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May 2012

# Arkansas Public Charter Schools: Evaluation of Service Impact and Student Achievement

2009–2010 Evaluation Report

SUBMITTED TO:

Mary Ann Duncan, Former Program Director of  
Charter Schools



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## 2009–2010 Evaluation Report

SUBMITTED TO:

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Schools

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## Executive Summary

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During the 2009–2010 school year, 27 public charter schools serving approximately 8,800 students were operating in Arkansas (16 open-enrollment and 11 conversion schools); of these 27 schools, 24 were still in operation at the time of this evaluation. The Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) provides oversight of the public charter schools. Since 2001, evaluations of these schools prior to Metis’ previous three annual evaluations have indicated that they are outperforming regular public schools in Arkansas. This evaluation focuses on the characteristics of the Arkansas public charter schools that are having the greatest impact on student achievement, overall customer satisfaction, and looks at schools’ efficacy in carrying out the charter school philosophy. These findings could have implications not only for public charter schools but also for traditional district schools in the state.

The ADE retained Metis Associates, Inc., a research and evaluation firm based in New York City, Atlanta, and Philadelphia, to conduct an independent evaluation of the Arkansas Public Charter School Program for the 2009–2010 school year. The evaluation used a variety of data collection methodologies, yielding both qualitative and quantitative data. These methodologies included the following:

- Surveys of school administrators (N = 24 respondents), parents (N = 1,052 respondents), and students (N = 5,016 respondents);
- Analyses of student achievement data from the Stanford Achievement Test 10 (SAT-10) in language and math (Grade 2), the Arkansas Benchmark exams in literacy and math (Grades 3–8), and End-of-Course (EOC) exams in geometry, algebra, and literacy (Grades 9–12); and
- Review of detailed project documentation.

During the 2009–2010 school year, the Arkansas public charter schools demonstrated that they provide a high-quality educational alternative to the state’s traditional public schools. Their successes may be linked to the schools’ charter status, which has allowed schools the flexibility to implement a wide array of practices that speak to each community’s educational needs. The study revealed evidence of schools’ specific focus on strong academic leadership, effective academic programming, and relevant professional development for staff.

The documentation reviewed for this evaluation included schools’ academic plans, along with meeting agendas and minutes that aligned with these plans. These materials demonstrated the efforts taken by the charter schools to meet the high accountability standards written in their comprehensive school plans and charters. A high percentage of schools further documented their use of technology, project-based learning, and individualized instruction—all of which show schools’ efforts to provide effective academic programming to students.

The evaluation documentation also showed that teacher professional development was an important focus of the charter schools in 2009–2010. Each school provided very detailed material on their

professional development practices, including annual professional development plans, agendas from professional development committee meetings, and training and materials (such as curriculum training guides and staff needs-assessment surveys).

This evaluation, like those previously carried out by Metis, found that parents and students reported high degrees of satisfaction with their schools. It is possible that parents' satisfaction is tied to the charter schools' efforts to cultivate a high level of parent involvement. Detailed documentation provided by schools showed that schools had clear parent involvement plans, and that they had created committees and reached out to community resources to assist with parent involvement efforts. These efforts resulted in a high percentage of parents who were very satisfied with their opportunities to be involved in their child's school, and a notably high percentage of parents who were very satisfied with their communication with their child's teacher.

According to school administrators, the two greatest challenges they faced in 2009–2010 were managing public perceptions and public relations, and facility costs. The concern over facility costs among open-enrollment schools has in fact decreased since the 2008–2009 school year, and relatedly, parents' satisfaction with their child's school facilities has increased.

On another positive note, the charter schools also seem to be reinvesting funds into arts integration programs, as evidenced by a 28 percentage point increase in the share of schools that reported implementing fine arts programs in 2009–2010 over the previous year. Parent concern over the diversity of course offerings for students was found in previous evaluations.

The regression analyses carried out for this evaluation suggest that certain public charter school characteristics may have resulted in higher student achievement in 2009–2010. In Grade 2, implementation of reduced/small class size was associated with increased student achievement on the SAT-10 math. In Grade 3, the use of team teaching was associated with improved student achievement on the Benchmark math exam, and smaller school size was associated with improved student achievement on the Benchmark literacy and math exams. In Grades 4–8, the use of theme-based curriculum was associated with improved student achievement on the Benchmark literacy and math exams, and implementation of reduced/small class size was associated with improved student achievement on the Benchmark literacy exam. Finally, in Grades 9–12, an extended school day was associated with higher achievement on the geometry End-of-Course exam.

Customer satisfaction seemed to be well linked to improved student achievement in 2009–2010. The regression analyses revealed that the parent satisfaction ratio was among the most common variables predicting improved student achievement across all grades in literacy and math. Higher attendance and lower suspension rates were also commonly associated with higher student achievement for a number of the grades. An analysis of student achievement data using No Child Left Behind (NCLB) comparisons indicated a much higher prevalence of subgroup differences in literacy and math achievement compared to 2008–2009 across all grade levels.

Taken together, the quantitative and qualitative data suggest that Arkansas public charter schools successfully implemented the charter school program and achieved their goals during the 2009–2010 school year.



The following recommendations, based on the evaluation's findings and conclusions, may be useful to the Arkansas Public Charter School Program and its stakeholders as they move forward and make decisions for the future:

- **Explore issues of attendance and suspensions.** More than in previous years, regression analyses indicated that attendance and school suspensions had an impact on student achievement. Future evaluations can determine whether these issues are growing, what their impact is, and how schools are—and ought to be—addressing them.
- **Continue to encourage the use of innovative curricular instruction.** A number of innovative instructional practices, such as theme-based instruction, team-teaching, and reduced class size, was associated with improved student achievement. The ADE could continue supporting the public charter schools in implementing and expanding these practices, and could encourage further study of their impact.
- **Address growing concerns over managing public perceptions.** There was an increase in 2009–2010 in the percentage of public charter school administrators who expressed concern about managing public perceptions and public relations. Public charter schools are under more scrutiny than traditional public schools because of the higher accountability requirements of their charters. The ADE might consider using specialized consultants to provide technical assistance or training to school administrators, helping them learn best practices for dealing with these issues.
- **Continue addressing facility challenges experienced by open-enrollment public charter schools.** While the concern over facility costs among school administrators of open-enrollment schools has declined since the last evaluation, and while parents at these schools have expressed greater satisfaction with their schools' facilities, we would again recommend that the ADE continue exploring the financial support that is provided to the public charter schools for facility management and provide technical assistance to schools who wish to seek outside funding to address this challenge (e.g., in the form of grant writing). It might also be possible to offer incentives to entities (e.g., districts, local businesses) that give public charter schools the opportunity to either co-locate with them or lease appropriate facilities from them.
- **Provide technical assistance opportunities.** A partnership could be formed to establish an infrastructure, perhaps with the help of local universities or community-based proponents of public charter schools, to assist new and existing public charter schools in a range of areas. These might include serving the needs of students with educational disabilities or with limited proficiency in English, securing appropriate facilities, sharing successful and promising practices, establishing policies and procedures for various areas of school implementation (e.g., academic, student discipline, parental involvement, etc.), and engaging in program development and grant writing.



## I. Introduction

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In August 2001, Arkansas established a statewide public charter school program, which grew from 4 schools in its first year to 27 schools serving approximately 8,800 students in 2009–2010 (16 open-enrollment and 11 conversion schools). Under the program, new open-enrollment schools and adapted district conversion schools offered flexible curricular programming and promised higher degrees of accountability to the communities they serve. Arkansas state law specifies that public charter schools must also demonstrate to the State Board of Education that they are producing gains in student achievement and adhering to the charter authorization. The Division of Learning Services' Public Charter School Office of the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) hired Metis Associates<sup>1</sup> to design and carry out the evaluation for the 2009–2010 school year. The independent evaluation was intended to assist the state in meeting its requirements to annually evaluate its charter school program and to address key research areas of interest to the ADE and to achieve the following:

- Contribute to the overall knowledge base about public charter schools, including their impact on student achievement;
- Obtain qualitative data on the program's impact from key stakeholders (administrators, students, and parents) across the target schools and assess the stakeholders' satisfaction with all aspects of program implementation; and
- Begin to identify the innovations and practices within and across the target public charter schools that might be having an impact on student academic achievement.

The evaluation period ran from October 2011 to March 2012. An interim report provided to ADE in February 2012 indicated high levels of parent and student satisfaction with the quality of schools' curricula and instruction, student remediation and support, and opportunities for parental involvement. Student achievement analyses also revealed various significant statistical differences between No Child Left Behind (NCLB) subgroups on their performance on state exams.

The next two sections of this report describe the research methods used in the study and present the findings, which are organized by the three major research questions contained in the evaluation proposal. The last section presents conclusions and recommendations for future implementation. Five appendices follow the main report; they include an evaluation matrix that aligns research questions to the data collection methods used to address them (Appendix A), a data collection summary sheet (Appendix B), outputs for student-achievement data distributions (Appendix C), detailed evaluation survey results (Appendix D), and copies of the evaluation surveys (Appendix E).

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<sup>1</sup> Metis Associates is an employee-owned, national social services research and evaluation consulting organization headquartered in New York City, with 35 years of expertise in program evaluation, grants development, and information technology.



## II. Research Methods

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Drawing on the scope of work described in the ADE request for proposal, Metis worked closely with the Public Charter School Office during the evaluation period to develop an evaluation implementation plan covering activities between October 2011 and March 2012. During initial progress meetings, a set of research questions was finalized for both the implementation and outcome components of the 2009–2010 evaluation. The final research questions developed were as follows:

- What is the overall efficacy of the charter schools with respect to various attributes, including strong academic leadership, high academic standards/expectations, mastery-oriented instruction, classroom management skills, a positive learning climate, and parental support and involvement?
- To what extent are the parents and the students of the public charter schools satisfied with their schools?
- What is the impact of the Arkansas public charter schools on student performance?
  - What are the characteristics of the public charter schools that have the greatest impact on academic achievement (e.g., student/parental satisfaction, school size, type of curricula used, etc.)?
  - What other indicators of improved school success are evident for public charter school students (e.g., increased attendance, fewer discipline reports, improved grades)?
  - What can the public charter schools learn from disaggregating the student outcome data by the different NCLB subgroups (special education status, Title I status, free/reduced-price lunch eligibility, gender, and racial/ethnic background)?

The Metis team used the following methods to collect data relevant to the evaluation questions.

**Administration of surveys to school administrators, parents, and students.** Beginning in November 2011, the evaluation team asked administrators at each of the public charter schools to complete an online charter school implementation survey, assist in disseminating a classroom-based student survey, and facilitate the administration of a parent survey, which the schools sent home with students for completion. Survey data for 2009–2010 were collected only for schools that were still in operation during the evaluation data collection period (November 2011–March 2012; N = 24 schools).

- The school implementation survey collected systematic information about public charter school operations. Administrator surveys for all 24 schools still in operation were completed by March 2012.

- The public charter schools sent the parent survey home with each student, including a cover letter, a parent consent form for student participation in the student survey, and an addressed, postage-paid survey return envelope. To ensure the greatest response rate possible, Metis did not use sampling methods, sending all parents a questionnaire. The parent survey asked questions related to parents' satisfaction with their child's school, including quality of instruction, parental support and communication, and school climate and safety. In total, 1,052 parent surveys were returned for the 2009–2010 school year (a 16 percent return rate). However, only surveys where parents reported having a child enrolled at the same school in 2009–2010 were retained for the analyses of parent survey data. After modifications to the survey data file, 562 survey entries for the 2009–2010 school year evaluation were available for analysis. The number of parent surveys returned from each school ranged from 3 to 167, with a median of 26.
- Students in Grades 3 and higher at all of the public charter schools completed a student survey. Parental consent for children's participation was obtained by means of a consent form included with the parent survey. School staff administered the surveys in the target grade classrooms and students inserted the completed questionnaires into a peel-and-seal envelope to ensure anonymity. The student survey asked questions related to students' satisfaction with various aspects of their school, including quality of instruction, educational support, and school climate and safety, and they collected basic background information. In total, 5,016 student surveys were returned (a 77 percent return rate). Among these, Metis conducted the analysis for only those students who reported being present at their school in 2009–2010, which resulted in 2,616 surveys being retained. The number of student surveys returned from each school ranged from 17 to 622, with a median of 148.

**Analysis of student achievement data and demographic information.** Student achievement data and demographic information were obtained from ADE for each target school year for all 27 public charter schools operating in 2009–2010, and an analytic file was constructed. Demographic information included racial/ethnic background, gender, Title I status, poverty status (free/reduced-price lunch eligibility), and special needs status. In addition, the file contained the results of the following assessments all for the 2009-2010 school year:

- The Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment, and Accountability Program (ACTAPP), which includes results for the Stanford Achievement Test 10 (SAT-10) in language and math (for Grades 1, 2, and 9);<sup>2</sup>
- The Arkansas Benchmark exams in literacy and math (for Grades 3–8); and
- End-of-Course (EOC) exams in geometry, algebra, and literacy (for Grades 9–12).

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<sup>2</sup> Pretest scores were not available for Grade 1 (i.e., there were no kindergarten scores), so the analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) could not be conducted for this grade. ANCOVA makes it possible to compare a given outcome in two or more categorical groups while controlling for the variability of important continuous predictors/covariates (e.g., prior achievement).

**Review of extant data.** The evaluation team collected relevant documentation on schoolwide public charter school implementation for 2009–2010. The list of requested program documentation included:

- Professional development opportunity schedules;
- Evidence of parental support/involvement (including parent newsletters, agendas of parent events, etc.);
- Evidence of strong academic leadership, high academic standards, positive school climate, and effective classroom management (including materials such as meeting agendas/minutes, local survey results, list of programs implemented at school);
- Forms that demonstrate class scheduling and student grouping practices;
- Arkansas Comprehensive School Improvement Plans (ACSIP) for the 2009–2010 school year; and
- Annual reports to the public.

### III. Findings

This section of the report presents findings of the evaluation organized according to the major research questions. Where there were notable or interesting differences, the discussion and interpretation of findings includes comparisons to results from the 2008–2009 evaluation.

#### A. Overall Efficacy of Public Charter Schools

For this study, Metis sought to examine how the public charter schools fostered growth in the key areas vital to running an effective charter school. Through the school administrator implementation survey and a collection of relevant school documents (described below), the study addressed schools’ steps in developing strong academic leadership, implementing a rigorous and effective instructional program, cultivating skill level of school staff through professional development, and involving and communicating effectively with families. Sections addressing each of these areas follow.

Table 1 lists the 27 public charter schools that were open during the 2009–2010 year, and includes information about the school type, grades served, and year opened.

