student achievements in learning, music, drama, and sports.” And particularly, whether parents and community members attend school meetings and activities, whether most people in the community help the school, and whether community attendance at school meetings and programs is good.

Instructional Management

This asks whether there are a clear set of rules for students to follow, whether taking attendance and other tasks do not interfere with classroom teaching, that most class time is devoted to learning activities, that students have assigned schoolwork, whether class time is spent talking about the assignments, and whether teachers use class time to help students learn their assigned work. Finally students are asked to react to whether “outside interruptions of the classroom are few.”

Student Activities

This scale pertains to whether students are able to take part in school activities if they are interested, including sports, music and plays, even if they are not very talented. Further, whether students are comfortable staying after school for activities such as sports and music, and whether they can take part in such activities even if their parents cannot afford it.

As has been said above, completed surveys were returned in time for processing by three Open Enrollment charter schools and two Conversion charter schools. We will begin with the Open Enrollment charter schools.

Table 31 shows the combined results for the three Open Enrollment charter schools. Recalling that only three Open Enrollment schools are represented, and that KIPP alone represents 57% of all Open Enrollment responses to the Climate Survey, we can nevertheless see a general pattern. Recall also that over interpreting has been buffered by requiring that

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exceptional response be defined as outside of plus or minus one standard deviation of the national mean, designated as the national range. With these provisos, it can still be seen that Teacher-Student Relationships, Administration, and Student Academic Orientation do seem to distinguish these Open Enrollment charter schools. Security and Maintenance, Student Behavioral Values, and Guidance, while not exceptional, are high on the national range, and indicate strong agreement. Thus, it can be seen that students of these three schools perceive them as strong, positive and supportive learning environments.

Table 31			
NASSP Student Climate Survey*			
Combined: KIPP, Arise, Lisa			
Spring 2006			
Respondents = 140			
Scale Name	School Mean	National Mean	National Range
Teacher-Student Relationships	✓ 41.2	38.3	36.0 - 41.1

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Security and Maintenance	27.9	25.6	23.4 - 27.8
Administration	✓ 22.6	19.2	17.5 - 20.9
Student Academic Orientation	✓ 14.5	12.8	11.9 - 13.7
Student Behavioral Values	8.1	7.4	6.7 - 8.1
Guidance	15.1	14.6	13.6 - 15.4

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Student-Peer Relationships	13.2	12.9	12.0 - 13.8
Parent and Community-School Relationships	13.9	13.5	12.5 - 14.5
Instructional Management	25.3	25.0	23.7 - 26.3
Student Activities	14.9	14.4	13.4 - 15.4
<p>* NASSP refers to the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the copyright holder of the School Climate Survey. ✓ indicates greater agreement than the national average on that scale X indicates lesser agreement, more disagreement, than the national average on that scale.</p>			

The two Conversion charter schools which returned completed surveys in time to be processed were Blytheville Charter School (Blytheville) and Cabot Academy for Excellence

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(Cabot). The combined results are presented in Table 32. Here it can be seen that both Conversion charter offer a positive view of Teacher-Student Relationships, of Student Behavioral Values, and of Instructional Management. Thus, the Conversion Charter Schools present a climate consisting of a strong, positive classroom experience.

The findings in Table 32 may also be contrasted with the combined Open Enrollment findings in Table 31, where Administration and Student Academic Orientation were exceptional.

Table 32			
NASSP Student Climate Survey*			
Combined: Blytheville, Cabot			
Spring 2006			
Respondents = 30			
Scale Name	School Mean	National Mean	National Range
Teacher-Student Relationships	✓ 42.3	38.3	36.0 - 41.1

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Security and Maintenance	24.3	25.6	23.4 - 27.8
Administration	19.9	19.2	17.5 - 20.9
Student Academic Orientation	13.7	12.8	11.9 - 13.7
Student Behavioral Values	✓ 9.0	7.4	6.7 - 8.1
Guidance	14.7	14.6	13.6 - 15.4

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Student-Peer Relationships	13.2	12.9	12.0 - 13.8
Parent and Community-School Relationships	13.3	13.5	12.5 - 14.5
Instructional Management	✓ 26.7	25.0	23.7 - 26.3
Student Activities	14.8	14.4	13.4 - 15.4
<p>* NASSP refers to the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the copyright holder of the School Climate Survey. ✓ indicates greater agreement than the national average on that scale X indicates lesser agreement, more disagreement, than the national average on that scale.</p>			

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The Student Satisfaction Survey consists of only eight scales. The items use the same five point scale, but this one is labeled differently, going from “Very Happy” to “Very Unhappy”. The scales will now be identified and explained.

Teachers

This scale concerns how well teachers understand the student’s problems, how often they tell him/her when she/he does good work, and how much they help when she/he is having trouble. It also asks how much teachers help the student with his/her homework, and how much her/his teacher enjoys teaching.

Fellow Students

This asks about how easy is to make friend, how often student help each other, how students treat each other, and, generally, how respondent feels about the students in her/his school.

Schoolwork

This scale concerns how much classes are a challenge, the choices in picking classes, how much schoolwork is exciting, and the number of tests which have to be taken. It is concerned, generally, about feeling about classes and schoolwork.

Student Activities

This scale concerns how the student feels about student activities in her/his school, including the number of sports and social events at school, the number in which he or she can take part, and how much students can plan and take part in school events.

Student Discipline

This scale concerns how safe the student feels at school, how well students behave in class and in the school, how well school rules are enforced, and how well students do what is expected of them without being told.

Decision-Making Opportunities

This scale deals with how much opportunity the student has to help make decision at the school, and how well school administrators listen to student idea. Another item is how much influence student council has in suggesting school events.

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School Buildings, Supplies, and Upkeep

The convenience, cleanliness, and good repair of school buildings is pertinent here. Also how easy it is to use the library, and how good the books are, and how well classroom supplies and materials help the student learn.

Communications

This scale relates to how easy it is to talk to the teacher outside of the classroom, to the principal or other administrators, and about how much the student is told about what is happening at the school, and how easy it is to find out about new and important things at school.

Table 33 displays the combined means for all three of the Open Enrollment schools. All of the combined school means are within the national range. KIPP respondents constitute 56% of all of the combined respondents, but that still allow for each of the other two to make a contribution.

The conclusion is that the students of all three Open Enrollment Charter schools express a general satisfaction with their school.

Table 33			
NASSP Student Satisfaction Survey*			
Combined: KIPP, Arise, Lisa			
Spring 2006			
Respondents = 145			
Scale Name	School Mean	National Mean	National Range

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Teachers	24.6	23.7	18.6 - 28.8
Fellow Students	16.3	16.5	12.6 - 20.4
School Work	18.3	18.3	13.8 - 22.8
Student Activities	15.0	17.5	13.4 - 21.6
Student Discipline	18.8	19.2	14.6 - 23.8

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Decision-Making Opportunities	15.9	14.5	10.1 - 18.9
School Buildings, Supplies, and Upkeep	22.0	20.9	16.3 - 25.5
Communication	20.5	19.6	14.8 - 24.4
<p>* NASSP refers to the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the copyright holder of the School Climate Survey. ✓ indicates greater agreement than the national average on that scale ✗ indicates lesser agreement, more disagreement, than the national average on that scale.</p>			

Table 34, on the following page, presents the combined results of the Student Satisfaction Survey for both Conversion Charter Schools. Note that only Student Activities has a school mean lower than the national mean, but it is still within the national range. So, it may be concluded that the students of both schools, combined, are generally satisfied with their respective schools.