Table 1: Overview of the Arkansas Public Charter Schools (2009–2010)

School	Grades Served	Year Opened
Osceola Academic Center of Excellence	4–8	2002–2003 <i>(Closed August 2010)</i>
Badger Academy Charter School	7–12	2007–2008
Blytheville Charter School and ALC	7–12	2001–2002
Cabot Academic Center of Excellence	7–12	2004–2005
Arthur Bo Felder Alternative Learning Academy	6–12	2005–2006 <i>(Closed June 2011)</i>
Lincoln Academic Center of Excellence	K–12	2009–2010
Mountain Home High School Career Academies	10–12	2003–2004
Oak Grove Elementary Health, Wellness, and Environmental Science	K–4	2009–2010
Ridgeroad Middle Charter School	7–8	2003–2004

School	Grades Served	Year Opened
Vilonia Academy of Technology	2-4	2004-2005
Vilonia Academy of Service and Technology	5-6	2007-2008
Academics Plus Charter School	K-12	2001-2002
Arkansas Virtual Academy	K-8	2004-2005
Benton County School of the Arts	K-12	2001-2002
Covenant Keepers College Preparatory Charter School	6-9	2008-2009
Dreamland Academy of Performing & Communication Arts	K-5	2007-2008
e-STEM Elementary Public Charter School	K-4	2008-2009
e-STEM Middle Public Charter School	5-8	2008-2009
e-STEM High Public Charter School	9-10	2008-2009
Haas Hall Academy	8-12	2004-2005
Imboden Area Charter School	K-8	2002-2003
Jacksonville Lighthouse Charter School	K-6	2009-2010
KIPP Delta Public Schools	K-1, 5-12	2002-2003
LISA Academy	6-12	2004-2005
LISA Academy-North Little Rock	K-9	2008-2009
Little Rock Preparatory Academy	5-8	2009-2010
Osceola Communication, Arts, and Business School	7-12	2008-2009 (Closed June 2011)

Among the 27 public charter schools open in 2009-2010, the grade configurations varied considerably, including elementary school grades only (four schools), elementary through middle school grades (seven schools), middle school through high school grades (eight schools), middle school grades only (one school), high school grades only (two schools), and all three schooling levels (five schools). Table 1 also shows that 11 of these schools were conversion schools and 16 were

open-enrollment schools. Three schools (Blytheville, Academics Plus, and Benton) were the first to open (2001–2002 school year), and four schools (Lincoln, Oak Grove, Jacksonville Lighthouse, and Little Rock Preparatory) were the latest to open (2009–2010 year).

### School Operations and Academic Leadership

In 2009–2010, as in previous years, the public charter schools put into practice various waivers allowed under state and district education laws, regulations, and policies. Metis received data from administrators from all 24 public charter schools still in operation during the evaluation period and analyzed these data to determine what waivers the public charter schools utilized. Table 2 shows the most common areas in which the schools obtained and implemented waivers.

**Table 2: Public Charter School Waivers**

Waiver	Number of Schools	Percentage of Schools
Teacher certification requirements	19	79%
Teacher hiring, discipline, and dismissal practices	11	46%
School calendar	10	42%
School day length	6	25%
School year length	5	21%
Collective bargaining provisions	5	21%
Establishing curriculum	5	21%
Other	5	21%
Student discipline policies	2	8%
Purchasing procedures	2	8%
Contractual services	2	8%

Teacher certification requirements were the most common waivers put in place by the public charter schools in 2009–2010, as they were in 2008–2009. A little less than half of the schools also implemented waivers for teacher hiring, discipline, and dismissal practices (46 percent) and adjustments to the school calendar (42 percent).

A great deal of information regarding the practices carried out at the charter schools during the 2009–2010 school year was contained in the program documentation the schools provided. Master schedules had information on class schedules, and accompanying documents had information on student grouping practices. Information on schools’ academic practices was available in curriculum outlines, listings, and descriptions of academic programs, and numerous agendas and minutes for meetings dealing with academics, school operations, and policies.

Schools provided the following program documentation to enable Metis to assess their progress in efficacious public charter school management and academic leadership:

- Master schedules, weekly schedules, and school calendars
- Documents concerning student grouping practices
- Teacher observation schedules
- Multiyear strategic plans
- School board and/or school leadership team meeting agendas and minutes (with information on annual goals; curricula; teacher effectiveness and teacher evaluations; student assessment; professional development; data analysis; special academic programs; student conduct policies and implementation of “intervention programs,” including use of therapists, mentors, and social workers; use of consultants for instruction, scheduling, attendance, and discipline; updating of school handbooks; and school wide events)
- Faculty and academic department meeting agendas (with information on unit and lesson planning, use of student data, SMART goals, special projects, addressing needs of low performers, professional development turn-keying, academic events like writing celebrations, and report cards)
- Curriculum outlines
- Monthly staff newsletters
- School newsletters
- Copies of student surveys (to research academic accessibility and effectiveness)
- Copies of teacher surveys (to examine academic practices and curricular effectiveness)
- Copies of parent surveys (to assess school effectiveness in areas of academic support for students, school climate, and parent communication)
- Documents outlining use of data at board meetings to support informed decision making
- Agendas for special committees to address school objectives (scheduling committees, discipline committees, core subject committees, testing committees, special needs instruction committees, ACSIP committee, etc.)
- Staff qualification documents (including resumes/CVs)
- Photos of school facilities
- Lunch menus
- Newspaper articles outlining academic successes and leadership of schools

The survey asked open-enrollment schools separately to indicate the most common practices carried out by their school board during the 2009–2010 year. Of the boards at the 16 participating open-enrollment schools, at least three-quarters did the following:

- Held open board meetings (100 percent);
- Shared agendas and other important information before board meetings (100 percent);
- Maintained written description of board members’ roles and responsibilities (88 percent);

- Established clear procedures for the selection of board members (88 percent);
- Maintained open lines of communication between board and school administration (81 percent);
- Maintained a commitment to strategic planning (81 percent);
- Established a formal plan for training of board members (75 percent); and
- Maintained clear, up-to-date bylaws (75 percent).

Program documentation collected from the open-enrollment schools, which included the materials listed on page 9 as well as board-specific documents (meeting agendas and minutes, school policy handbooks, and data reports to the school), demonstrated transparency in boards’ activities, roles, and responsibilities as well as in communication with the school community.

An important aspect of opening a charter school involves determining where the school will be housed. Previous evaluation reports have outlined the various challenges faced by charter schools in procuring the proper facilities to allow operation at full capacity, and have noted in particular the difficulties of implementing extracurricular activities in certain facilities and the financial burden of transforming physical spaces to handle activities such as sports programs. School administrators were asked to indicate what facility arrangements existed for their school in 2009–2010. The largest proportion of respondents (42 percent) indicated using rented/leased facilities that were independent of the school district. The second highest proportion (33 percent) indicated using existing district facilities at no cost, while a notable 17 percent of schools indicated purchasing their own facilities. As can be seen, the majority of school facilities were not school-ready buildings, a situation that led to challenges in some school offerings (explained further under “Issues and Challenges” below).

### Academic Program and Instruction

Administrator survey respondents indicated the use of various methods of instructional delivery in 2009–2010. The list of options included all instructional methods known to be implemented across the public charter school program in 2009–2010.

**Table 3: Primary Methods of Instructional Delivery**

Instructional Method	Number of Schools	Percentage of Schools
Regular integration of technology	19	79%
Character education	19	79%
Project-based or hands-on learning	18	75%
Individualized or tailored instruction	18	75%
Reduced or small class size	17	71%
Direct instruction	17	71%

Instructional Method	Number of Schools	Percentage of Schools
Interdisciplinary instruction	16	67%
Cooperative learning	15	63%
Regular integration of fine arts	14	58%
Multigrade classrooms	13	54%
Alternative or authentic assessment	12	50%
Extended school day (before, after, summer, and/or vacation)	12	50%
Team teaching	10	42%
School-to-work concepts and strategies	9	38%
Distance-learning and/or instruction via Internet	9	38%
Theme-based curriculum	7	29%
Work-based or field-based learning	7	29%
Year-round or extended schooling	7	29%
Independent study	6	25%
Home-based learning with parent as primary instructor	1	4%

One major finding shown in Table 3 is the prevalence of technology integration in the charter schools' instructional methodology in 2009–2010. Approximately 79 percent of schools indicated regularly integrating technology along with an equal 79 percent of schools that indicated implementing character education in their schools. At least two-thirds of schools also indicated implementing project-based or hands-on learning (75 percent), individualized or tailored instruction (75 percent), reduced or small class size (71 percent), direct instruction (71 percent), and interdisciplinary instruction (67 percent).

When asked about special education instruction, 100 percent of schools reported providing some type of accommodation for students with special needs (up from 74 percent the previous year). The two most common accommodations reported, pull-out services and/or inclusive classrooms, were offered by over three-quarters of the charter schools (79 percent). In addition, approximately 42 percent of these charter schools had self-contained special education classes (similar to the previous year). When asked about instruction for English language learner (ELL) students, 39 percent of schools indicated offering English as a second language instruction; although this figure is down from 54 percent the previous year, it is explained by the absence of ELL students in 52 percent of schools.

All of the public charter schools appeared to use a range of assessment strategies in addition to the state and national assessments required of all Arkansas public schools. At least half of schools reported using student demonstrations/exhibitions (70 percent), behavioral indicators (74 percent),



student portfolios (57 percent), and student interviews or surveys (52 percent) in addition to teacher-assigned grades and the required standardized achievement test and Benchmark exam.

Schools provided detailed program documentation to support their reports of the various instructional methodologies used. Documentation included curriculum outlines and materials; descriptions of general education, special education, elective/enrichment courses, advanced placement, and gifted programs; and school course listings. The documentation also provided evidence of strong instructional support for teachers and students across the charter school program, including pacing guides and scope and sequence documents, tutoring and after-school schedules, and evidence of postsecondary support programs.

The following is a summary list of documents provided by schools that indicate the implementation of strong instructional programming and support across the public charter school program.

- Sample curricula and curriculum outlines for core subject areas (some grade specific);
- Instructional pacing guides;
- Lists of course offerings (general education, special education, elective/enrichment courses, advanced placement, gifted programs, and special programs like community initiatives for students);
- Course introductions;
- Descriptions of alternative learning environment programs (also agendas for related meetings);
- Charter school annual reports to the public;
- Student mentorship program guides and lists;
- Remediation course rosters/schedules;
- Interdisciplinary projects and interdisciplinary instructional plans;
- Descriptions/lists of online learning opportunities used;
- Inventory lists of educational software and technology-related equipment;
- Letters of support from partnering instructional organizations;
- Evidence of strong postsecondary preparation support and college-readiness programs (e.g., program pamphlets, career-fairs, materials for school-based post-secondary support offices, etc.);
- Scope and sequence documents;
- Student assessment guides and samples;
- Core-subject events (Literacy Night agendas, writing celebration flyers, etc.);
- Sample instructional and assessment rubrics;
- Student portfolio guides for teachers/students;
- Sample student portfolios, student projects, and student work;

- Sample unit and lesson plans;
- Sample unit and grade wide assessments, testing tools, and schedules;
- Tutoring and after-school schedules; and
- Student Progress Report Notebook guides.

### Staff-Related Practices

Arkansas public charter schools take advantage of laws that allow them to implement staff practices not possible under a traditional school structure. Table 4 shows the results of the online administrator survey, which asked about the various alternative staff practices that the charter schools implemented through flexibility in their charter school contracts.

**Table 4: Public Charter School Alternative Staff Practices**

Practice	Number of Schools	Percentage of Schools <sup>a</sup>
Dismissal of teachers for unsatisfactory performance	13	57%
Ongoing, targeted professional development	13	57%
Lack of tenure for teachers	10	44%
Rewards for exemplary performance	9	39%
Professional development services contract with nondistrict providers	8	35%
Performance-based bonuses for teachers	7	30%
Private fund-raising/grants development	4	17%
Other	4	17%
Higher teacher salaries (than public school)	3	13%

Dismissal of teachers for poor performance and ongoing targeted professional development were the most common alternative practice among all schools (each cited by 57 percent of schools), followed by lack of tenure for teachers (44 percent), and rewards for exemplary performance (39 percent).

The survey findings revealed that public charter schools offered approximately 10 dedicated days of professional development in 2009–2010, which is up from 9 in 2008–2009. Program documentation provided information on the content of the professional development that the public charter schools offered during the 2009–2010 year. It also revealed professional development practices and planning to support implementation.

Documents that offered evidence of implementation included the following:

- Professional development schedules;
- School year professional development plans;

- Letters of partnerships with instructional organizations;
- Curriculum training guides and professional development materials;
- Professional development committee meeting agendas;
- Instructional coaching schedules;
- Faculty meeting agendas focused on professional development implementation;
- Professional growth plans and personalized professional-development verification forms;
- Staff needs-assessment surveys;
- Leadership team meeting agendas and minutes related to professional development plans;
- Documents illustrating alignment of professional development offerings to school wide goals; and
- Professional development sign-in sheets.

The following were the general topics covered by professional development sessions across multiple charter schools:<sup>3</sup>

- Subject-specific curriculum implementation (e.g., literacy, history, math, science, writing, health);
- Classroom management and behavior-related trainings (e.g., behavior intervention, crisis management, classroom management approaches, teen conflict, teen communication);
- Instructional delivery trainings (e.g., use of technology, research-based instruction, instructional best practices, common core, instructional differentiation, unit pacing);
- Curriculum mapping and instructional alignment;
- Data-driven decision making and use of data;
- Parent involvement strategies;
- Parent communication strategies;
- Virtual learning;
- Cognitive research;
- Student testing, accountability, and achievement;
- Use of technology to support instruction (e.g., computing, software, SmartBoards);
- Staff collaboration and teaming;
- Conference participation (regional and national);

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<sup>3</sup> This list consists of general topic areas found in the documentation provided; there were too many specific titles to list them.

- Mentoring and advocacy; and
- Administration-related trainings (e.g., instructional leadership, parental involvement data disaggregation, fiscal management, curriculum alignment, supervision, parental involvement, staff assessment, progress monitoring, teacher effectiveness)

### Parent Communication and Involvement

The school administrator survey asked respondents to rate the level of parental and community involvement in the charter school program. Table 5 presents these findings for all 24 charter schools.

**Table 5: Level of Parental and Community Involvement**

Indicator	Total N	Level of Involvement		
		Excellent or Good	Average	Poor of Unsatisfactory
Level of parental involvement concerning students' academic achievement, attendance, and/or behavior	24	62%	25%	13%
Level of parental involvement concerning participation in schoolwide events or activities (e.g., Parents Club)	24	55%	33%	13%
Level of community involvement at this school	24	46%	29%	25%

As can be seen in the table above, the majority of responding school administrators rated parental involvement in students' academic achievement, attendance, and/or behavior in 2009–2010 as *good* to *excellent* (62 percent), a quarter (25 percent) of administrators rated it *average*, and only 13 percent rated it *poor* or *unsatisfactory*. These findings show a marked decrease in the rating for parental involvement from the previous school year (2008–2009), when 82 percent of schools rated parents' involvement as *good* to *excellent* (a 20 percentage point difference). Generally, schools rated parental involvement in school wide events and activities a bit lower than their involvement in students academics; only 13 percent rated parents' involvement in school wide events as *excellent*. This finding reflects a decrease since 2008–2009, when 35 percent rated this item as *excellent*.