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Table 34

NASSP Student Satisfaction Survey*
Combined: Blytheville, Cabot
Spring 2006
Respondents = 31

Scale Name	School Mean	National Mean	National Range
Teachers	27.5	23.7	18.6 - 28.8
Fellow Students	17.4	16.5	12.6 - 20.4

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School Work	20.2	18.3	13.8 - 22.8
Student Activities	15.3	17.5	13.4 - 21.6
Student Discipline	20.5	19.2	14.6 - 23.8
Decision-Making Opportunities	17.5	14.5	10.1 - 18.9
School Buildings, Supplies, and Upkeep	22.4	20.9	16.3 - 25.5

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Communication	21.3	19.6	14.8 - 24.4
* NASSP refers to the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the copyright holder of the School Climate Survey. ✓ indicates greater agreement than the national average on that scale X indicates lesser agreement, more disagreement, than the national average on that scale.			

Teacher Satisfaction Survey

The Teacher Satisfaction Survey has nine scales, all pertaining to teachers' experience in the school. These will now be identified and described.

Administration

This gauges the overall level of satisfaction with school administrators, including the amount of input the teacher has into administrative decisions, the quality of feedback she/he gets about his/her performance. It also has the elements of how tactfully the administrator deals with teacher's problems, the amount of support provided to the teacher by the administrators, the level of interest the administrator shows about teacher's concerns, and the amount of recognition teacher gets for her/his work. The final element relates to the amount of supervision or control by the administrator.

Compensation

This scale gauges the teacher's level of satisfaction with his/her pay, fringe benefits, and other compensation, including the quality of health care benefits, and the amount of financial security teacher feels.

Opportunities for Advancement

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This scale gauges the degree of satisfaction with opportunities for career advancement in the school.

Student Responsibility and Discipline

This scale gauges satisfaction with the behavior of students, the extent to which they are motivated to learn, and the degree of responsibility students show toward their school assignments. It also gauges satisfaction with the degree to which students are self-disciplined.

Curriculum and Job Tasks

This scale relates to the feeling of accomplishment teacher gets from her/his job, the extent to which the job is challenging, whether the curriculum and course content is up to date, and the amount of administrative paperwork and grading required of the job.

Co-Workers

This scale measures the level of satisfaction with teacher's co-workers, including his/her quality of relationship with them, their competence, their interest in school improvement, their concern for student learning, and whether they stimulate and support teacher's work.

Parents and Community

This concerns the degree of interest parents show in the education of their children, the financial support of the community, the degree and quality of parental and community input into the school, and the extent to which parents and the community are supportive of the school.

School Buildings, Supplies, and Maintenance

This relates to the availability of supplies for classroom, the quality of the school library, the quality of maintenance of the school grounds and buildings, and the speed with which needed repairs are made.

Communication

This measures satisfaction with the speed with which teacher is informed about potential student problems, the speed with which administrators communicate important information to you, the ease with which teacher can talk with school administrator, and the clarity of school forms and procedures.

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Table 34 displays the combined teacher satisfaction results for KIPP, Arise, and Lisa. This combined group of teachers are generally satisfied with their schools, a particularly with the opportunities for advancement and the supplies and condition of the building.

Table 34			
NASSP Teacher Satisfaction Survey*			
Combined: KIPP, Arise, Lisa			
Spring 2006			
Respondents = 8			
Scale Name	School Mean	National Mean	National Range
Administration	30.8	28.3	21.4 - 35.2

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Compensation	15.1	15.9	11.5 - 20.3
Opportunities for Advancement	✓ 16.0	11.6	8.1 - 15.1
Student Responsibility and Discipline	17.0	14.7	10.4 - 19.0
Curriculum and Job Tasks	27.1	25.9	21.3 - 30.5
Co-Workers	29.5	28.2	23.6 - 32.8

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Parents and Community		19.7	18.1	13.6 - 22.6
School Buildings, Supplies and Maintenance	✓	30.1	23.9	18.8 - 29.0
Communication		28.4	23.7	18.4 - 29.0
<p>* NASSP refers to the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the copyright holder of the School Climate Survey. ✓ indicates greater agreement than the national average on that scale X indicates lesser agreement, more disagreement, than the national average on that scale.</p>				

The teacher satisfaction findings of the two Conversion Charter Schools are presented in Table 35. All of the school means are within the national range, but three scales show means approaching the top of that scale. These are Administration, Opportunities for Advancement, and School Buildings, Supplies, and Maintenance. So, we may conclude that the combined teaching corps of these two schools is well satisfied with their schools, and very well satisfied with the administration, opportunities for advancement, the condition of the building, and with classroom supplies.

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Table 35

**NASSP Teacher Satisfaction Survey*
Combined: Blytheville, Cabot
Spring 2006
Respondents = 14**

Scale Name	School Mean	National Mean	National Range
Administration	33.5	28.3	21.4 - 35.2
Compensation	16.9	15.9	11.5 - 20.3

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Opportunities for Advancement	14.5	11.6	8.1 - 15.1
Student Responsibility and Discipline	16.4	14.7	10.4 - 19.0
Curriculum and Job Tasks	26.5	25.9	21.3 - 30.5
Co-Workers	30.2	28.2	23.6 - 32.8
Parents and Community	19.1	18.1	13.6 - 22.6

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School Buildings, Supplies and Maintenance	27.8	23.9	18.8 - 29.0
Communication	25.8	23.7	18.4 - 29.0
* NASSP refers to the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the copyright holder of the School Climate Survey. ✓ indicates greater agreement than the national average on that scale ✗ indicates lesser agreement, more disagreement, than the national average on that scale.			

Parent Satisfaction Survey

The Parent Satisfaction Survey has nine scales, which will now be identified and described.

Parent Involvement

Parent involvement measures satisfaction with the extent to which parents are involved in the education of their children, the ease with which parents can become involved in the school, and the number of opportunities for parent and teacher interaction. It also includes the willingness of the community to pay for the school and school programs.

Curriculum

This scale is a bit complex. It covers three objects, the involvement of parents, the quality of classes, and the quality of the library. With respect to involvement, it asks whether

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respondent is satisfied with the “extent to which parents are involved in the education of their children.” With respect to quality of classes it asks for satisfaction with the imaginativeness and innovativeness of classes, the extent to which they are up to date, and the extent to which classes are offered to challenge the more advanced students. With respect to the quality of the library, it specifically asks satisfaction with the extent to which the library meets the needs of students.

Student Activities

This scale measures the satisfaction with the variety of student activities, how supportive the teachers and administrators are of student activities, and the number of activities the students plan and carry out themselves. Also included are the emphasis the school puts on sports, the emphasis the school puts on social activities, the extent to which student activities reflect the values and interests of the community, and the activity of the students in community events other than those sponsored by the school.

Teachers

Satisfaction with teachers includes satisfaction with the extent to which teachers demand that students do well on classwork, the extent to which they treat students fairly, are helpful, and willing to spend extra time with students with problems. Also included are the competence of teachers and whether they are good role models.

Support Services

Support services covers transportation, guidance, health education, and food services offered at the school.

School Buildings, Supplies, and Maintenance

This scale includes satisfaction with the adequacy of supplies, and the upkeep of grounds and buildings.

Student Discipline

This scale measures satisfaction with how the school deals with absenteeism, the fairness of school disciplinary rules, and how the school deals with drug, alcohol, and tobacco use at school. It also includes satisfaction with the behavior of students at school, their self-discipline, and the pride and responsibility shown by students of their school.

School Administrators

This scale measures satisfaction with how easy it is to make appointment with, how easy it is to talk with administrators, and whether school administrators deal with problems in a tactful

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manner. It also includes satisfaction with the competence of administrators, whether administrators seem to be planning for the needs of the school and its programs, and the opportunity parents and the community have for input into decisions made by school administrators.

School Information Services

This scale deals with satisfaction with the speed and quality of information about the performance of their students, problems and needs of their students, changes made in the curriculum, and notice of topics to be discussed at meetings. It also asks about satisfaction with the reporting of school activities in the local media.

Table 36 displays the parent satisfaction results for all three Open Enrollment Charter Schools combined. Note that all of the combined school means are higher than the national means, although all means are within the national range. Thus, the parents of the three schools are generally satisfied with their respective schools.

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Table 36

NASSP Parent Satisfaction Survey*
Combined: KIPP, Arise, Lisa
Spring 2006
Respondents = 86

Scale Name	School Mean	National Mean	National Range
Parent Involvement	20.3	17.9	14.7 - 21.1
Curriculum	28.8	26.5	22.0 - 31.0

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Student Activities	30.6	29.4	24.2 - 34.6
Teachers	29.3	26.1	20.7 - 31.5
Support Services	23.3	21.7	17.6 - 25.8
School Buildings, Supplies, and Maintenance	18.1	15.7	13.0 - 18.4
Student Discipline	33.6	29.6	23.7 - 35.5

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School Administration	30.1	27.1	21.7 - 32.5
School Information	24.2	20.9	16.2 - 25.6
* NASSP refers to the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the copyright holder of the School Climate Survey. ✓ indicates greater agreement than the national average on that scale ✗ indicates lesser agreement, more disagreement, than the national average on that scale.			

The parent satisfaction survey results for both Conversion charter schools are displayed in Table 37, on the following page. Note that the school means of the both schools are within the national range but exceed their corresponding national means, except for Support Services, which is precisely equal. It may, thus, be concluded that the parent of both Conversion charter schools, combined, are satisfied with their respective schools.

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Table 37

NASSP Parent Satisfaction Survey*
Combined: Blytheville, Cabot
Spring 2006
Respondents = 10

Scale Name	School Mean	National Mean	National Range
Parent Involvement	20.2	17.9	14.7 - 21.1
Curriculum	27.6	26.5	22.0 - 31.0

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Student Activities	30.0	29.4	24.2 - 34.6
Teachers	29.4	26.1	20.7 - 31.5
Support Services	21.7	21.7	17.6 - 25.8
School Buildings, Supplies, and Maintenance	16.5	15.7	13.0 - 18.4
Student Discipline	33.0	29.6	23.7 - 35.5

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School Administration	28.9	27.1	21.7 - 32.5
School Information	22.4	20.9	16.2 - 25.6
<p>* NASSP refers to the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the copyright holder of the School Climate Survey. ✓ indicates greater agreement than the national average on that scale ✗ indicates lesser agreement, more disagreement, than the national average on that scale.</p>			

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Conclusion

This evaluation conducted by Huron Mountain Research Services, LLC during the winter and spring of 2006, examined the financial, performance, and attitudinal data pertinent to the charter schools of Arkansas. It also examined charter goal statements and missions and their legal requirement. Also charter school systems in other states were briefly summarized.

First, it may be concluded that Arkansas has one of, if not the, most coherent legally organized charter school system, with clear channels of accountability. And it must also be concluded that the current system of financing the Open Enrollment Charter Schools is inequitable and inadequate. The Koret Task Force cites the funding inadequacy of Open Enrollment Charter Schools. It says, specifically, that “Arkansas should take a cue from Minnesota...”¹⁹ In this regard it must be kept perpetually in mind that charter schools are part of the public education system of the state. And as it is constitutionally impermissible to financially discriminate against any part of the public education system, so it is impermissible to fund Open Enrollment Charter Schools inequitably compared to regular public schools.

Charter goal statements were found to be inadequate, and inconsistent with pertinent statutory provisions. Each charter is legally required to have “...a set of performance-based objectives and student achievement objectives for the term of the charter and the means for measuring those objectives on at least a yearly basis.”²⁰

Three Open Enrollment Charter Schools focus, because of their location or policy commitment, on poor, high needs, African American students, KIPP: Delta College Preparatory School, Focus Learning Academy, and Arise Charter School. KIPP is doing an exemplary job, with its students exceeding regional and state averages after three years. The students of Focus Learning and Arise do not seem to be doing as well; however, their performance was examined after two and one years of operation, respectively. They need to be examined again to determine whether their performance is improving.

Looking at scholastic performance generally, it was found that by the seventh grade, among Open Enrollment Charter Schools, Academics Plus, KIPP: Delta College Preparatory School, Lisa Academy, and Benton County School of the Arts are performing well above state and regional averages, both in literacy and mathematics. Among Conversion Charter Schools, Osceola Academic Center of Excellence is doing very well in literacy, and fairly well in mathematics.

It is a cardinal principle of the charter school movement that schools should be judged by their results, and not by their process. That is a valid rule for all schools. But charter schools have to demonstrate, to justify their waivers and autonomy, that they will use innovative and effective pedagogy which will produce results superior to non-charter schools. Of course, in the crucible of state legislative politics the principle of autonomy will often be compromised. We see, above, that the Colorado system of charter schools, wherein all charter schools are

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authorized only by a local school district in which it is resident, is designed to be convenient to administer, with respect to both finances and oversight, but autonomy is restricted. And this also pertains to the Conversion charter schools in Arkansas, the autonomy of which is severely restricted. But if results are the main standard of judgement, why is autonomy important? The response relates to the commitment of charter schools to use innovative and effective pedagogy. A case in point involves this evaluator in his visit to a Conversion charter school. The evaluator noted that each instructional day had been extended by one hour, and asked why this was done. The director responded that the students they had in this At Risk charter school had been steadily falling behind in school; so, the director and the director's colleagues concluded that an important factor to help them would be to provide them with more time on task. The evaluator noted that with one hour daily, although bound to be helpful, might not be enough, if for at least two years students had been consistently behind. The director then stated that the original plan was for the school to run 8:00 to 5:00, just as they do at KIPP, but that the superintendent rejected the idea, claiming that the costs of increased salaries would be over budget, and would complicate things with the other teachers. This example simply demonstrates that Conversion charter schools do not have autonomy.

But this is not to say that Conversion charter school staff do not have a commitment to use innovative methods to produce superior results. Granted that Benchmark test scores are but one, narrow window on a school's educational results, but it is the one indicator which we have. And using this we see that Osceola Center of Excellence is demonstrating significant results, very high literacy scores and respectable mathematics scores by the 7th grade. The Conversion At Risk charter school are not doing nearly as well. It is the responsibility of the state, particularly of the Charter School Office, to monitor these, and inform them, that if they do not improve, their charters are in jeopardy.

And this applies to the Open Enrollment charter schools as well. Two of these schools are categorized as serving At Risk Students. But the fact of the matter is that three schools are serving at risk students, for KIPP: Delta College Preparatory School does also. With the absence of reference to Special Education treatment, an at risk student without permanent physical disabilities, is a poor child who was insufficiently cognitively stimulated as a child, who enters school, where she or he is not provided educational treatment adequate to her or his needs, and who, therefore, falls behind.²¹ This definition corresponds to the the way at risk students are understood among the Arkansas charter schools. KIPP accepts 5th graders, poor African American students, who practically all are "behind," at risk. KIPP accepts these students, and does not look at their records. Rather, it makes the commitment, to each student it enrolls, to provide a rigorous educational treatment, and after eight years, to have them college bound. So, it is a College Preparatory School. But what about Arise Charter School and Focus Learning Academy. They have much more modest goals. But it is not the business of the Charter School Office of the State to question a school's goals or methods, presuming they are not illegal. Rather, it is the Charter School Office's business to monitor results. These may be varied, but they have to all indicate performance above regular education standards. If they simply equal the regular public school performance, their rationale as a charter school is vitiated. Their

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commitment has to be to show superior performance. And if they cannot, their charter is in jeopardy.