Despite the lower ratings for parental involvement, schools indicated implementing the same level of effort to the implementation of parent involvement strategies in 2009–2010 as in 2008–2009. Between 91 and 96 percent of schools in each of the past two school years indicated having parent-teacher conferences and involving parents in monitoring student academic progress. In addition, between 83 and 88 percent of schools in 2008–2009 and 2009–2010 also indicated involving parents in discipline-related discussions, and holding school events during times that accommodated parents' schedules. Indeed, in 2009–2010, there were notable *increases* (at least 20 percentage points) in the percentage of schools implementing two strategies for involving parents:

- Conducting parent workshops (+27 percentage points); and
- Using community resources (e.g., museums, parks) to enhance student learning (+22 percentage points).

Since 2007–2008, schools’ use of community resources has risen 41 percentage points, the most dramatic increase between 2007–2008 and 2009–2010 in any method used. Conversely, a much lower percentage of schools in 2009–2010 used community sites for service learning work-based learning opportunities (-20 percentage points) compared to schools in 2008–2009.

The program documentation contained some additional examples of strategies used by the schools to promote parent involvement and communication, including school wide parent involvement plans, monthly parent newsletters, parent trainings or workshops, annual parent feedback surveys, and materials on other school functions. The majority of the schools provided samples of parent newsletters that were regularly distributed throughout the school year. All schools that provided copies of their 2009–2010 school improvement plan (ACSIP) indicated the implementation of parent orientation events and Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) meetings. The following is a complete list of all documentation provided to Metis that spoke to schools’ efforts at promoting a high level of parent involvement:

- Charter school annual reports to the public;
- School wide parent involvement plans (outlines of strategies for communication, for building parental capacity, for generating partnership between parents and schools, for collaboration with community stakeholders, and for recruiting parent volunteers);
- Community collaboration initiative plans;
- Open-house agendas;
- Parent events documents (e.g., agendas, handouts, sign-in sheets, calendars);
- Parent communication documents (e.g., letters and memos sent home, parent newsletters, flyers and notices of special events, email blasts of upcoming events), information about parent activities, academic programming, academic events [e.g., literacy nights], fundraising, testing schedules, health-related assemblies, community-related resources, meal plans, contact lists, lists of special programs [academic/remedial and extracurricular], including documents translated into other languages, etc.);
- Announcements of hiring of parent involvement director;
- School wide lists of parent involvement activities for school;
- Parent-teacher conference sign-in sheets and related communiqués;
- Parent volunteering forms and lists of opportunities;
- Parent survey samples and survey results;
- Student/parent handbooks and school-parent compacts;
- PowerPoint presentations used at parent welcoming assemblies; and
- Resources provided to parents, including lists of websites.

## Issues and Challenges

Public charter school administrators were asked about what issues and challenges (if any) they encountered in operating their school during the 2009–2010 year. The only area that the majority of schools (57 percent) indicated was a challenge in 2009–2010 was managing public perceptions and public relations (in 2008–2009 47 percent of schools identified this area as challenging). Managing facility costs was found challenging in 2009–2010 by 43 percent of schools, down from 52 percent of schools in 2008–2009. A third (33 percent) of schools reported finding it challenging to increase parental involvement in 2009–2010; a similar share of schools (38 percent) reported the same challenge in 2008–2009. Finally, when schools are disaggregated by type (open-enrollment vs. conversion), we learn that all nine schools that indicated being challenged by facility costs were open-enrollment (the figure represents 54 percent of open-enrollment schools).

## B. Satisfaction of Students and Parents with Public Charter Schools

Parent and student satisfaction with the public charter schools was assessed through parent and student surveys. Initially, parents were asked about the reasons for their charter school selection; parents and students alike were asked about the overall quality of the school and their experiences and/or satisfaction with the instruction, student support, school environment and climate, and family involvement (parent survey only). Both sets of respondents were also queried about prior experiences with other schools. The main findings from the survey analyses are presented in the subsections below. Complete parent and student survey responses can be found in Appendix D.

### Charter School Selection

In general, parent survey respondents attributed their charter school selection to the particular school’s quality of instruction and environment. Specifically, parents most frequently cited the following reasons for charter school selection:

- Interest in the charter school’s instructional or academic program (70 percent);
- Dissatisfaction with traditional public school options/safety (67 percent);
- Interest in the charter school’s educational mission or philosophy (64 percent);
- Small size of the charter school or small classes (41 percent);
- Better teachers at the charter school (41 percent);
- Greater opportunities for parental involvement at the charter school (32 percent); and
- Respondent’s child wanted to come to the charter school (27 percent).

These findings generally aligned with the parent survey findings from 2008–2009, except for parents’ reported dissatisfaction with their child’s previous school, which was higher in 2009-2010 by 17 percentage points over the previous year (67 percent vs. 50 percent). Also, while only approximately a quarter (27 percent) of parents named their child’s interest as a reason for enrollment, it is

important to note that 75 percent of students reported being at least *somewhat* interested in their charter school during the 2009–2010 school year.

**Instruction**

Figure 1 represents the findings from the student survey on various aspects of instruction; it shows students’ estimations of how frequently they use technology in the classroom, how much homework they receive, how hard their teachers expect them to work, how much knowledge they feel they gained during the school year, and how they well they have performed academically overall.

**Figure 1: Student Perceptions of Charter School Instruction**

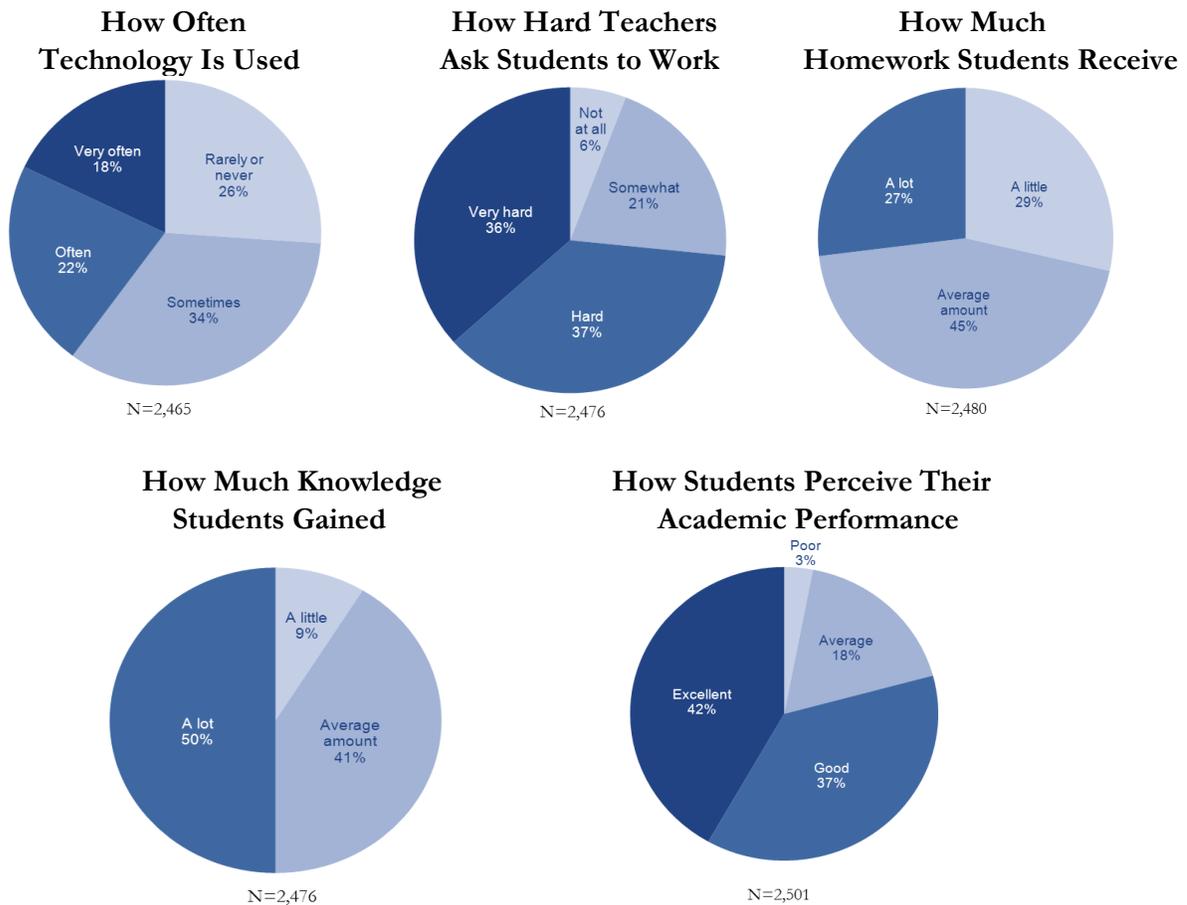


Figure 1 shows that:

- Three-quarters (73 percent) of student respondents thought their teachers expected them to work hard or very hard.

- The greatest proportion of students (40 percent) used computers and other electronics in class often or very often.
- While less than half of student survey respondents (45 percent) thought they received an average amount of homework, approximately a quarter (27 percent) thought they received a lot of homework.
- Half of student respondents (50 percent) thought they learned a lot, while a slightly lower percentage (41 percent) thought learned an average amount.
- A large percentage of students felt they earned good or excellent grades (79 percent) during the 2009–2010 school year.
- Of the above items, only students’ estimates of how they were performing in school was also asked in the 2008–2009 student survey, where a slightly lower percentage of students (72 percent) believed their performance was good to excellent.

The parent survey asked parents to rate their level of satisfaction with the child’s school in various areas related to instruction. The table below illustrates the findings for parents across all 24 charter schools.

**Table 6: Parent Satisfaction with Charter School Instruction**

Indicator	Total N	Level of Satisfaction Reported			
		Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Curriculum	538	75%	22%	2%	1%
Quality of reading instruction	524	77%	20%	2%	1%
Quality of math instruction	533	74%	19%	6%	1%
Quality of writing instruction	529	73%	22%	4%	1%
Use of technology within the instructional program	526	69%	25%	5%	1%
Performance of the teachers	536	70%	23%	6%	1%

As Table 6 shows, at least 93 percent of parent survey respondents were satisfied (*very satisfied* or *somewhat satisfied*) with all elements of instruction at the charter schools. The greatest proportion of parents reported satisfaction with their charter school’s curriculum (97 percent) and quality of reading instruction (97 percent), followed by quality of writing instruction (95 percent), technology use within the instructional program (94 percent), teacher performance (93 percent), and quality of math instruction (93 percent). No notable differences were observed when compared to findings from 2008–2009.

### Student Support

Table 7 represents parent survey findings on charter schools’ support for students. The survey asked parents about their satisfaction with various areas of support, specifically individualized attention

received by students, special services available, guidance counseling, tutoring, and extracurricular activities.

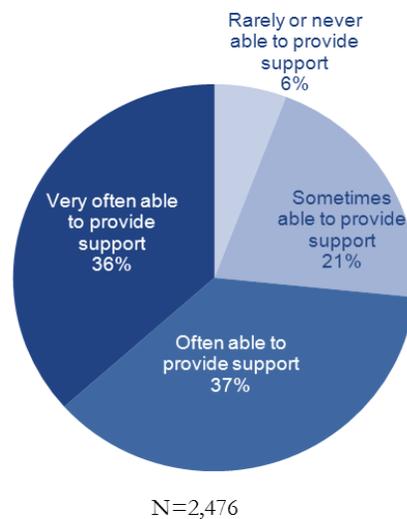
**Table 7: Parent Satisfaction with Charter School Student Support**

Indicator	Total N	Level of Satisfaction Reported			
		Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Extra help or special services when needed	470	76%	18%	4%	2%
Individualized attention	534	72%	22%	5%	1%
Quality of student support services such as guidance counseling and tutoring	498	70%	22%	6%	2%
Extracurricular activities	496	59%	24%	12%	5%

Parents’ satisfaction with the student support component at their child’s charter school, shown in Table 7, suggests a strong performance by teachers in this area. Most parents reported being *very satisfied* or *somewhat satisfied* with the extra help/special services provided by the school (94 percent), individualized attention given their child (94 percent), quality of student support services (92 percent), and extracurricular activities (83 percent). Parents’ rating of the quality of student support services was the only item rated notably higher than in 2008–2009, but 21 percentage points.

The student survey asked students to rate their teachers’ ability to provide support when needed. Nearly three-quarters (73 percent) of respondents noted that their teachers were able to do so *often* or *very often* (Figure 2, below) very similar to the 72 percent of students that indicated the same in 2008–2009.

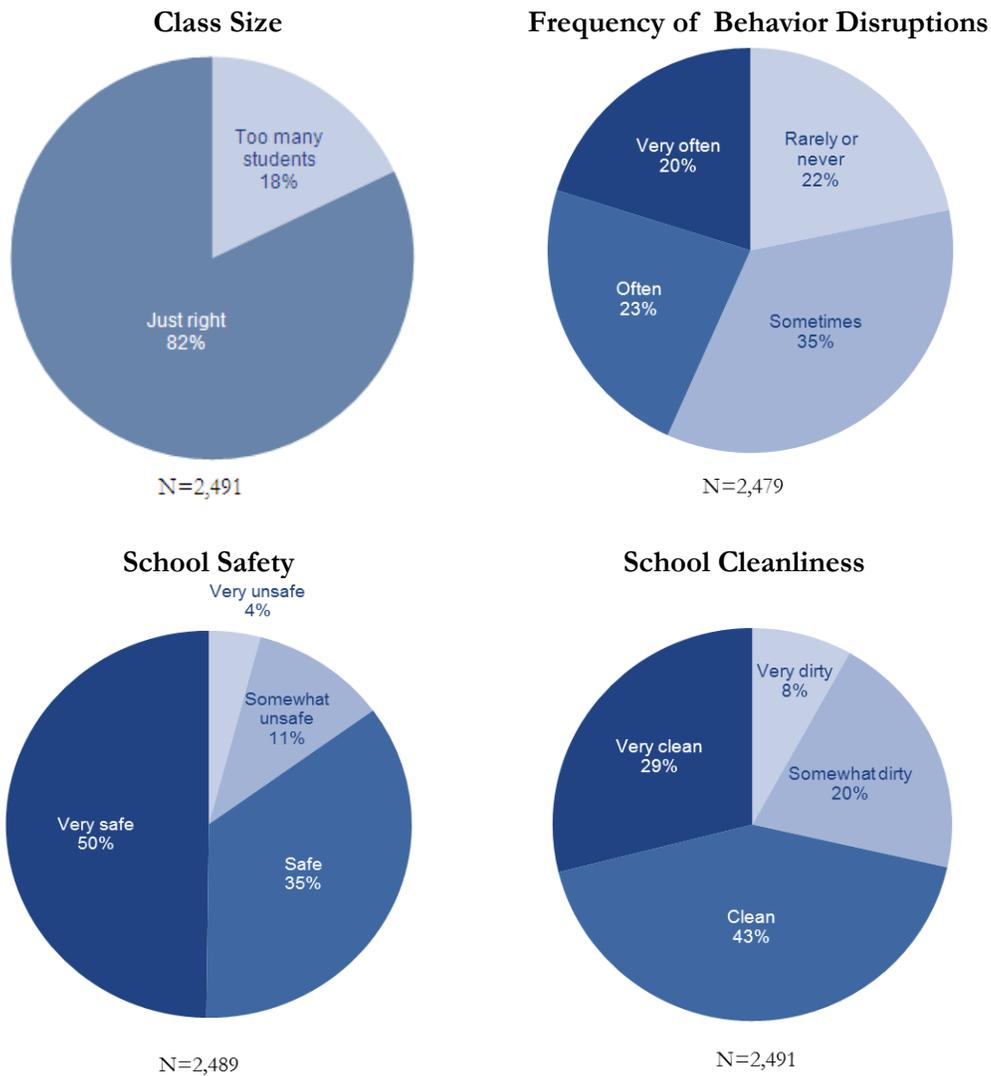
**Figure 2: Student Perception of Teachers’ Ability to Provide Support**



## School Environment and Climate

Findings on charter schools' environment and climate are outlined in Figure 3 and Table 8.