Of course the attitude of students, teachers, and parents affects what happens in school. We see, for the few schools for which we have data, that students perceive a generally a favorable climate, particularly at KIPP among the Open Enrollment Charter Schools, and at Cabot, among the Conversion Charter Schools. Students at Blytheville Charter School did not perceive as favorable a climate²².

With respect to student satisfaction, it is more subdued, but generally positive among the charter schools. Teacher satisfaction was quite positive in all schools except for Blytheville, where it was modestly positive. And parent satisfaction was positive for all schools, with areas of higher satisfaction in Blytheville and in Arise.

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Recommendations

11. Charters should be more critically reviewed. Particularly, greater scrutiny has to be devoted to performance goals, if only to accord with State law.
12. To eliminate discriminatory financing for Open Enrollment Charter Schools, the State should finance each such school with an annual payment equal to the state average public school district per pupil annual revenue. An additional payment for facilities should also be made.
13. To provide more autonomy for Conversion Charter Schools, the state should finance them directly.
14. Consistent with the Koret Report, HMRS also recommends the authorization of separate school boards for each Conversion Charter School, to which that school would be answerable.
15. The current legal system of empowering only the State Board of Education to charter schools should be maintained. This allows for a clear channel of authority and oversight.
16. To adequately monitor charter schools, particularly the Open Enrollment Charter Schools, the Charter School Office should conduct at least two structured monitoring visits to each school.
17. The Charter School Office should ensure that all monitors use the same site visit protocol to structure each monitoring visit as additional staff is assigned to monitoring.
18. To conduct effective oversight and monitoring of the charter schools, the Director of the Charter School Office should be authorized and provided with two professional staff. The Director should be promoted to a rank consistent with such responsibility.
19. The Department of Education should conduct a financial analysis of all charter schools directly financed by the State.
20. The Charter School Office should publish a periodical newsletter for charter schools and charter school parents. This also requires that the Director have additional staff.

APPENDIX A

Site Visit Protocol

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Protocol for Site-Visit

School: _____

Teacher Interview

21. How long have you been teaching at this school?
22. What is your total teaching experience?
23. (If taught elsewhere,) How is teaching at this school different from your previous experience?
24. Is it easy to professionally collaborate with the other teachers? (Probe)
25. Are parents of the students in your class(s) involved with the school?
26. What would you say is the best thing about teaching at this school?
27. What would you say is the most difficult thing about teaching at this school?

Principal Interview

1. How long have you been at this school?
2. How many years of experience to you have in administration?
3. Where you an educational administrator elsewhere previous to your current position?
4. (If yes,) How is teaching at this school different from your previous administration experience?
5. Do you feel that parents of charter school students are more actively involved in their child's education? (Probe, why?)
6. How are major expenditure decisions done? Who makes decisions regarding text books, furnishings and equipment, teacher salaries, for example? (Probe.)
7. What would you say is the best thing about being an administrator at this school?

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8. What would you say in the most difficult thing about being an administrator at this school?

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Protocol for Site-Visit, p. 2

Facility Observation

1. Friendliness of greeting
2. Noise level
3. Student demeanor
4. Cleanliness
5. Orderliness
6. Physical plant
 - a. Library
 - b. Cafeteria
 - c. Gymnasium
 - d. Space in classrooms
 - e. (Elementary) Playground

APPENDIX B

Scholastic Performance Tables by School and by Grade

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Open Enrollment Charter Schools

Table OL3-5			
Benchmark: Literacy Elementary Grades 3 - 5 By School and Statewide Open Enrollment Charters 2004-05 School Year			
School	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
	Percent Proficient	Percent Proficient	Percent Proficient
Statewide – Non-Charter	50.1	51.4	46.1
COLLEGE PREPARATORY			
Academics Plus	-	81.0	65.0
Haas Hall Academy	NA	NA	NA
KIPP: Delta College Preparatory	NA	NA	34.0
Lisa Academy	NA	NA	NA
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS			
Benton County School of the Arts	57.0	66.0	73.0
Imboden Area Charter School	-	-	-
AT RISK STUDENTS			
Arise Charter School	NA	8.3	5.6
Focus Learning Academy	23.0	8.3	10.0
ALL O.E. CHARTER SCHOOLS	40.0	40.9	37.5
NA means "Not Applicable," because the grade is not taught at the school. - means data not available			

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Table OM3-5			
Benchmark: Mathematics Elementary Grades 3 - 5 By School and Statewide Open Enrollment Charters 2004-05 School Year			
School	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
	Percent Proficient	Percent Proficient	Percent Proficient
Statewide – Non-Charter	57.8	50.1	39.2
COLLEGE PREPARATORY			
Academics Plus	-	43.0	43.0
Haas Hall Academy	NA	NA	NA
KIPP: Delta College Preparatory	NA	NA	16.0
Lisa Academy	NA	NA	NA
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS			
Benton County School of the Arts	67.0	74.0	62.0
Imboden Area Charter School	-	-	-
AT RISK STUDENTS			
Arise Charter School	NA	0.0	0.0
Focus Learning Academy	7.7	8.3	0.0
ALL O.E. CHARTER SCHOOLS	37.4	31.3	24.2
NA means "Not Applicable," because the grade is not taught at the school. - means data not available			

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Table OL6-8 Benchmark: Literacy Middle School Grades By School and Statewide Open Enrollment Charters 2004-05 School Year			
School	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
	Percent Proficient	Percent Proficient	Percent Proficient
Statewide – Non-Charter	56.5	48.8	32.7
COLLEGE PREPARATORY			
Academics Plus	61.0	53.0	56.0
Haas Hall Academy	NA	NA	NA
KIPP: Delta College Preparatory	52.0	60.0	-
Lisa Academy	63.0	69.0	68.0
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS			
Benton County School of the Arts	67.0	65.0	87.0
Imboden Area Charter School	-	-	NA
AT RISK STUDENTS			
Arise Charter School	17.0	19.0	40.0
Focus Learning Academy	-	NA	NA
ALL O.E. CHARTER SCHOOLS	52.0	53.2	62.8
NA means "Not Applicable," because the grade is not taught at the school. - means data not available			

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Table OM6-8			
Benchmark: Mathematics Middle School Grades By School and Statewide Open Enrollment Charters 2004-05 School Year			
School	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
	Percent Proficient	Percent Proficient	Percent Proficient
Statewide – Non-Charter	43.7	42.1	32.7
COLLEGE PREPARATORY			
Academics Plus	50.0	50.0	35.0
Haas Hall Academy	NA	NA	NA
KIPP: Delta College Preparatory	52.0	60.0	-
Lisa Academy	-	-	-
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS			
Benton County School of the Arts	43.0	58.0	65.0
Imboden Area Charter School	-	-	NA
AT RISK STUDENTS			
Arise Charter School	0.0	19.0	0.0
Focus Learning Academy	-	NA	NA
ALL O.E. CHARTER SCHOOLS	33.8	47.6	36.2
NA means "Not Applicable," because the grade is not taught at the school. - means data not available			

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Table OL3 Benchmark: Literacy Grade 3 By School and Demographic and Region Open Enrollment Charters 2004-05 School Year			
School	Grade 3	Grade 3	Grade 3
	School Average Proficiency	Demographic Group* Average	Regional** Average
Statewide – Non-Charter	50.1		
COLLEGE PREPARATORY			
Academics Plus	-	55.7	57.6
Haas Hall Academy	NA	NA	NA
KIPP: Delta College Preparatory	NA	NA	NA
Lisa Academy	NA	NA	NA
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS			
Benton County School of the Arts	57.0	63.9	58.3
Imboden Area Charter School	-	35.6	57.8
AT RISK STUDENTS			
Arise Charter School	NA	NA	NA
Focus Learning Academy	23.0	35.6	52.2
ALL O.E. CHARTER SCHOOLS	40.0		
<p>* Demographic Group refers to all of the non-charter schools in the state in which the percentage of Free or Reduced Lunch recipients is in the same quintile as the charter school of comparison.</p> <p>** The Region of Regional Average refers to the non-charter schools in the county of the school plus all of the non-charter schools in the contiguous counties</p> <p>NA means "Not Applicable," because the grade is not taught at the school.</p> <p>- means data not available</p>			

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Table OM3 Benchmark: Mathematics Grade 3 By School and Demographic and Region Open Enrollment Charters 2004-05 School Year			
School	Grade 3	Grade 3	Grade 3
	School Average Proficiency	Demographic Group Average	Regional Average
Statewide – Non-Charter	57.8		
COLLEGE PREPARATORY			
Academics Plus	-	63.6	67.3
Haas Hall Academy	NA	NA	NA
KIPP: Delta College Preparatory	NA	NA	NA
Lisa Academy	NA	NA	NA
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS			
Benton County School of the Arts	67.0	63.6	71.0
Imboden Area Charter School	-	41.0	64.2
AT RISK STUDENTS			
Arise Charter School	NA	NA	NA
Focus Learning Academy	7.7	41.0	61.0
ALL O.E. CHARTER SCHOOLS	37.4		
<p>* Demographic Group refers to all of the non-charter schools in the state in which the percentage of Free or Reduced Lunch recipients is in the same quintile as the charter school of comparison.</p> <p>** The Region of Regional Average refers to the non-charter schools in the county of the school plus all of the non-charter schools in the contiguous counties</p> <p>NA means "Not Applicable," because the grade is not taught at the school.</p> <p>- means data not available</p>			

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Table OL4 Benchmark: Literacy Grade 4 By School and Demographic and Region Open Enrollment Charters 2004-05 School Year			
School	Grade 4	Grade 4	Grade 4
	School Average Proficiency	Demographic Group Average	Regional Average
Statewide – Non-Charters	51.4		
COLLEGE PREPARATORY			
Academics Plus	81.0	55.8	58.9
Haas Hall Academy	NA	NA	NA
KIPP: Delta College Preparatory	NA	NA	NA
Lisa Academy	NA	NA	NA
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS			
Benton County School of the Arts	66.0	66.2	60.0
Imboden Area Charter School	-	36.9	56.0
AT RISK STUDENTS			
Arise Charter School	8.3	36.9	40.9
Focus Learning Academy	8.3	36.9	56.9
ALL O.E. CHARTER SCHOOLS	40.9		
<p>* Demographic Group refers to all of the non-charter schools in the state in which the percentage of Free or Reduced Lunch recipients is in the same quintile as the charter school of comparison.</p> <p>** The Region of Regional Average refers to the non-charter schools in the county of the school plus all of the non-charter schools in the contiguous counties</p> <p>NA means "Not Applicable," because the grade is not taught at the school.</p> <p>- means data not available</p>			

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Table OM4			
Benchmark: Mathematics			
Grade 4			
By School and Demographic and Region			
Open Enrollment Charters			
2004-05 School Year			
School	Grade 4	Grade 4	Grade 4
	School Average Proficiency	Demographic Group Average	Regional Average
Statewide – Non-Charters	50.1		
COLLEGE PREPARATORY			
Academics Plus	43.0	54.4	53.0
Haas Hall Academy	NA	NA	NA
KIPP: Delta College Preparatory	NA	NA	NA
Lisa Academy	NA	NA	NA
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS			
Benton County School of the Arts	74.0	63.7	57.8
Imboden Area Charter School	-	37.0	57.4
AT RISK STUDENTS			
Arise Charter School	0.0	37.0	41.1
Focus Learning Academy	8.3	37.0	58.9
ALL O.E. CHARTER SCHOOLS	31.3		
<p>* Demographic Group refers to all of the non-charter schools in the state in which the percentage of Free or Reduced Lunch recipients is in the same quintile as the charter school of comparison.</p> <p>** The Region of Regional Average refers to the non-charter schools in the county of the school plus all of the non-charter schools in the contiguous counties</p> <p>NA means "Not Applicable," because the grade is not taught at the school.</p> <p>- means data not available</p>			

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Table OL5			
Benchmark: Literacy Grade 5			
By School and Demographic and Region Open Enrollment Charters 2004-05 School Year			
School	Grade 5	Grade 5	Grade 5
	School Average Proficiency	Demographic Group Average	Regional Average
Statewide – Non-Charters	46.1		
COLLEGE PREPARATORY			
Academics Plus	65.0	51.6	53.0
Haas Hall Academy	NA	NA	NA
KIPP: Delta College Preparatory	34.0	32.2	35.1
Lisa Academy	NA	NA	NA
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS			
Benton County School of the Arts	73.0	60.7	51.8
Imboden Area Charter School	-	32.2	44.5
AT RISK STUDENTS			
Arise Charter School	5.6	32.2	35.4
Focus Learning Academy	10.0	32.2	52.3
ALL O.E. CHARTER SCHOOLS	37.5		
<p>* Demographic Group refers to all of the non-charter schools in the state in which the percentage of Free or Reduced Lunch recipients is in the same quintile as the charter school of comparison.</p> <p>** The Region of Regional Average refers to the non-charter schools in the county of the school plus all of the non-charter schools in the contiguous counties</p> <p>NA means "Not Applicable," because the grade is not taught at the school.</p> <p>- means data not available</p>			

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Table OM5 Benchmark: Mathematics Grade 5 By School and Demographic and Region Open Enrollment Charters 2004-05 School Year			
School	Grade 5	Grade 5	Grade 5
	School Average Proficiency	Demographic Group Average	Regional Average
Statewide – Non-Charters	39.2		
COLLEGE PREPARATORY			
Academics Plus	43.0	43.2	44.2
Haas Hall Academy	NA	NA	NA
KIPP: Delta College Preparatory	16.0	24.6	22.7
Lisa Academy	NA	NA	NA
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS			
Benton County School of the Arts	62.0	54.1	48.9
Imboden Area Charter School	-	24.6	37.1
AT RISK STUDENTS			
Arise Charter School	0.0	24.6	28.2
Focus Learning Academy	0.0	24.6	43.3
ALL O.E. CHARTER SCHOOLS	24.2		
<p>* Demographic Group refers to all of the non-charter schools in the state in which the percentage of Free or Reduced Lunch recipients is in the same quintile as the charter school of comparison.</p> <p>** The Region of Regional Average refers to the non-charter schools in the county of the school plus all of the non-charter schools in the contiguous counties</p> <p>NA means "Not Applicable," because the grade is not taught at the school.</p> <p>- means data not available</p>			