Figure 3: Student Perception of School Environment/Climate



As shown in Figure 3, the majority of student survey respondents thought that

- Their charter school was safe (85 percent);
- Their class size was just right (82 percent);
- Their school was clean (72 percent); and
- Behavior disruptions occurred sometimes or rarely/never (57 percent).



When compared to the previous year, no notable differences were observed for any of the above items.

**Table 8: Parent Satisfaction with Charter School Environment and Climate**

Indicator	Total N	Level of Satisfaction Reported			
		Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
School safety	495	78%	19%	2%	1%
School size	525	76%	19%	3%	2%
Class size	525	75%	19%	5%	1%
School climate (i.e., the feel or tone of everyday life at the school)	502	73%	21%	5%	1%
School discipline policies and practices	504	70%	20%	7%	3%
Quality of the building in which the school is located	462	67%	22%	7%	4%
Quality of the school facilities (i.e., school library, gymnasium, and science labs)	432	52%	29%	12%	7%

Table 8 shows that parent survey respondents were generally satisfied with the environment and climate of their child's charter school, with at least 81 percent of parents reporting satisfaction with each of the indicators. Specifically, the greatest proportion of parents were *somewhat to very satisfied* with the charter schools' safety (97 percent), followed by size (95 percent), class size (94 percent), climate (94 percent), quality of the building (89 percent), and quality of the facilities (81 percent). In previous evaluations, satisfaction with the quality of school facilities was notably lower among open-enrollment school parents than among conversion school parents, so the two school types disaggregated data for the last two items in Table 8. The results showed that in 2009–2010 there were no notable differences between the groups (i.e., there was only a two percentage point difference in the share of parents in both groups giving a rating of dissatisfied). A notably higher percentage of parents were *somewhat to very satisfied* in 2009–2010 compared to 2008–2009 in their ratings of the quality of the building (+24 percentage points), while no other area showed a notable difference in either direction.

## Family Involvement

Table 9 shows the level of parent satisfaction with two family involvement indicators.

**Table 9: Parent Satisfaction with Charter School Family Involvement**

Indicator	Total N	Level of Satisfaction Reported			
		Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Opportunities for parents to be involved or participate	536	81%	16%	2%	1%
Communication with child's teacher	538	76%	18%	5%	1%

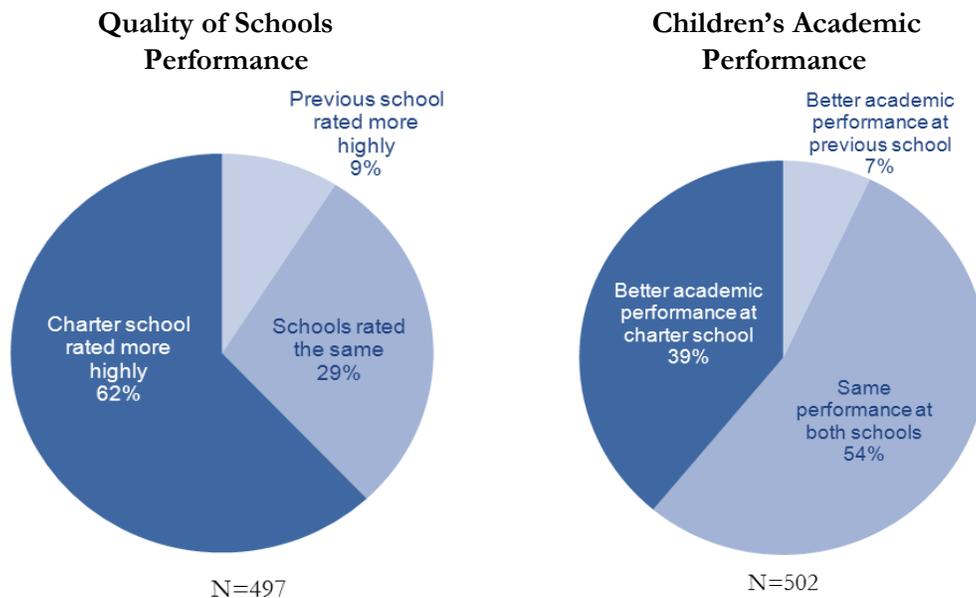


Satisfaction ratings for family involvement were similar to those for school instruction, support, and environment/climate, with most responding parents reporting they were *very satisfied* with family involvement at their charter school. Specifically, the majority of parents were *very satisfied* with the opportunities available for parent participation (81 percent) and communication with teachers (76 percent). The latter is a 12 percentage point increase over the share of parents that were very satisfied in 2008–2009.

### Previous School Experience

The majority of student survey respondents attended another school prior to enrollment at their current charter school (80 percent). Of those students, most indicated that they attended a regular public school (82 percent). The remaining students attended a private school (9 percent), attended a different charter school (5 percent), or were home schooled (5 percent).

**Figure 4: Parent Comparisons of the Charter School versus Previous School**



When asked about the quality of their previous school, most students (57 percent) reported that it was *good* or *excellent*. Parents tended to prefer their child's current charter school over the previous school. Figure 4 shows that nearly two-thirds (62 percent) of parent survey respondents thought that their child's current charter school was of better quality than their child's previous school. Moreover, 39 percent of parent survey respondents reported better academic performance for their child at their current charter school than at the previous school. Items in the 2009-2010 survey did not match items in the 2008-2009 surveys for comparing findings.

**Table 10: Parent Satisfaction with Current Charter School versus Previous School**

Area	Indicator	Total N	Satisfaction with Current School		
			More than with Previous	Same as with Previous	Less than with Previous
Instruction	Quality of math instruction	746	40%	50%	10%
	Quality of reading instruction	739	38%	52%	10%
	Quality of writing instruction	743	37%	52%	11%
Student support	Extra help or special services for students when needed	642	38%	52%	10%
School environment and climate	School safety	718	34%	56%	10%
	School facilities	646	28%	47%	25%
Family involvement	Parent involvement or participation	734	40%	52%	8%

Table 10 outlines the differences in parents’ satisfaction with their child’s current charter school and their previous school. The data show the following:

- Approximately half of the parent survey respondents expressed the same level of satisfaction with both schools in the areas of instruction (50–52 percent), student support (52 percent), school environment (56 percent), and family involvement (52 percent).
- Notably, however, at least a quarter of parents indicated that for these four areas, they were more satisfied with their child’s current charter school than their child’s previous school. Across the areas, parents were most likely to report greater satisfaction with the charter school’s family involvement (40 percent) and least likely to report greater satisfaction with school environment and climate (28–34 percent).
- Comparing across indicators shows that the greatest proportion of parents were more satisfied with the current charter school’s parent involvement (40 percent) and quality of math instruction (40 percent) than with the previous school’s. Smaller proportions of parents were more satisfied with their current school’s extra help or special services for students (38 percent), quality of reading instruction (38 percent), and quality of writing instruction (37 percent).

### Challenges

While parents were generally satisfied with the charter schools, 246 parents expressed concern about particular elements through open-ended responses. The most frequently mentioned concerns include the following:

- Need for expansion of schools to include the upper grade levels;
- Lack of extracurricular activities for students;
- Large school and class size;

- Teacher turnover;
- Bullying;
- Quality of the school facilities;
- Students' academic progress;
- Insufficient challenges for students;
- Insufficient communication with parents; and
- Caps that limit enrollment.

## C. Impact of Arkansas Public Charter Schools on Student Achievement

SAT-10 language and math data were used to analyze student achievement in Grade 2;<sup>4</sup> Benchmark literacy and math exam data were used to analyze student achievement in Grades 3–8; and EOC algebra 1, geometry, and 11th-grade literacy exam data were used to analyze student achievement in Grades 9–12.<sup>5</sup>

The SAT-10 allows educators to monitor students' progress and ensure that the state and/or national standards are met. For each grade (K–12), the SAT-10 test includes language, math, and reading sections.

The Benchmark literacy and math exams are criterion-referenced tests mandated by the state of Arkansas. They have been customized around the Arkansas Curriculum Frameworks, meaning that the test items are based on the academic standards in the frameworks and are developed by committees of Arkansas teachers with support from the ADE and the testing contractor.

The EOC algebra 1, geometry, and 11th-grade literacy exams were used to compare the performance of students in Grades 9–12 in spring 2009 and spring 2010. All three of these examinations are criterion-referenced tests with questions that have been aligned with the goals and subject-specific competencies described by the Arkansas Curriculum Frameworks. Thus, student performance on these exams is directly aligned with the statewide frameworks and statewide curriculum goals.<sup>6</sup>

### Predictors of Improved Student Outcomes

Multiple regression analyses were used to examine the different factors that might influence student achievement. Multiple regression can be a useful tool when there is an interest in accounting for the variation in an outcome (i.e., dependent variable) based on combinations of different factors and

<sup>4</sup> There were no pretest scores available for students in Grade 1 in 2009-2010.

<sup>5</sup> Note that SAT-10 language and math data were also used for Grade 9 for the ANCOVA analyses of NCLB designations.

<sup>6</sup> This information is from the ADE website: <http://arkansased.gov>

conditions (i.e., independent variables). Multiple regression analysis can establish a set of independent variables that explains a proportion of the variation in a dependent variable at a significant level (significance test of  $R^2$ ) and can establish the relative predictive importance of the individual independent variables (comparing beta weights).

Regressions were conducted to predict 2010 student achievement scores from several programmatic and demographic variables, measures of satisfaction,<sup>7</sup> 2009 achievement scores (when available),<sup>8</sup> and attendance. Several models were constructed using a range of variables to maximize the number of observed cases and the number of input variables. The list below shows the starting set of variables for all of the models. Note that NCLB subgroups<sup>9</sup> were also included in the full regression models to further control for potential confounding factors and improve model fit.

- School size,
- School attendance ratio,
- Number of suspensions,
- Spring 2009 test scores (SAT-10 and Benchmark exams),
- Student satisfaction total,
- Parent satisfaction total,
- 2010 grade point average (GPA),
- Student NCLB subgroups,
- Presence of extended school day,
- Implementation of reduced/small class size,
- Use of team teaching,
- Use of theme-based instruction, and
- Use of multigrade classrooms (not retained in final regression models; see below).

Based on initial  $R^2$  values and the corresponding significance tests conducted, the majority of the listed variables were retained. The only variable that did not significantly predict spring 2010 outcomes was the use of multigrade classrooms; therefore the analysis removed this variable from all of the final models.

The following tables summarize the resulting regression models. Presented in each table is the amount of variation explained by the independent variables (i.e., the  $R^2$  value) as well as the set of

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<sup>7</sup> Student and parent satisfaction were derived by summing ratings across various items in each survey, creating an overall level of satisfaction for each group.

<sup>8</sup> For high school grades (9–12), student grade point average in 2010 was used as an achievement predictor for the state exam performance.

<sup>9</sup> For these analyses, NCLB subgroups include gender, ethnicity, Title I status, special education status, and an indicator of socioeconomic status (e.g., eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch).

variables that appears to contribute significantly and substantially to that variation. The tables also include the beta weight (standard coefficient [SC] beta) from which each variable’s direction of association (i.e., positive or negative) with the outcome can be discerned.

**Table 11: Stepwise Regression Results for the Final Model Predicting Spring 2010 SAT-10 Language and Math Scale Scores (Grade 2)**

Test	Independent Variables Included in Final Model	SC Beta	Variance Explained (R <sup>2</sup> )
SAT-10 Language N = 454 F = 184.579	SAT-10 spring 2009 language scale score	.697	.622*
	White race/ethnicity	.124	
	Special education status	-.110	
	Free/reduced-price lunch eligibility	-.069	
SAT-10 Math N = 456 F = 275.371	SAT-10 spring 2009 math scale score	.738	.646*
	Implementation of reduced/small class size	.146	
	Special education status	-.109	

\* p < .05. The p-value refers to the odds that the regression model does not appropriately predict the outcome.

Table 11 presents the resulting regression models predicting 2010 SAT-10 language and math scores for Grade 2. Both final models retained the pretest (i.e., 2009) achievement as a significantly positive predictor for the outcomes. A few demographic variables also turned out to be significantly associated with the achievement outcomes. In addition, the model for SAT-10 math indicated that reduced/small class size served as a positive predictor of Grade 2 students’ math outcome.

Specifically, higher SAT-10 language achievement in Grade 2 was associated with the following:

- Higher pretest performance;
- White race/ethnicity of students (compared to minority race/ethnicity<sup>10</sup>);
- General education status (compared to special education status); and
- Higher family socioeconomic status (i.e., ineligibility for free/reduced-price lunch).

For SAT-10 math, higher achievement in Grade 2 was associated with the following:

- Higher pretest performance;
- Implementation of class size reduction initiatives; and
- General education status (compared to special education status).

<sup>10</sup> Minority students included those who were Asian, Black, Hispanic, Native American/Alaskan, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, or multiracial.

The positive association of pretest performance with both achievement outcomes was expected. In the model for SAT-10 math, implementing class size reduction initiatives was positively associated with the outcome. With regard to SAT-10 language, White students scored significantly higher than minority students, and students who were ineligible for free/reduced-price lunch performed significantly better than those who were eligible. In both models, students with general education status significantly outperformed their special needs counterparts.

**Table 12: Stepwise Regression Results for the Final Model Predicting Spring 2010 Benchmark Literacy and Math Scale Scores (Grade 3)**

Test	Independent Variables Included in Final Model	SC Beta	Variance Explained (R <sup>2</sup> )
Benchmark Literacy N = 447 F = 89.018	SAT-10 spring 2009 language scale score	.632	.587*
	Special education status	-.166	
	School size	-.131	
	Female gender	.100	
	School attendance ratio	.099	
	Number of suspensions	-.084	
	White race/ethnicity	.078	
Benchmark Math N = 447 F = 105.087	SAT-10 spring 2009 math scale score	.686	.544*
	School size	-.240	
	Use of team teaching	.210	
	Female gender	.072	
	Student satisfaction total	.067	

\* p < .05. The p-value refers to the odds that the regression model does not appropriately predict the outcome.

Table 12 shows the resulting regression models predicting 2010 Benchmark literacy and math scores for Grade 3.<sup>11</sup> The number of significant predictors retained in both final models was higher for Grade 3 than for Grade 2. As shown in Table 12, higher literacy achievement in Grade 3 was associated with the following:

- Higher pretest performance;
- General education status (compared to special education status);

<sup>11</sup> The analysis of Grade 3 data was not combined with either the analysis of Grade 2 data or that of Grades 4-8 data, since it had the Benchmark test scores as outcomes but the SAT-10 as the pretests.

- Smaller school size;
- Female gender of students (compared to male gender);
- Higher school attendance ratio;
- Fewer suspensions; and
- White race/ethnicity of students (compared to minority race/ethnicity).

The following set of variables was associated with higher math achievement in Grade 3:

- Higher pretest performance;
- Smaller school size;
- Use of team teaching;
- Female gender of students (compared to male gender); and
- Higher student satisfaction total.

In both models, pretest performance served as a positive predictor of the outcomes, and notably smaller school size was associated with higher achievement. In addition, female students significantly outperformed their male counterparts on both literacy and math. The model for literacy also indicated that school attendance ratio was positively associated with the outcome, while the number of suspensions had negative association; students with general education status significantly outperformed those with special needs; and White students scored significantly higher than other racial/ethnic groups when the analysis controlled for all the other predictors. With regard to the Benchmark math model, one programmatic variable (i.e., use of team teaching) turned out to be a positive predictor of the achievement outcome, and higher student satisfaction total was associated with better performance.

**Table 13: Stepwise Regression Results for the Final Model Predicting Spring 2010 Benchmark Literacy and Math Scale Scores (Grades 4–8)**

Test	Independent Variables Included in Final Model	SC Beta	Variance Explained (R <sup>2</sup> )
Benchmark Literacy N = 3,658 F = 688.540	Benchmark spring 2009 literacy scale score	.698	.675*
	Special education status	-.118	
	Number of suspensions	-.087	
	Implementation of reduced/small class size	.072	
	Female gender	.074	
	White race/ethnicity	.062	
	Use of theme-based curriculum	.044	

Test	Independent Variables Included in Final Model	SC Beta	Variance Explained (R <sup>2</sup> )
	Student satisfaction total	.039	
	Free/reduced-price lunch eligibility	-.021	
Benchmark Math N = 3,661 F = 942.080	Benchmark spring 2009 math scale score	.797	.721*
	White race/ethnicity	.070	
	Special education status	-.053	
	Number of suspensions	-.044	
	Use of theme-based curriculum	.027	
	School attendance ratio	.033	
	Parental satisfaction total	.035	
	Free/reduced-price lunch eligibility	-.027	

\* p < .05. The p-value refers to the odds that the regression model does not appropriately predict the outcome.

Table 13 presents the resultant regression models predicting 2010 Benchmark literacy and math scores for students in Grades 4–8. In addition to pretest performance, the two models included several demographic and programmatic variables.

As shown in Table 13, higher literacy achievement in Grades 4–8 was associated with the following:

- Higher pretest performance;
- General education status (compared to special education status);
- Fewer suspensions;
- Implementation of class size reduction initiatives;
- Female gender of students (compared to male gender);
- White race/ethnicity of students (compared to minority race/ethnicity);
- Use of theme-based curriculum;
- Higher student satisfaction total; and
- Higher family socioeconomic status (i.e., ineligibility for free/reduced-price lunch).

For the Benchmark math exam, higher achievement at these grade levels was associated with the following:

- Higher pretest performance;
- White race/ethnicity of students (compared to minority race/ethnicity);

- General education status (compared to special education status);
- Fewer suspensions;
- Use of theme-based curriculum;
- Higher school attendance ratio;
- Higher parental satisfaction total; and
- Higher family socioeconomic status (i.e., ineligibility for free/reduced-price lunch).

The literacy and math outcomes had several significant predictors in common:

- Higher pretest performance consistently predicted better achievement;
- Use of theme-based curriculum turned out to be a positive predictor of higher performance;
- The number of student suspensions unsurprisingly had a negative association with outcomes;
- White students significantly outperformed minority counterparts; students with general education status scored significantly higher than those with special needs; and
- Those who were ineligible for free/reduced-price lunch performed significantly better than eligible students.

Higher student satisfaction total, implementation of class size reduction initiatives, and female gender of students were associated with a better literacy outcome. Higher parental satisfaction total was found to be a significant predictor of higher math performance, as was a higher school attendance ratio.

**Table 14: Stepwise Regression Results for the Final Model Predicting Spring 2010 End-of-Course Exam Scores (Grades 9–12)**

Test	Independent Variables Included in Final Model	SC Beta	Variance Explained (R <sup>2</sup> )
EOC Algebra I N = 419 F = 33.846	Grade point average	.327	.366*
	White race/ethnicity	.226	
	Special education status	-.197	
	School attendance ratio	.137	
	Parental satisfaction total	.115	
	Free/reduced-price lunch eligibility	-.090	
EOC Geometry N = 718 F = 96.795	Grade point average	.478	.578*
	Presence of extended school day	.177	

Test	Independent Variables Included in Final Model	SC Beta	Variance Explained (R <sup>2</sup> )
	White race/ethnicity	.144	
	Special education status	-.162	
	Female gender	-.165	
	Parental satisfaction total	.108	
	Number of suspensions	-.086	
	Free/reduced-price lunch eligibility	-.057	
11 <sup>th</sup> Grade Literacy N = 513 F = 139.519	Grade point average	.459	.523*
	Special education status	-.270	
	Number of suspensions	-.215	
	White race/ethnicity	.149	

\* p < .05. The p-value refers to the odds that the regression model does not appropriately predict the outcome.

Table 14 presents the final regression models predicting 2010 EOC algebra 1, geometry, and literacy for Grades 9–12. Because EOC exams are taken only once, pretest scores were unavailable to include in high school models. Instead, student GPA in 2010 was included in the models as an achievement indicator. The analyses found that higher achievement in EOC algebra 1 in Grades 9–12 was associated with the following:<sup>12</sup>

- Higher GPA;
- White race/ethnicity of students (compared to minority ethnicity);
- General education status (compared to special education status);
- Higher school attendance ratio;
- Higher parental satisfaction total; and
- Higher family socioeconomic status (i.e., ineligibility for free/reduced-price lunch).

For EOC geometry, higher achievement at these grade levels was associated with the following:

- Higher GPA;
- Presence of extended school day;
- White race/ethnicity of students (compared to minority race/ethnicity);

<sup>12</sup> Note that the final regression model was able to explain only approximately 37 percent of variation in the algebra 1 outcome (R<sup>2</sup>). This model fit was less satisfactory than that of other models with higher R<sup>2</sup> values.

- General education status (compared to special education status);
- Male gender of students (compared to female gender);
- Higher parental satisfaction total;
- Fewer suspensions; and
- Higher family socioeconomic status (i.e., ineligibility for free/reduced-price lunch).

For 11<sup>th</sup> grade literacy, higher achievement was associated with the following:

- Higher GPA;
- General education status (compared to special education status);
- Fewer suspensions; and
- White race/ethnicity of students (compared to minority race/ethnicity).

For all three EOC exams, higher GPA served as a significant predictor of better performance, as expected. White students significantly outperformed minority students and students with general education status significantly outperformed special education students on all three exams. The number of suspensions was negatively associated with geometry and literacy outcomes. For algebra 1 and geometry, students ineligible for free/reduced-price lunch performed significantly better than eligible students on both exams. Higher parental satisfaction total was also associated with better performance on algebra 1 and geometry. In addition, higher school attendance was associated with higher algebra 1 scores. Notably, male students significantly outperformed female students in geometry. The presence of an extended school day was the only programmatic variable that served as a significant positive predictor of student geometry performance.

### **Student Outcome Data Disaggregated by NCLB Subgroups**

To examine the academic performance of various subgroups of students, the Metis team conducted a series of analyses of covariance (ANCOVAs) on the results of the SAT-10 for Grades 2 and 9 and the Benchmark exams for Grades 3–8. ANCOVA makes it possible to compare a given outcome in two or more categorical groups while controlling for the variability of important continuous predictors/variables (e.g., prior achievement). Specifically, the analyses conducted here controlled for variability in pretest achievement so that any observed posttest achievement differences could be attributed to group membership instead of “starting point.” Note that analyses were not conducted on Grade 1 because no pretest scores were available. Nor were analyses conducted for Grades 10–12 because they, too, lacked the requisite pretest scores (since EOC exams are administered once a year). The subgroups of students for which these analyses were conducted were based on the following characteristics:

- Racial/ethnic background
- Gender
- Special education status

- Title I status
- Free/reduced-price lunch eligibility

Tables 15–17 present a summary of the results of these analyses. The complete set of findings can be found in Appendix C.

**Table 15: Summary of ANCOVA Analyses of SAT-10 Language and Math Skills Across Student Subgroups for Grade 2 in 2009–2010**

Comparison Groups		SAT-10: Overall Language Skills	SAT-10: Overall Math Skills
Race/ ethnicity	Black	<b><i>Significant difference</i></b>	No significant difference
	<b><i>White</i></b>		
	Others		
Gender	Male	No significant difference	No significant difference
	Female		
Title I status	Non–Title I	No significant difference	No significant difference
	Title I		
Education status	<b><i>General education</i></b>	<b><i>Significant difference</i></b>	<b><i>Significant difference</i></b>
	Special education		
Free/ reduced- price lunch eligibility	<b><i>Not eligible</i></b>	<b><i>Significant difference</i></b>	No significant difference
	Eligible		

Note. Findings are based on ANCOVA results. Pretest scores were not available for Grade 1, so the ANCOVAs could not be conducted for this grade. Higher-achieving groups are presented in italicized bold type when a statistically significant difference with the probability (or p-value of) less than .05 is observed. In simpler terms, the p-value (shown explicitly in the tables in Appendix C) refers to the odds that the observed difference is erroneous.

As shown in Table 15, less than half of the NCLB comparisons in Grade 2 produced statistically significant results, suggesting less of a gap between NCLB subgroups in this grade than might be expected. The few instances where there were notable findings from the SAT-10 subgroup analyses include the following:

- In language but not math, Grade 2 students who were not eligible for free/reduced-price lunch scored significantly higher than those who were eligible.
- White students in Grade 2 had the best language performance of all racial/ethnic groups.
- General education students in Grade 2 performed significantly better than special education students in both language and math.

- No statistically significant differences were found for gender groups or Title I status in Grade 2 achievement.

**Table 16: Summary of ANCOVA Analyses of Benchmark Literacy and Math Skills Across Student Subgroups for Grades 3–8 in 2009–2010**

Comparison Groups		Target Grade	Benchmark: Overall Literacy Skills	Benchmark: Overall Math Skills
Race/ ethnicity	Black	3	No significant difference	No significant difference
	White			
	Others			
	Black	4	No significant difference	<b>Significant difference</b>
	<b>White</b>			
	Others			
	Black	5	<b>Significant difference</b>	<b>Significant difference</b>
	<b>White</b>			
	Others			
	Black	6	<b>Significant difference</b>	<b>Significant difference</b>
	<b>White</b>			
	<b>Others</b>			
Black	7	<b>Significant difference</b>	<b>Significant difference</b>	
<b>White</b>				
<b>Others</b>				
Black	8	<b>Significant difference</b>	<b>Significant difference</b>	
<b>White</b>				
<b>Others</b>				
Gender	Male	3	<b>Significant difference</b>	No significant difference
	<b>Female</b>			
	Male	4	<b>Significant difference</b>	No significant difference
	<b>Female</b>			
	Male	5	<b>Significant difference</b>	No significant difference
	<b>Female</b>			
	Male	6	<b>Significant difference</b>	No significant difference
	<b>Female</b>			
Male	7		No significant difference	

Comparison Groups		Target Grade	Benchmark: Overall Literacy Skills	Benchmark: Overall Math Skills
	<b>Female</b>		<b>Significant difference</b>	
	Male	8		No significant difference
Title I status	<b>Female</b>		<b>Significant difference</b>	
	Non–Title I	3	No significant difference	No significant difference
	Title I			
	Non–Title I	4	No significant difference	No significant difference
	Title I			
	Non–Title I	5	No significant difference	
	<b>Title I</b>			<b>Significant difference</b>
	<b>Non–Title I</b>	6	No significant difference	<b>Significant difference</b>
	Title I			
	Non–Title I	7	No significant difference	No significant difference
	Title I			
	<b>Non–Title I</b>	8	<b>Significant difference</b>	<b>Significant difference</b>
Title I				
Education status	<b>General education</b>	3	<b>Significant difference</b>	No significant difference
	Special education			
	<b>General education</b>	4	<b>Significant difference</b>	<b>Significant difference</b>
	Special education			
	<b>General education</b>	5	No significant difference	<b>Significant difference</b>
	Special education			
	<b>General education</b>	6	<b>Significant difference</b>	No significant difference
	Special education			
	<b>General education</b>	7	<b>Significant difference</b>	<b>Significant difference</b>
	Special education			
	<b>General education</b>	8	<b>Significant difference</b>	<b>Significant difference</b>
	Special education			
Free/ reduced- price lunch	<b>Not eligible</b>	3	No significant difference	<b>Significant difference</b>
	Eligible			
	Not eligible	4	No significant difference	No significant difference

Comparison Groups		Target Grade	Benchmark: Overall Literacy Skills	Benchmark: Overall Math Skills
eligibility	Eligible			
	<b>Not eligible</b>	5	<b>Significant difference</b>	No significant difference
	Eligible			
	<b>Not eligible</b>	6	No significant difference	<b>Significant difference</b>
	Eligible			
	<b>Not eligible</b>	7	No significant difference	<b>Significant difference</b>
	Eligible			
	<b>Not eligible</b>	8	<b>Significant difference</b>	<b>Significant difference</b>
Eligible				

Note. Findings are based on ANCOVA results. Higher-achieving groups are presented in italicized bold type when a statistically significant difference with the probability (or p-value of) less than .05 is observed. In simpler terms, the p-value (shown explicitly in the tables in Appendix C) refers to the odds that the observed difference is erroneous.