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Table OL6 Benchmark: Literacy Grade 6 By School and Demographic and Region Open Enrollment Charters 2004-05 School Year			
School	Grade 6	Grade 6	Grade 6
	School Average Proficiency	Demographic Group Average	Regional Average
Statewide – Non-Charters	56.5		
COLLEGE PREPARATORY			
Academics Plus	61.0	61.3	62.4
Haas Hall Academy	NA	NA	NA
KIPP: Delta College Preparatory	52.0	43.1	46.7
Lisa Academy	63.0	67.0	62.4
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS			
Benton County School of the Arts	67.0	67.0	61.0
Imboden Area Charter School	-	43.1	53.7
AT RISK STUDENTS			
Arise Charter School	17.0	43.1	47.7
Focus Learning Academy	-	43.1	66.5
ALL O.E. CHARTER SCHOOLS	52.0		
<p>* Demographic Group refers to all of the non-charter schools in the state in which the percentage of Free or Reduced Lunch recipients is in the same quintile as the charter school of comparison.</p> <p>** The Region of Regional Average refers to the non-charter schools in the county of the school plus all of the non-charter schools in the contiguous counties</p> <p>NA means "Not Applicable," because the grade is not taught at the school.</p> <p>- means data not available</p>			

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Table OM6			
Benchmark: Mathematics			
Grade 6			
By School and Demographic and Region			
Open Enrollment Charters			
2004-05 School Year			
School	Grade 6	Grade 6	Grade 6
	School Average Proficiency	Demographic Group Average	Regional Average
Statewide – Non-Charterers	43.7		
COLLEGE PREPARATORY			
Academics Plus	50.0	49.3	49.6
Haas Hall Academy	NA	NA	NA
KIPP: Delta College Preparatory	31.0	30.2	26.7
Lisa Academy	45.0	53.6	49.6
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS			
Benton County School of the Arts	43.0	53.6	50.2
Imboden Area Charter School	-	30.2	38.1
AT RISK STUDENTS			
Arise Charter School	0.0	30.2	31.9
Focus Learning Academy	-	30.2	53.8
ALL O.E. CHARTER SCHOOLS	33.8		
<p>* Demographic Group refers to all of the non-charter schools in the state in which the percentage of Free or Reduced Lunch recipients is in the same quintile as the charter school of comparison.</p> <p>** The Region of Regional Average refers to the non-charter schools in the county of the school plus all of the non-charter schools in the contiguous counties</p> <p>NA means "Not Applicable," because the grade is not taught at the school.</p> <p>- means data not available</p>			

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Table OL7 Benchmark: Literacy Grade 7 By School and Demographic and Region Open Enrollment Charters 2004-05 School Year			
School	Grade 7	Grade 7	Grade 7
	School Average Proficiency	Demographic Group Average	Regional Average
Statewide – Non-Charters	48.8		
COLLEGE PREPARATORY			
Academics Plus	53.0	50.2	52.0
Haas Hall Academy	NA	NA	NA
KIPP: Delta College Preparatory	60.0	29.3	41.0
Lisa Academy	69.0	57.2	52.0
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS			
Benton County School of the Arts	65.0	57.2	56.6
Imboden Area Charter School	-	29.3	53.3
AT RISK STUDENTS			
Arise Charter School	19.0	29.3	35.4
Focus Learning Academy	NA	NA	NA
ALL O.E. CHARTER SCHOOLS	53.2		
<p>* Demographic Group refers to all of the non-charter schools in the state in which the percentage of Free or Reduced Lunch recipients is in the same quintile as the charter school of comparison.</p> <p>** The Region of Regional Average refers to the non-charter schools in the county of the school plus all of the non-charter schools in the contiguous counties</p> <p>NA means "Not Applicable," because the grade is not taught at the school.</p> <p>- means data not available</p>			

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Table OM7			
Benchmark: Mathematics			
Grade 7			
By School and Demographic and Region			
Open Enrollment Charters			
2004-05 School Year			
School	Grade 7	Grade 7	Grade 7
	School Average Proficiency	Demographic Group Average	Regional Average
Statewide – Non-Charters	42.1		
COLLEGE PREPARATORY			
Academics Plus	50.0	43.2	45.0
Haas Hall Academy	NA	NA	NA
KIPP: Delta College Preparatory	56.0	20.5	30.8
Lisa Academy	55.0	50.3	45.0
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS			
Benton County School of the Arts	58.0	50.3	55.2
Imboden Area Charter School	-	20.5	42.6
AT RISK STUDENTS			
Arise Charter School	19.0	20.5	28.1
Focus Learning Academy	NA	NA	NA
ALL O.E. CHARTER SCHOOLS	47.6		
<p>* Demographic Group refers to all of the non-charter schools in the state in which the percentage of Free or Reduced Lunch recipients is in the same quintile as the charter school of comparison.</p> <p>** The Region of Regional Average refers to the non-charter schools in the county of the school plus all of the non-charter schools in the contiguous counties</p> <p>NA means "Not Applicable," because the grade is not taught at the school.</p> <p>- means data not available</p>			

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Table OL8 Benchmark: Literacy Grade 8 By School and Demographic and Region Open Enrollment Charters 2004-05 School Year			
School	Grade 8	Grade 8	Grade 8
	School Average Proficiency	Demographic Group Average	Regional Average
Statewide – Non-Charters	57.0		
COLLEGE PREPARATORY			
Academics Plus	-	59.3	58.7
Haas Hall Academy	NA	NA	NA
KIPP: Delta College Preparatory	-	36.8	48.2
Lisa Academy	68.0	63.8	58.7
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS			
Benton County School of the Arts	87.0	63.8	64.0
Imboden Area Charter School	NA	NA	NA
AT RISK STUDENTS			
Arise Charter School	40.0	36.8	46.6
Focus Learning Academy	NA	NA	NA
ALL O.E. CHARTER SCHOOLS	62.8		
<p>* Demographic Group refers to all of the non-charter schools in the state in which the percentage of Free or Reduced Lunch recipients is in the same quintile as the charter school of comparison.</p> <p>** The Region of Regional Average refers to the non-charter schools in the county of the school plus all of the non-charter schools in the contiguous counties</p> <p>NA means "Not Applicable," because the grade is not taught at the school.</p> <p>- means data not available</p>			

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Table OM8 Benchmark: Mathematics Grade 8 By School and Demographic and Region Open Enrollment Charters 2004-05 School Year			
School	Grade 8	Grade 8	Grade 8
	School Average Proficiency	Demographic Group Average	Regional Average
Statewide – Non-Charters	32.7		
COLLEGE PREPARATORY			
Academics Plus	35.0	35.0	35.2
Haas Hall Academy	NA	NA	NA
KIPP: Delta College Preparatory	-	12.5	23.0
Lisa Academy	45.0	41.0	35.2
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS			
Benton County School of the Arts	65.0	41.0	42.1
Imboden Area Charter School	NA	NA	NA
AT RISK STUDENTS			
Arise Charter School	0.0	12.5	19.7
Focus Learning Academy	NA	NA	NA
ALL O.E. CHARTER SCHOOLS	36.2		
<p>* Demographic Group refers to all of the non-charter schools in the state in which the percentage of Free or Reduced Lunch recipients is in the same quintile as the charter school of comparison.</p> <p>** The Region of Regional Average refers to the non-charter schools in the county of the school plus all of the non-charter schools in the contiguous counties</p> <p>NA means "Not Applicable," because the grade is not taught at the school.</p> <p>- means data not available</p>			

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Conversion Charter Schools

Table CL4-8					
Benchmark: Literacy Grades 4 - 8 By School and Statewide Conversion Charters 2004-05 School Year					
School	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
	Percent Proficient*				
Statewide – Non-Charters	51.4	46.1	56.5	48.9	57.0
TECHNOLOGY ORIENTED					
Academy of Technology	-	NA	NA	NA	NA
Arkansas School for Info & Tech	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS					
Mtn Home H. S. Academies	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Osceola Academic Center of Exc.	38.0	42.0	59.0	53.0	63.0
AT RISK STUDENTS					
Blytheville Charter School	NA	NA	NA	-	-
Cabot Academic Center of Exc.	NA	NA	NA	-	-
Felder Alternative Academy	NA	NA	-	-	-
Raider Open Door Academy	NA	63.0	-	7.7	-
Ridgeroad Charter Middle School	NA	NA	NA	15.0	14.0
ALL CONVERSION CHARTERS	38.0	52.5			
<p>* The numbers use are for "Proficient and Beyond," which represent the sum of "Proficient" and "Advanced." NA means "Not Applicable," because the grade is not taught at the school. - means data not available</p>					

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Table CM4-8

**Benchmark: Mathematics
Grades 4 - 8
By School and Statewide
Conversion Charters
2004-05 School Year**

School	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
	Percent Proficient*				
Statewide – Non-Charters	50.1	39.2	43.7	42.1	32.7
TECHNOLOGY ORIENTED					
Academy of Technology	-	NA	NA	NA	NA
Arkansas School for Info & Tech	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS					
Mtn Home H. S. Academies	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Osceola Academic Center of Exc.	31.0	30.0	48.0	35.0	17.0
AT RISK STUDENTS					
Blytheville Charter School	NA	NA	NA	-	-
Cabot Academic Center of Exc.	NA	NA	NA	-	-
Felder Alternative Academy	NA	NA	-	-	-
Raider Open Door Academy	NA	13.0	-	7.7	-
Ridgeroad Charter Middle School	-	NA	NA	15.0	14.0
ALL CONVERSION CHARTERS	31.0	21.5	48.0	19.2	15.5

* The numbers use are for "Proficient and Beyond," which represent the sum of "Proficient" and "Advanced."

NA means "Not Applicable," because the grade is not taught at the school.

- means data not available

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Table CL4 Benchmark: Literacy Grade 4 By School and Demographic and Region Conversion Charters 2004-05 School Year			
School	Grade 4	Grade 4	Grade 4
	School Average Proficiency	Demographic Group Average	Regional Average
Statewide – Non-Charters	51.4		
TECHNOLOGY ORIENTED			
Academy of Technology	-	66.2	56.9
Arkansas School for Info & Tech	NA	NA	NA
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS			
Mtn Home H. S. Academies	NA	NA	NA
Osceola Academic Center of Exc.	38.0	36.9	48.2
AT RISK STUDENTS			
Blytheville Charter School	NA	NA	NA
Cabot Academic Center of Exc.	NA	NA	NA
Felder Alternative Academy	NA	NA	NA
Raider Open Door Academy	NA	NA	NA
Ridgeroad Charter Middle School	NA	NA	NA
ALL CONVERSION CHARTERS	38.0		
<p>* Demographic Group refers to all of the non-charter schools in the state in which the percentage of Free or Reduced Lunch recipients is in the same quintile as the charter school of comparison.</p> <p>** The Region of Regional Average refers to the non-charter schools in the county of the school plus all of the non-charter schools in the contiguous counties</p> <p>NA means "Not Applicable," because the grade is not taught at the school.</p> <p>- means data not available</p>			

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Table CM4 Benchmark: Mathematics Grade 4 By School and Demographic and Region Conversion Charters 2004-05 School Year			
School	Grade 4	Grade 4	Grade 4
	School Average Proficiency	Demographic Group Average	Regional Average
Statewide – Non-Charters	50.1		
TECHNOLOGY ORIENTED			
Academy of Technology	-	63.7	58.9
Arkansas School for Info & Tech	NA	NA	NA
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS			
Mtn Home H. S. Academies	NA	NA	NA
Osceola Academic Center of Exc.	31.0	37.0	46.1
AT RISK STUDENTS			
Blytheville Charter School	NA	NA	NA
Cabot Academic Center of Exc.	NA	NA	NA
Felder Alternative Academy	NA	NA	NA
Raider Open Door Academy	NA	NA	NA
Ridgeroad Charter Middle School	-	37.0	42.6
ALL CONVERSION CHARTERS	31.0		
<p>* Demographic Group refers to all of the non-charter schools in the state in which the percentage of Free or Reduced Lunch recipients is in the same quintile as the charter school of comparison.</p> <p>** The Region of Regional Average refers to the non-charter schools in the county of the school plus all of the non-charter schools in the contiguous counties</p> <p>NA means "Not Applicable," because the grade is not taught at the school.</p> <p>- means data not available</p>			

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Table CL5 Benchmark: Literacy Grade 5 By School and Demographic and Region Conversion Charters 2004-05 School Year			
School	Grade 5	Grade 5	Grade 5
	School Average Proficiency*	Demographic Group Average	Regional Average
Statewide – Non-Charters	46.1		
TECHNOLOGY ORIENTED			
Academy of Technology	NA	NA	NA
Arkansas School for Info & Tech	NA	NA	NA
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS			
Mtn Home H. S. Academies	NA	NA	NA
Osceola Academic Center of Exc.	42.0	32.2	48.6
AT RISK STUDENTS			
Blytheville Charter School	NA	NA	NA
Cabot Academic Center of Exc.	NA	NA	NA
Felder Alternative Academy	NA	NA	NA
Raider Open Door Academy	63.0	44.6	44.2
Ridgeroad Charter Middle School	NA	NA	NA
ALL CONVERSION CHARTERS	52.5		
<p>* Demographic Group refers to all of the non-charter schools in the state in which the percentage of Free or Reduced Lunch recipients is in the same quintile as the charter school of comparison.</p> <p>** The Region of Regional Average refers to the non-charter schools in the county of the school plus all of the non-charter schools in the contiguous counties</p> <p>NA means "Not Applicable," because the grade is not taught at the school.</p> <p>- means data not available</p>			

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Table CM5 Benchmark: Mathematics Grade 5 By School and Demographic and Region Conversion Charters 2004-05 School Year			
School	Grade 5	Grade 5	Grade 5
	School Average Proficiency	Demographic Group Average	Regional Average
Statewide – Non-Charters	39.2		
TECHNOLOGY ORIENTED			
Academy of Technology	NA	NA	NA
Arkansas School for Info & Tech	NA	NA	NA
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS			
Mtn Home H. S. Academies	NA	NA	NA
Osceola Academic Center of Exc.	30.0	24.6	39.1
AT RISK STUDENTS			
Blytheville Charter School	NA	NA	NA
Cabot Academic Center of Exc.	NA	NA	NA
Felder Alternative Academy	NA	NA	NA
Raider Open Door Academy	13.0	38.1	36.8
Ridgeroad Charter Middle School	NA	NA	NA
ALL CONVERSION CHARTERS	21.5		
<p>* Demographic Group refers to all of the non-charter schools in the state in which the percentage of Free or Reduced Lunch recipients is in the same quintile as the charter school of comparison.</p> <p>** The Region of Regional Average refers to the non-charter schools in the county of the school plus all of the non-charter schools in the contiguous counties</p> <p>NA means "Not Applicable," because the grade is not taught at the school.</p> <p>- means data not available</p>			

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Table CL6

**Benchmark: Literacy
Grade 6
By School and Demographic and Region
Conversion Charters
2004-05 School Year**

School	Grade 6	Grade 6	Grade 6
	School Average Proficiency*	Demographic Group Average	Regional Average
Statewide – Non-Charters	56.5		
TECHNOLOGY ORIENTED			
Academy of Technology	NA	NA	NA
Arkansas School for Info & Tech	NA	NA	NA
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS			
Mtn Home H. S. Academies	NA	NA	NA
Osceola Academic Center of Exc.	59.0	43.1	57.8
AT RISK STUDENTS			
Blytheville Charter School	NA	NA	NA
Cabot Academic Center of Exc.	NA	NA	NA
Felder Alternative Academy	-	43.1	62.4
Raider Open Door Academy	-	54.7	55.6
Ridgeroad Charter Middle School	NA	NA	NA
ALL CONVERSION CHARTERS	59.0		

* Demographic Group refers to all of the non-charter schools in the state in which the percentage of Free or Reduced Lunch recipients is in the same quintile as the charter school of comparison.