Table 16 shows that there were more subgroup differences in Grades 5–8 than were evident at the lower elementary grades (i.e., 2–4):

- Non–Title I students achieved significantly higher scores than Title I students in math in Grade 6, and in both literacy and math in Grade 8. Notably, Title I students in Grade 5 performed significantly better than non–Title I students in math. In addition, students who were ineligible for free/reduced-price lunch significantly outperformed eligible students in literacy in Grade 5, in math in Grades 3, 6, and 7, and in both literacy and math in Grade 8.
- Females achieved significantly higher literacy scores than males in Grades 3–8, while no differences in the math performance of the two genders were detected in any grade.
- General education students performed significantly better than special education students in literacy in Grades 3 and 6, in math in Grade 5, and in both literacy and math in Grades 4, 7, and 8.

With respect to racial/ethnic background, the ANCOVA analysis showed the following:

- White students achieved the highest literacy scores of all racial/ethnic groups in Grades 6 and 8, and the highest math scores in Grades 4 and 7.
- In Grade 5, White students achieved the highest scores in both literacy and math among all racial/ethnic groups.
- Students other than White or Black performed the best among all racial/ethnic groups in literacy in Grade 7 and in math in Grades 6 and 8.

**Table 17: Summary of ANCOVA Analyses of SAT-10 Language and Math Skills Across Student Subgroups for Grade 9 in 2009–2010**

Comparison Groups		SAT-10: Overall Language Skills	SAT-10: Overall Math Skills
Race/ ethnicity	Black	<b><i>Significant difference</i></b>	<b><i>Significant difference</i></b>
	<b>White</b>		
	<b>Others</b>		
Gender	Male	No significant difference	<b><i>Significant difference</i></b>
	<b>Female</b>		
Title I status	Non–Title I	No significant difference	No significant difference
	Title I		
Education status	<b>General education</b>	<b><i>Significant difference</i></b>	<b><i>Significant difference</i></b>
	Special education		
Free/ reduced- price lunch eligibility	<b>Not eligible</b>	<b><i>Significant difference</i></b>	<b><i>Significant difference</i></b>
	Eligible		

*Note.* Findings are based on ANCOVA results. Higher-achieving groups are presented in italicized bold type when a statistically significant difference with the probability (or p-value of) less than .05 is observed. In simpler terms, the p-value (shown explicitly in the tables in Appendix C) refers to the odds that the observed difference is erroneous.

Table 17 shows that although no statistically significant differences were found for Title I status among students in Grade 9, there were many subgroup differences in the SAT-10 outcomes for the remaining NCLB categories. Specifically:

- Students who were not eligible for free/reduced-price lunch achieved significantly higher language and math scores than did their lower-income peers.
- General education students had significantly higher achievement scores than special education students in both language and math.
- Female students significantly outperformed their male counterparts in math.
- White students achieved the highest language scores among all racial/ethnic groups, whereas students other than White or Black achieved the highest math scores.

## IV. Discussion and Recommendations

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Taken together, the quantitative and qualitative data suggest that Arkansas public charter schools provided a high-quality educational alternative to the state's traditional public schools. At the time of the study, the public charter schools were implementing academic programs using a wide array of instructional practices, providing professional development, engaging parents and the community, reporting on students' academic progress, and providing safe school environments.

An analysis of the various data used in this study leads to the following conclusions:

- Arkansas public charter schools are working hard to maintain high academic standards and to offer a range of instruction to meet students' needs (including remedial support and special programs).
- Parents and students were very satisfied with their public charter schools during the 2009–2010 school year.
- There was a greater focus on rigorous professional development in 2009–2010 than in 2008–2009.
- Certain characteristics of the public charter schools—use of theme-based curricula, use of team teaching, higher attendance ratios, higher student and parent satisfaction, fewer suspensions, and class size reduction—were associated with improved student achievement in 2009–2010.
- NCLB comparisons indicated a much higher prevalence of subgroup differences in literacy and math achievement at all grade levels than was the case in 2008–2009.
- The two biggest concerns of charter school administrators in 2009–2010 were managing public perceptions and dealing with budgetary issues, although the latter was less of a concern than in 2008–2009.

Specifically, the study saw a great deal of evidence of schools' focus on strong academic leadership (agendas and detailed minutes for meetings associated with carrying out schools' academic plans and instructional programs; school board meeting minutes outlining decision-making processes). There was also ample evidence that Arkansas public charter schools are being progressive with their instructional programs. In 2009–2010, the most common method of instructional delivery across the public charter schools involved regular use of technology, according to school administrator survey data. Parents reported high levels of satisfaction with technology use in their children's schools; only 6 percent of parent survey respondents indicated feeling dissatisfied with use of technology within the instructional program. (On the other hand, 26 percent of student survey respondents indicated that technology was rarely or never used in their classroom, though this does not indicate whether students who were exposed to technology were satisfied with its use.) Survey data also showed that special programs (including character education, project-based learning, and individualized instruction) were present in more than three-quarters of the public charter schools.



Although the charter school program focuses on providing rigorous academic instruction to students, schools also aim to provide rigorous professional development to teachers. The evaluation found that teacher professional development was an important focus of the charter schools in 2009–2010. Evidence for the importance of professional development was provided in very detailed documentation, including annual professional development plans and materials such as curriculum training guides, staff needs-assessment surveys, and agendas from professional development committee meetings.

The intensive focus on professional development and accountability of teachers was reflected in parents’ and students’ survey responses. Nearly three-quarters (73 percent) of students indicated that their teachers expected them to work hard or very hard, an indication that students are feeling challenged by the academic programming at their schools. Moreover, roughly the same percentage of parents (73 to 77 percent) indicated feeling very satisfied with the quality of math, reading, and writing instruction at their child’s school. This is a critical finding, as 70 percent of parents indicated in the survey that they placed their child in a charter school because of their interest in the school’s instructional and academic program, evidence that many parents who enrolled their child at an Arkansas charter school are having their expectations met.

Recognizing that parents and the community are an important part of a school’s academic success, the charter schools also made a concerted effort to continue involving parents and the community in school-related activities. Thus in 2009–2010, there was a 27 percentage point increase from the previous year in the share of schools that reported conducting parent workshops. In addition, there was a 22 percentage point increase in the proportion of schools that reported using community resources (e.g., museums, parks, etc.) to enhance student learning. Schools continued using various other strategies, including involving parents in student academic progress monitoring and in discipline-related discussions. All of these efforts led parents to report a high degree of satisfaction with the schools’ efforts to involve them: 81 percent indicated feeling very satisfied with opportunities to be involved or participate in school-related activities, and 94 percent indicated feeling somewhat to very satisfied with the communication with their child’s teacher (76 percent were very satisfied). Parents also indicated feeling more satisfied with their child’s current public charter school than with their child’s previous school, a large percentage thought the quality of the math, reading, and writing instruction was better at the public charter school than at the previous school.

Successes in achieving high parent satisfaction and implementing effective innovative instructional practices can be linked to the schools’ charter status, which has allowed schools the flexibility to implement a wide array of practices that speak to each community’s educational needs. In 2009–2010, these practices included greater control over methods of instructional delivery, implementation of open board meetings, formal plans for family and community involvement, the hiring and dismissing of staff (because of absence of teacher contracts), targeted professional development, and performance-based bonuses for teachers.

Despite the high degree of satisfaction among parents, parents did indicate some concerns about their children’s schools. The most common concerns listed in response to an open-ended question

were these: the limited grade levels offered (parents wished schools to add grade levels), the limited extracurricular offerings, the inexperience of teachers because of high teacher turnover rates, bullying, quality of school facilities, and large school/class sizes.

One growing challenge in 2009–2010 was the issue of managing public perceptions and public relations. This challenge was listed by 57 percent of schools—a 10 percentage point increase over the previous year—making it the only challenge listed by the majority of charter schools for 2009–2010. Issues with facility costs, an ongoing challenge for public charter schools over the past four years (especially for open-enrollment schools), was a concern for 43 percent of schools; this figure marked a decrease of 9 percentage points from 2008–2009. Concerns with facility costs were closely linked in previous evaluations to parents’ level of satisfaction with the quality of their child’s school facilities, especially among open-enrollment schools. However, the gap between open-enrollment and conversion school parents that were concerned over the quality of their schools’ facility was lower in 2009–2010 than in the previous year (16 percent vs. 24 percent, respectively), which again seems to follow the trend of school administrators being less concerned over facility costs in 2009–2010 than in 2008–2009.

At a time when many schools are ending arts programs in favor of core-subject area programs, the Arkansas public charter schools are increasing their attention to the fine arts. In 2009–2010, 58 percent of the public charter schools indicated implementing fine arts programs, compared to only 30 percent the previous year. However, other instructional methods decreased in 2009–2010 compared to the previous year. Cooperative learning, which was used in 90 percent of schools in 2008–2009, was used in 63 percent of schools in 2009–2010. Uses of other instructional methods remained at similar levels from the previous year.

Regression analyses suggest that certain public charter school characteristics may have resulted in higher student achievement in 2009–2010. In Grade 2, implementation of reduced/small class size was associated with increased student achievement on the SAT-10 math. In Grade 3, the use of team teaching was associated with improved student achievement on the Benchmark math exam, and smaller school size was associated with improved student achievement on the Benchmark literacy and math exams. In Grades 4–8, the use of theme-based curriculum was associated with improved student achievement on the Benchmark literacy and math exams, and implementation of reduced/small class size was associated with improved student achievement on the Benchmark literacy exam. Finally, in Grades 9–12, the presence of an extended school day was associated with higher achievement on the geometry EOC exam.

Customer satisfaction seemed to be well linked to improved student achievement in 2009–2010. The regression analyses revealed the parent satisfaction ratio to be among the most common variables predicting improved student achievement across all grades in literacy and math. Higher attendance and lower suspension rates were also commonly associated with higher student achievement for a number of the grades on different tests. The association of school attendance with student achievement is well documented, but the association of customer satisfaction with student achievement has only been found in the evaluations for 2008–2009 and 2009–2010, and not in the previous three evaluations of the Arkansas Public Charter School Program.

Finally, comparative analyses of NCLB subgroups revealed that White students generally outperformed minority students in both literacy and math; general education students outperformed special education students in both literacy and math; female students generally outperformed male students in literacy; and students not eligible for free/reduced-price lunch generally outperformed eligible students in literacy and math. The most notable trends were observed in Grades 3–8 and in Grade 9 for race/ethnicity, gender, and free/reduced-price lunch status. Highlights of the findings in these areas include the following:

- White students significantly outperformed both Black students and those of other races/ethnicities in literacy in Grades 2, 5, 6, 8, and 9, and in math in Grades 4, 5, 7, and 9.
- Females significantly outperformed males on the literacy exam in Grades 3–8.
- Students not eligible for free/reduced-price lunch outperformed eligible students in Grades 2, 5, 8, and 9 in literacy, and in Grades 3, 6, 7, 8, and 9 in math.
- Finally, general education students significantly outperformed special education students in literacy in Grades 2–4 and 6–9, and in math in Grades 2, 4, 5, and 7–9.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations apply collectively to all public charter schools rather than to any specific school. It is hoped that these recommendations will be useful to the Arkansas Public Charter School Program and its stakeholders as they move forward and make decisions in the future.

- **Explore issues of attendance and suspensions.** More than in previous years, regression analyses indicated that attendance and school suspensions had an impact on student achievement. Future evaluations can determine whether these issues are growing, what their impact is, and how schools are—and ought to be—addressing them.
- **Continue to encourage the use of innovative curricular instruction.** A number of innovative instructional practices, such as theme-based instruction, team teaching, and reduced class size, were associated with improved student achievement. The ADE could continue supporting the public charter schools in implementing these practices, and could encourage further study of their impact.
- **Address growing concerns over managing public perceptions.** There was an increase in 2009–2010 in the percentage of public charter school administrators who expressed concern about managing public perceptions and public relations. Public charter schools are under more scrutiny than traditional public schools because of the higher accountability requirements in their charters. The ADE could consider using consultants who specialize in this area to provide technical assistance or training, helping school administrators learn best practices for dealing with these issues.
- **Continue addressing facility challenges experienced by open-enrollment public charter schools.** While the concern over facility costs among administrators of open-enrollment schools has declined since the last evaluation, and while parents at these schools have expressed greater satisfaction with their schools' facilities, we would again recommend that the ADE continue exploring the financial support that is provided to the public charter



schools for facility management and provide technical assistance to schools who wish to seek outside funding to address this challenge (e.g., in the form of grant writing). It might be possible to offer incentives to entities (e.g., districts, local businesses) that give public charter schools the opportunity to either co-locate with them or lease appropriate facilities from them.

- **Provide technical assistance opportunities.** Starting a new public charter school is a very difficult proposition, particularly when there may be limited resources available to support, guide, and assist it. We suggest that a partnership be formed to establish an infrastructure, perhaps with the help of local universities or community-based proponents of public charter schools, to assist new and existing public charter schools in the following ways:
  - Serving the needs of students with educational disabilities or with limited proficiency in English (where needed);
  - Securing appropriate facilities;
  - Establishing policies and procedures for school operations, instruction, and student practices;
  - Engaging in program development and grant writing;
  - Selecting/developing and implementing curricula;
  - Sharing successful and promising practices;
  - Hiring, developing, and retaining staff;
  - Establishing governance mechanisms; and
  - Conducting formative and summative program evaluations to drive program and school improvement.

# Appendices

## A. Evaluation Design Matrix

Table 18: Evaluation Research Questions and Associated Data Collection Strategies

Evaluation Questions	Data Collection Strategies				
	Document Review	Implementation Survey	Parent Satisfaction Survey	Student Satisfaction Survey	Student Record Data
<b>Implementation Evaluation Questions</b>					
1. What is the overall efficacy of the charter schools with respect to various attributes, such as strong academic leadership, high academic standards/expectations, mastery-oriented instruction, classroom management skills, positive learning climate, and parental support and involvement?	X	X			
2. To what extent are the parents and the students of the public charter schools satisfied with their school?			X	X	
<b>Outcome Evaluation Questions</b>					
3. What is the impact of the Arkansas public charter schools on student performance?	X	X	X	X	X
a. What characteristics of the public charter schools are having the greatest positive impact on academic achievement (e.g., student/parental satisfaction, school size, provider, management organization, type of curricula used, etc.)?	X	X	X	X	X
b. What other indicators of improved school success are evident for public charter school students (e.g., increased attendance, fewer discipline reports)?	X	X	X	X	X
c. What can be learned from disaggregating the student outcome data by the NCLB subgroups (special education status, Title I status, free/reduced-price lunch eligibility, gender, English language proficiency, and racial/ethnic background)?					X

## B. Data Collection Results

Table 19: Data Collection Tallies (Surveys and Program Documentation Received)

	School	Student Surveys Received	Parent Surveys Received	Online Administrator Survey Completed	Program Documents Received
Conversion	Badger Academy Conversion Charter School	18	3	√	√
	Blytheville Charter School and ALC	50	6	√	√
	Cabot Academic Center of Excellence	107	23	√	√
	Lincoln Academic Center of Excellence	50	16	√	√
	Mountain Home High School Career Academies	622	37	√	√
	Oak Grove Elementary Health, Wellness, and Environmental Science	186	27	√	√
	Ridgeroad Middle Charter School	354	13	√	√
	Vilonia Academy of Service and Technology	87	7	√	√
	Vilonia Academy of Technology	47	11	√	√
Open-Enrollment	Academics Plus Charter School	380	94	√	√
	Arkansas Virtual Academy	46	163	√	√
	Benton County School of Arts	459	59	√	√
	Covenant Keepers College Preparatory Charter School	152	108	√	√
	Dreamland Academy of Performing & Communication Arts	49	15	√	—
	e-STEM Elementary Public Charter School	328	25	√	√
	e-STEM Middle Public Charter School	139	53	√	√
	e-STEM High Public Charter School	17	14	√	√
	Haas Hall Academy	292	167	√	√
	Imboden Area Charter School	40	10	√	√



School		Student Surveys Received	Parent Surveys Received	Online Administrator Survey Completed	Program Documents Received
	Jacksonville Lighthouse Charter School	269	38	√	√
	KIPP Delta College Preparatory School	434	35	√	√
	LISA Academy	486	82	√	—
	LISA Academy—North Little Rock	260	35	√	√
	Little Rock Preparatory Academy	144	11	√	√
	<b>Total</b>	<b>5,016</b>	<b>1,052</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>22</b>

— = No data received.



## C. ANCOVA Analyses of Students Achievement Using NCLB Subgroups

Table 20: SAT-10 Language ANCOVA Results by Race/Ethnicity Comparisons, Grade 2

Grade	Subgroup	Mean Scale Score	Mean Difference	Degrees of Freedom	F Value	Significance
Grade 2 (N = 461)	Black	587.05	14.90	2	10.130	0.000*
	White	601.95				
	Black	587.05	11.38	2	10.130	0.000*
	Others	598.43				
	White	601.95	3.52	2	10.130	0.000*
	Others	598.43				

\* Statistically significant difference with the probability less than .05.

Table 21: SAT-10 Math ANCOVA Results by Race/Ethnicity Comparisons, Grade 2

Grade	Subgroup	Mean Scale Score	Mean Difference	Degrees of Freedom	F Value	Significance
Grade 2 (N = 463)	Black	581.42	7.36	2	2.246	0.107
	White	588.78				
	Black	581.42	4.70	2	2.246	0.107
	Others	586.12				
	White	588.78	2.66	2	2.246	0.107
	Others	586.12				

Table 22: Benchmark Literacy ANCOVA Results by Race/Ethnicity Comparisons, Grades 3–8

Grade	Subgroup	Mean Scale Score	Mean Difference	Degrees of Freedom	F Value	Significance
Grade 3 (N = 455)	Black	539.07	32.98	2	2.403	0.092
	White	572.05				
	Black	539.07	34.62	2	2.403	0.092
	Others	573.69				
	White	572.05	1.64	2	2.403	0.092



Grade	Subgroup	Mean Scale Score	Mean Difference	Degrees of Freedom	F Value	Significance
	Others	573.69				
Grade 4 (N = 497)	Black	642.84	25.84	2	2.781	0.063
	White	668.68				
	Black	642.84	21.01	2	2.781	0.063
	Others	663.85				
	White	668.68	4.83	2	2.781	0.063
	Others	663.85				
Grade 5 (N = 661)	Black	655.52	46.99	2	19.820	0.000*
	White	702.51				
	Black	655.52	7.93	2	19.820	0.000*
	Others	663.45				
	White	702.51	39.06	2	19.820	0.000*
	Others	663.45				
Grade 6 (N = 689)	Black	724.24	6.19	2	3.892	0.021*
	White	730.43				
	Black	724.24	30.73	2	3.892	0.021*
	Others	693.51				
	White	730.43	36.92	2	3.892	0.021*
	Others	693.51				
Grade 7 (N = 999)	Black	716.33	6.90	2	4.904	0.008*
	White	723.23				
	Black	716.33	32.16	2	4.904	0.008*
	Others	748.49				
	White	723.23	25.26	2	4.904	0.008*
	Others	748.49				
Grade 8 (N = 883)	Black	769.47	23.29	2	4.788	0.009*
	White	792.76				
	Black	769.47	6.08	2	4.788	0.009*
	Others	763.39				
	White	792.76	29.37	2	4.788	0.009*
	Others	763.39				

\* Statistically significant difference with the probability less than .05.

**Table 23: Benchmark Math ANCOVA Results by Race/Ethnicity Comparisons, Grades 3–8**

Grade	Subgroup	Mean Scale Score	Mean Difference	Degrees of Freedom	F Value	Significance
Grade 3 (N = 455)	Black	555.17	18.14	2	2.958	0.053
	White	573.31				
	Black	555.17	28.17	2	2.958	0.053
	Others	583.34				
	White	573.31	10.03	2	2.958	0.053
	Others	583.34				
Grade 4 (N = 498)	Black	617.53	22.13	2	11.151	0.000*
	White	639.66				
	Black	617.53	18.92	2	11.151	0.000*
	Others	598.61				
	White	639.66	41.05	2	11.151	0.000*
	Others	598.61				
Grade 5 (N = 661)	Black	637.04	12.64	2	4.008	0.019*
	White	649.68				
	Black	637.04	1.80	2	4.008	0.019*
	Others	635.24				
	White	649.68	14.44	2	4.008	0.019*
	Others	635.24				
Grade 6 (N = 689)	Black	695.16	13.00	2	3.148	0.044*
	White	708.16				
	Black	695.16	13.84	2	3.148	0.044*
	Others	709.00				
	White	708.16	0.84	2	3.148	0.044*
	Others	709.00				
Grade 7 (N = 1,002)	Black	704.35	14.27	2	8.678	0.000*
	White	718.62				
	Black	704.35	12.10	2	8.678	0.000*
	Others	716.45				

Grade	Subgroup	Mean Scale Score	Mean Difference	Degrees of Freedom	F Value	Significance
	White	718.62	2.17	2	8.678	0.000*
	Others	716.45				
Grade 8 (N = 883)	Black	699.07	25.26	2	30.798	0.000*
	White	724.33				
	Black	699.07	35.42	2	30.798	0.000*
	Others	734.49				
	White	724.33	10.16	2	30.798	0.000*
	Others	734.49				

\* Statistically significant difference with the probability less than .05.

Table 24: SAT-10 Language ANCOVA Results by Race/Ethnicity Comparisons, Grade 9

Grade	Subgroup	Mean Scale Score	Mean Difference	Degrees of Freedom	F Value	Significance
Grade 9 (N = 751)	Black	685.00	6.47	2	4.331	0.013*
	White	691.47				
	Black	685.00	4.68	2	4.331	0.013*
	Others	689.68				
	White	691.47	1.79	2	4.331	0.013*
	Others	689.68				

\* Statistically significant difference with the probability less than .05.

Table 25: SAT-10 Math ANCOVA Results by Race/Ethnicity Comparisons, Grade 9

Grade	Subgroup	Mean Scale Score	Mean Difference	Degrees of Freedom	F Value	Significance
Grade 9 (N = 778)	Black	712.00	8.14	2	12.911	0.000*
	White	720.14				
	Black	712.00	13.72	2	12.911	0.000*
	Others	725.72				
	White	720.14	5.58	2	12.911	0.000*
	Others	725.72				

\* Statistically significant difference with the probability less than .05.

Table 26: SAT-10 Language ANCOVA Results by Gender Comparisons, Grade 2

Grade	Subgroup	Mean Scale Score	Mean Difference	Degrees of Freedom	F Value	Significance
Grade 2 (N = 461)	Male	595.73	2.64	1	0.791	0.374
	Female	598.37				

Table 27: SAT-10 Math ANCOVA Results by Gender Comparisons, Grade 2

Grade	Subgroup	Mean Scale Score	Mean Difference	Degrees of Freedom	F Value	Significance
Grade 2 (N = 463)	Male	586.97	1.09	1	0.157	0.692
	Female	585.88				

Table 28: Benchmark Literacy ANCOVA Results by Gender Comparisons, Grades 3–8

Grade	Subgroup	Mean Scale Score	Mean Difference	Degrees of Freedom	F Value	Significance
Grade 3 (N = 455)	Male	541.68	42.45	1	10.598	0.001*
	Female	584.13				
Grade 4 (N = 497)	Male	647.82	26.48	1	7.671	0.006*
	Female	674.30				
Grade 5 (N = 661)	Male	669.29	16.26	1	4.838	0.028*
	Female	685.55				
Grade 6 (N = 689)	Male	712.32	23.82	1	10.464	0.001*
	Female	736.14				
Grade 7 (N = 999)	Male	712.24	21.23	1	11.593	0.001*
	Female	733.47				
Grade 8 (N = 883)	Male	752.66	48.91	1	43.663	0.000*
	Female	801.57				

\* Statistically significant difference with the probability less than .05.

Table 29: Benchmark Math ANCOVA Results by Gender Comparisons, Grades 3–8

Grade	Subgroup	Mean Scale Score	Mean Difference	Degrees of Freedom	F Value	Significance
Grade 3	Male	562.81	12.19	1	3.192	0.075



Grade	Subgroup	Mean Scale Score	Mean Difference	Degrees of Freedom	F Value	Significance
(N = 455)	Female	575.00				
Grade 4 (N = 498)	Male	629.73	2.21	1	0.163	0.687
	Female	631.94				
Grade 5 (N = 661)	Male	638.54	7.86	1	3.353	0.068
	Female	646.40				
Grade 6 (N = 689)	Male	704.11	2.38	1	0.241	0.624
	Female	701.73				
Grade 7 (N = 1,002)	Male	712.47	3.53	1	1.257	0.262
	Female	708.94				
Grade 8 (N = 883)	Male	714.95	6.37	1	3.310	0.069
	Female	708.58				

Table 30: SAT-10 Language ANCOVA Results by Gender Comparisons, Grade 9

Grade	Subgroup	Mean Scale Score	Mean Difference	Degrees of Freedom	F Value	Significance
Grade 9 (N = 751)	Male	688.96	1.71	1	0.889	0.346
	Female	690.67				

Table 31: SAT-10 Math ANCOVA Results by Gender Comparisons, Grade 9

Grade	Subgroup	Mean Scale Score	Mean Difference	Degrees of Freedom	F Value	Significance
Grade 9 (N = 778)	Male	716.77	3.60	1	5.488	0.019*
	Female	720.37				

\* Statistically significant difference with the probability less than .05.

Table 32: SAT-10 Language ANCOVA Results by Title I Status, Grade 2

Grade	Subgroup	Mean Scale Score	Mean Difference	Degrees of Freedom	F Value	Significance
Grade 2 (N = 461)	Title I	597.61	0.72	1	0.058	0.810
	Non–Title I	596.89				



**Table 33: SAT-10 Math ANCOVA Results by Title I Status, Grade 2**

Grade	Subgroup	Mean Scale Score	Mean Difference	Degrees of Freedom	F Value	Significance
Grade 2 (N = 463)	Title I	583.87	4.22	1	2.273	0.132
	Non-Title I	588.09				

**Table 34: Benchmark Literacy ANCOVA Results by Title I Status, Grades 3–8**

Grade	Subgroup	Mean Scale Score	Mean Difference	Degrees of Freedom	F Value	Significance
Grade 3 (N = 455)	Title I	574.30	20.56	1	2.445	0.119
	Non-Title I	553.74				
Grade 4 (N = 497)	Title I	658.89	4.13	1	0.183	0.669
	Non-Title I	663.02				
Grade 5 (N = 661)	Title I	680.27	2.86	1	0.135	0.713
	Non-Title I	677.41				
Grade 6 (N = 689)	Title I	712.49	15.71	1	3.235	0.073
	Non-Title I	728.20				
Grade 7 (N = 999)	Title I	715.33	11.32	1	2.922	0.088
	Non-Title I	726.65				
Grade 8 (N = 883)	Title I	764.50	21.75	1	7.814	0.005*
	Non-Title I	786.25				

\* Statistically significant difference with the probability less than .05.

**Table 35: Benchmark Math ANCOVA Results by Title I Status, Grades 3–8**

Grade	Subgroup	Mean Scale Score	Mean Difference	Degrees of Freedom	F Value	Significance
Grade 3 (N = 455)	Title I	568.71	0.54	1	0.006	0.938
	Non-Title I	569.25				
Grade 4 (N = 498)	Title I	632.51	3.05	1	0.299	0.585
	Non-Title I	629.46				
Grade 5 (N = 661)	Title I	651.77	12.69	1	7.490	0.006*
	Non-Title I	639.08				
Grade 6 (N = 689)	Title I	692.16	13.83	1	5.682	0.017*
	Non-Title I	705.99				

Grade	Subgroup	Mean Scale Score	Mean Difference	Degrees of Freedom	F Value	Significance
Grade 7 (N = 1,002)	Title I	710.15	0.94	1	0.079	0.778
	Non–Title I	711.09				
Grade 8 (N = 883)	Title I	703.44	13.81	1	14.832	0.000*
	Non–Title I	717.25				

\* Statistically significant difference with the probability less than .05.

**Table 36: SAT-10 Language ANCOVA Results by Title I Status, Grade 9**

Grade	Subgroup	Mean Scale Score	Mean Difference	Degrees of Freedom	F Value	Significance
Grade 9 (N = 751)	Title I	689.82	0.07	1	0.002	0.967
	Non–Title I	689.89				

**Table 37: SAT-10 Math ANCOVA Results by Title I Status, Grade 9**

Grade	Subgroup	Mean Scale Score	Mean Difference	Degrees of Freedom	F Value	Significance
Grade 9 (N = 778)	Title I	718.31	0.71	1	0.202	0.653
	Non–Title I	719.02				

**Table 38: SAT-10 Language ANCOVA Results by Education Status, Grade 2**

Grade	Subgroup	Mean Scale Score	Mean Difference	Degrees of Freedom	F Value	Significance
Grade 2 (N = 461)	Special Ed	583.79	14.64	1	7.349	0.007*
	General Ed	598.43				

\* Statistically significant difference with the probability less than .05.

**Table 39: SAT-10 Math ANCOVA Results by Education Status, Grade 2**

Grade	Subgroup	Mean Scale Score	Mean Difference	Degrees of Freedom	F Value	Significance
Grade 2 (N = 463)	Special Ed	569.04	18.97	1	15.273	0.000*
	General Ed	588.01				

\* Statistically significant difference with the probability less than .05.