** The Region of Regional Average refers to the non-charter schools in the county of the school plus all of the non-charter schools in the contiguous counties
NA means "Not Applicable," because the grade is not taught at the school.

- means data not available

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Table CM6 Benchmark: Mathematics Grade 6 By School and Demographic and Region Conversion Charters 2004-05 School Year			
School	Grade 6	Grade 6	Grade 6
	School Average Proficiency	Demographic Group Average	Regional Average
Statewide – Non-Charters	43.7		
TECHNOLOGY ORIENTED			
Academy of Technology	NA	NA	NA
Arkansas School for Info & Tech	NA	NA	NA
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS			
Mtn Home H. S. Academies	NA	NA	NA
Osceola Academic Center of Exc.	48.0	30.2	44.0
AT RISK STUDENTS			
Blytheville Charter School	NA	NA	NA
Cabot Academic Center of Exc.	NA	NA	NA
Felder Alternative Academy	-	30.2	49.6
Raider Open Door Academy	-	42.0	43.2
Ridgeroad Charter Middle School	NA	NA	NA
ALL CONVERSION CHARTERS	48.0		
<p>* Demographic Group refers to all of the non-charter schools in the state in which the percentage of Free or Reduced Lunch recipients is in the same quintile as the charter school of comparison.</p> <p>** The Region of Regional Average refers to the non-charter schools in the county of the school plus all of the non-charter schools in the contiguous counties</p> <p>NA means "Not Applicable," because the grade is not taught at the school.</p> <p>- means data not available</p>			

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Table CL7 Benchmark: Literacy Grade 7 By School and Demographic and Region Conversion Charters 2004-05 School Year			
School	Grade 7	Grade 7	Grade 7
	School Average Proficiency*	Demographic Group Average	Regional Average
Statewide – Non-Charters	48.8		
TECHNOLOGY ORIENTED			
Academy of Technology	NA	NA	NA
Arkansas School for Info & Tech	NA	NA	NA
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS			
Mtn Home H. S. Academies	NA	NA	NA
Osceola Academic Center of Exc.	53.0	29.3	45.5
AT RISK STUDENTS			
Blytheville Charter School	-	29.3	45.5
Cabot Academic Center of Exc.	-	57.2	45.6
Felder Alternative Academy	-	29.3	52.0
Raider Open Door Academy	7.7	44.2	46.7
Ridgeroad Charter Middle School	27.0	29.3	52.0
ALL CONVERSION CHARTERS	29.2		
<p>* Demographic Group refers to all of the non-charter schools in the state in which the percentage of Free or Reduced Lunch recipients is in the same quintile as the charter school of comparison.</p> <p>** The Region of Regional Average refers to the non-charter schools in the county of the school plus all of the non-charter schools in the contiguous counties</p> <p>NA means "Not Applicable," because the grade is not taught at the school.</p> <p>- means data not available</p>			

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Table CM7			
Benchmark: Mathematics			
Grade 7			
By School and Demographic and Region			
Conversion Charters			
2004-05 School Year			
School	Grade 7	Grade 7	Grade 7
	School Average Proficiency	Demographic Group Average	Regional Average
Statewide – Non-Charters	42.1		
TECHNOLOGY ORIENTED			
Academy of Technology	NA	NA	NA
Arkansas School for Info & Tech	NA	NA	NA
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS			
Mtn Home H. S. Academies	NA	NA	NA
Osceola Academic Center of Exc.	35.0	20.5	35.0
AT RISK STUDENTS			
Blytheville Charter School	-	20.5	35.0
Cabot Academic Center of Exc.	-	50.3	33.0
Felder Alternative Academy	-	20.5	45.0
Raider Open Door Academy	7.7	40.1	39.6
Ridgeroad Charter Middle School	15.0	20.5	45.0
ALL CONVERSION CHARTERS	19.2		
<p>* Demographic Group refers to all of the non-charter schools in the state in which the percentage of Free or Reduced Lunch recipients is in the same quintile as the charter school of comparison.</p> <p>** The Region of Regional Average refers to the non-charter schools in the county of the school plus all of the non-charter schools in the contiguous counties</p> <p>NA means "Not Applicable," because the grade is not taught at the school.</p> <p>- means data not available</p>			

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Table CL8 Benchmark: Literacy Grade 8 By School and Demographic and Region Conversion Charters 2004-05 School Year			
School	Grade 8	Grade 8	Grade 8
	School Average Proficiency*	Demographic Group Average	Regional Average
Statewide – Non-Charterers	57.0		
TECHNOLOGY ORIENTED			
Academy of Technology	NA	NA	NA
Arkansas School for Info & Tech	NA	NA	NA
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS			
Mtn Home H. S. Academies	NA	NA	NA
Osceola Academic Center of Exc.	63.0	36.8	58.5
AT RISK STUDENTS			
Blytheville Charter School	-	36.8	58.5
Cabot Academic Center of Exc.	-	63.8	50.3
Felder Alternative Academy	-	36.8	58.7
Raider Open Door Academy	-	52.3	59.7
Ridgeroad Charter Middle School	40.0	36.8	58.7
ALL CONVERSION CHARTERS	51.5		
<p>* Demographic Group refers to all of the non-charter schools in the state in which the percentage of Free or Reduced Lunch recipients is in the same quintile as the charter school of comparison.</p> <p>** The Region of Regional Average refers to the non-charter schools in the county of the school plus all of the non-charter schools in the contiguous counties</p> <p>NA means "Not Applicable," because the grade is not taught at the school.</p> <p>- means data not available</p>			

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Table CM8 Benchmark: Mathematics Grade 8 By School and Demographic and Region Conversion Charters 2004-05 School Year			
School	Grade 8	Grade 8	Grade 8
	School Average Proficiency*	Demographic Group Average	Regional Average
Statewide – Non-Charters	32.7		
TECHNOLOGY ORIENTED			
Academy of Technology	NA	NA	NA
Arkansas School for Info & Tech	NA	NA	NA
DISTINCTIVE FOCUS			
Mtn Home H. S. Academies	NA	NA	NA
Osceola Academic Center of Exc.	17.0	12.5	28.2
AT RISK STUDENTS			
Blytheville Charter School	-	12.5	28.2
Cabot Academic Center of Exc.	-	41.0	25.2
Felder Alternative Academy	-	12.5	35.2
Raider Open Door Academy	-	28.6	33.5
Ridgeroad Charter Middle School	14.0	12.5	35.2
ALL CONVERSION CHARTERS	15.5		
<p>* Demographic Group refers to all of the non-charter schools in the state in which the percentage of Free or Reduced Lunch recipients is in the same quintile as the charter school of comparison.</p> <p>** The Region of Regional Average refers to the non-charter schools in the county of the school plus all of the non-charter schools in the contiguous counties</p> <p>NA means "Not Applicable," because the grade is not taught at the school.</p> <p>- means data not available</p>			

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APPENDIX C

School Climate Survey Questionnaires