**Table 40: Benchmark Literacy ANCOVA Results by Education Status, Grades 3–8**

Grade	Subgroup	Mean Scale Score	Mean Difference	Degrees of Freedom	F Value	Significance
Grade 3 (N = 455)	Special Ed	461.77	109.92	1	19.768	0.000*
	General Ed	571.69				
Grade 4 (N = 497)	Special Ed	609.22	55.38	1	7.286	0.007*
	General Ed	664.60				
Grade 5 (N = 661)	Special Ed	653.33	25.71	1	1.448	0.229
	General Ed	679.04				
Grade 6 (N = 689)	Special Ed	676.25	51.08	1	9.079	0.003*
	General Ed	727.33				
Grade 7 (N = 999)	Special Ed	647.55	79.45	1	32.555	0.000*
	General Ed	727.00				
Grade 8 (N = 883)	Special Ed	638.61	148.33	1	93.362	0.000*
	General Ed	786.94				

\* Statistically significant difference with the probability less than .05.

**Table 41: Benchmark Math ANCOVA Results by Education Status, Grades 3–8**

Grade	Subgroup	Mean Scale Score	Mean Difference	Degrees of Freedom	F Value	Significance
Grade 3 (N = 455)	Special Ed	558.61	11.26	1	0.743	0.389
	General Ed	569.87				
Grade 4 (N = 498)	Special Ed	607.84	24.53	1	4.459	0.035*
	General Ed	632.37				
Grade 5 (N = 661)	Special Ed	610.18	33.72	1	7.095	0.008*
	General Ed	643.90				
Grade 6 (N = 689)	Special Ed	684.44	19.45	1	3.03	0.082
	General Ed	703.89				
Grade 7 (N = 1,002)	Special Ed	695.64	16.01	1	5.245	0.022*
	General Ed	711.65				
Grade 8 (N = 883)	Special Ed	689.06	24.19	1	10.570	0.001*
	General Ed	713.25				

\* Statistically significant difference with the probability less than .05.

**Table 42: SAT-10 Language ANCOVA Results by Education Status, Grade 9**

Grade	Subgroup	Mean Scale Score	Mean Difference	Degrees of Freedom	F Value	Significance
Grade 9 (N = 751)	Special Ed	673.97	16.61	1	13.751	0.000*
	General Ed	690.58				

\* Statistically significant difference with the probability less than .05.

**Table 43: SAT-10 Math ANCOVA Results by Education Status, Grade 9**

Grade	Subgroup	Mean Scale Score	Mean Difference	Degrees of Freedom	F Value	Significance
Grade 9 (N = 778)	Special Ed	708.64	10.46	1	7.733	0.006*
	General Ed	719.10				

\* Statistically significant difference with the probability less than .05.

**Table 44: SAT-10 Language ANCOVA Results by Poverty Status, Grade 2**

Grade	Subgroup	Mean Scale Score	Mean Difference	Degrees of Freedom	F Value	Significance
Grade 2 (N = 461)	Free/Reduced Lunch	592.75	8.82	1	8.685	0.003*
	No Free/Reduced Lunch	601.57				

\* Statistically significant difference with the probability less than .05.

**Table 45: SAT-10 Math ANCOVA Results by Poverty Status, Grade 2**

Grade	Subgroup	Mean Scale Score	Mean Difference	Degrees of Freedom	F Value	Significance
Grade 2 (N = 463)	Free/Reduced Lunch	585.80	1.13	1	0.151	0.698
	No Free/Reduced Lunch	586.93				

**Table 46: Benchmark Literacy ANCOVA Results by Poverty Status, Grades 3–8**

Grade	Subgroup	Mean Scale Score	Mean Difference	Degrees of Freedom	F Value	Significance
Grade 3 (N = 455)	Free/Reduced Lunch	556.40	13.06	1	0.945	0.331
	No Free/Reduced Lunch	569.46				
Grade 4	Free/Reduced Lunch	658.75	4.36	1	0.191	0.662

Grade	Subgroup	Mean Scale Score	Mean Difference	Degrees of Freedom	F Value	Significance
(N = 497)	No Free/Reduced Lunch	663.11				
Grade 5 (N = 661)	Free/Reduced Lunch	664.15	29.16	1	16.165	0.000*
	No Free/Reduced Lunch	693.31				
Grade 6 (N = 689)	Free/Reduced Lunch	718.28	10.50	1	1.874	0.171
	No Free/Reduced Lunch	728.78				
Grade 7 (N = 999)	Free/Reduced Lunch	718.39	9.21	1	1.922	0.166
	No Free/Reduced Lunch	727.60				
Grade 8 (N = 883)	Free/Reduced Lunch	767.72	21.59	1	7.398	0.007*
	No Free/Reduced Lunch	789.31				

\* Statistically significant difference with the probability less than .05.

Table 47: Benchmark Math ANCOVA Results by Poverty Status, Grades 3–8

Grade	Subgroup	Mean Scale Score	Mean Difference	Degrees of Freedom	F Value	Significance
Grade 3 (N = 455)	Free/Reduced Lunch	558.85	19.41	1	7.614	0.006*
	No Free/Reduced Lunch	578.26				
Grade 4 (N = 498)	Free/Reduced Lunch	628.37	4.50	1	0.616	0.433
	No Free/Reduced Lunch	632.87				
Grade 5 (N = 661)	Free/Reduced Lunch	641.95	1.92	1	0.185	0.668
	No Free/Reduced Lunch	643.87				
Grade 6 (N = 689)	Free/Reduced Lunch	693.66	15.16	1	9.003	0.003*
	No Free/Reduced Lunch	708.82				
Grade 7 (N = 1,002)	Free/Reduced Lunch	703.52	16.07	1	24.357	0.000*
	No Free/Reduced Lunch	719.59				
Grade 8 (N = 883)	Free/Reduced Lunch	704.42	16.07	1	19.475	0.000*
	No Free/Reduced Lunch	720.49				

\* Statistically significant difference with the probability less than .05.

**Table 48: SAT-10 Language ANCOVA Results by Poverty Status, Grade 9**

Grade	Subgroup	Mean Scale Score	Mean Difference	Degrees of Freedom	F Value	Significance
Grade 9 (N = 751)	Free/Reduced Lunch	686.49	6.52	1	12.286	0.000*
	No Free/Reduced Lunch	693.01				

\* Statistically significant difference with the probability less than .05.

**Table 49: SAT-10 Math ANCOVA Results by Poverty Status, Grade 9**

Grade	Subgroup	Mean Scale Score	Mean Difference	Degrees of Freedom	F Value	Significance
Grade 9 (N = 778)	Free/Reduced Lunch	715.82	5.51	1	12.069	0.001*
	No Free/Reduced Lunch	721.33				

\* Statistically significant difference with the probability less than .05.

## D. Survey Findings

### Parent Survey

Table 50: Length of Children’s Charter School Enrollment

	(N = 539)
Number of years (including this year)	Percent
3	48%
4	32%
5	11%
6	4%
7	3%
8	2%

Table 51: Children’s Previous School

	(Ne = 520)
Previous School	Percent
Regular/traditional public school	73%
Private school	13%
Home school	9%
Another charter school	5%

Table 52: Number of Children per Family Enrolled at the Charter School

	(N = 537)
Number of children	Percent
1	60%
2	33%
3	6%
4	1%

Table 53: Parent Education Level

Education Level	(N = 546)
	Percent
High school diploma	21%
Associate's or 2-year degree	15%
Bachelor's or 4-year degree	31%
Graduate degree	27%
Other	6%

Table 54: Main Reasons for Charter School Selection

Reason	(N = 533)
	Percent
Interest in the charter school's instructional or academic program	70%
Dissatisfaction with traditional public school options and/or safety	67%
Interest in the charter school's educational mission or philosophy	64%
Better teachers at this charter school	41%
Small size of this charter school or small classes	41%
Greater opportunities for parental involvement at this charter school	32%
Respondent's child wanted to come to this charter school	27%
Extended-day hours/before- and after-school programs available	20%
More convenient location than previous school	19%
Child was doing poorly in previous school	15%
Child has special needs that the previous school was not addressing/meeting	12%
Not applicable	2%

Table 55: Student Academic Performance: Previous and Current Schools

School	Total N	Academic Performance				
		Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Failing
Previous school	526	42%	32%	18%	7%	1%
2009–2010 Charter school	534	60%	31%	8%	1%	0%

Table 56: Parent Satisfaction with Charter School

Indicator	Total N	Level of Satisfaction			
		Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Curriculum (i.e., what the school teaches)	538	75%	22%	2%	1%
Performance of the teachers (i.e., how well the school teaches)	536	70%	23%	6%	1%
Class size	525	75%	19%	5%	1%
The individualized attention respondent's child gets	534	72%	22%	5%	1%
Opportunities for parents to be involved or participate	536	81%	16%	2%	1%
Communication with respondent's child's teacher	538	76%	18%	5%	1%
Quality of the building in which the school is located	462	67%	22%	7%	4%
Quality of the school facilities (i.e., school library, gymnasium, and science labs)	432	52%	29%	12%	7%
Use of technology within the instructional program	526	69%	25%	5%	1%
School discipline policies and practices	504	70%	20%	7%	3%
Quality of student support services such as guidance counseling and tutoring	498	70%	22%	6%	2%
Extracurricular activities (i.e., sports programs, after-school clubs or activities)	496	59%	24%	12%	5%
School size	525	76%	19%	3%	2%
School climate (i.e., the feel or tone of everyday life at the school)	502	73%	21%	5%	1%
Quality of reading instruction	524	77%	20%	2%	1%
Quality of math instruction	533	74%	19%	6%	1%
Quality of writing instruction	529	73%	22%	4%	1%
School safety	495	78%	19%	2%	1%
Extra help or special services for students when needed	470	76%	18%	4%	2%

Table 57: Parent Satisfaction with Child's Previous School

Indicator	Total N	Level of Satisfaction			
		Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Quality of reading instruction	489	47%	31%	12%	10%
Quality of math instruction	490	41%	35%	13%	11%
Quality of writing instruction	490	46%	31%	15%	8%
School safety	485	52%	21%	13%	14%



Indicator	Total N	Level of Satisfaction			
		Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
School facilities	479	44%	32%	15%	9%
Parent involvement/participation	487	49%	28%	13%	10%
Extra help or special services for students when needed	440	45%	23%	16%	16%

Table 58: Quality of Previous and Current Schools

Indicator	Total N	Quality			
		Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Previous school	519	22%	39%	27%	12%
2009–2010 charter school	533	68%	25%	6%	1%

### Student Survey

Table 59: Distribution of Students by Grade Level

Grade	(N = 2,582)
	Percent
3	11%
4	10%
5	9%
6	12%
7	8%
8	15%
9	5%
10	9%
11	9%
12	12%

Table 60: Students' Years at the Charter School

Number of years	(N = 2,572)
	Percent
3 years	40%
4 or more years	60%

Table 61: Students' Previous School

Previous School	(N = 2,576)
	Percent
Regular/traditional public school	66%
Current school is student's first	19%
Private school	7%
Home school	4%
Another charter school	4%

Table 62: Student Interest in Charter School

Indicator	Total N	Interest			
		Very Interested	Somewhat Interested	Just a Little Interested	Not at All Interested
Student interest	2,436	41%	34%	17%	8%

Table 63: Student Rating of Previous School

Indicator	Total N	Rating			
		Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Previous school	2,090	28%	30%	27%	15%

Table 64: Student Grades at Charter School

Indicator	Total N	Rating			
		Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Grades	2,501	42%	37%	18%	3%



**Table 65: Student Perception of Teacher’s Expectations**

Indicator	Total N	Expected to Work . . .			
		Very Hard	Hard	Somewhat	Not at All
How hard did your teachers expect you to work?	2,476	36%	37%	21%	6%

**Table 66: Student Perception of Teachers’ Helpfulness**

Indicator	Total N	Available to Help . . .			
		Very Often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely or Never
How often were your teachers able to help you when you needed help?	2,476	36%	37%	21%	6%

**Table 67: Student Perception of Class Size**

Indicator	Total N	Number of Students in Class	
		Too many	Just Right
How did you feel about the number of students in your class(es)?	2,491	18%	82%

**Table 68: Student Perception of Knowledge Gained**

Indicator	Total N	Knowledge Gained		
		A Lot	Average Amount	A Little
How much did you feel you learned?	2,476	50%	41%	9%

**Table 69: Student Perception of Homework**

Indicator	Total N	Rating		
		A Lot	Average Amount	A Little
How much homework did you get?	2,480	27%	45%	29%



**Table 70: Student Perception of Technology Use**

Indicator	Total N	Technology Used . . .			
		Very Often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely/Never
How often did you get to use computers and other electronics in your classes?	2,465	18%	22%	34%	26%

**Table 71: Student Perception of Behavior Disruptions**

Indicator	Total N	Disruptions Occurred . . .			
		Very Often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely/Never
How often were there behavior disruptions in your classes?	2,479	20%	23%	35%	22%

**Table 72: Student Perception of School Safety**

Indicator	Total N	Level of Safety			
		Very Safe	Safe	Somewhat Unsafe	Very Unsafe
How safe was your school?	2,489	50%	35%	11%	4%

**Table 73: Student Perception of School Cleanliness**

Indicator	Total N	Level of Cleanliness			
		Very Clean	Clean	Somewhat Dirty	Very Dirty
How clean was your school?	2,491	29%	43%	20%	8%

**School Administrator Survey**

**Table 74: Number of Years at Current Position**

Number of years	(Total N = 24)	
	Percent	
This is my first year	21%	
1 year	8%	
2 years	25%	

Number of years	(Total N = 24)
	Percent
3 years	17%
4 years	29%

Table 75: Number of Years at Charter School

Number of years	(Total N = 24)
	Percent
This is my first year	17%
1 year	4%
2 years	8%
3 years	8%
4 years	21%
5+ years	42%

Table 76: Charter School Exemptions and Waivers

Exemptions/Waivers	(Total N = 24)
	Percent
Teacher certification requirements	79%
Teacher hiring, discipline, and dismissal practices	46%
School calendar	42%
School day length	25%
Collective bargaining provisions	21%
Establishing curriculum	21%
School year length	21%
Exemptions/Waivers specified in school	21%
Purchasing procedures (e.g., outside bidding, more timely purchases)	8%
Contractual services	8%
Student discipline policies	8%
Resource allocations	4%

**Table 77: Charter School Enrollment Methods**

Enrollment methods	(Total N = 24)	
	Percent	
Lottery		71%
Use of zoning laws (i.e., all zoned students welcome)		29%
First-come, first-served basis (until maximum capacity is reached)		29%
Admissions criteria (i.e., competitive application process)		4%
Other		4%

**Table 78: Charter School Facilities Arrangement**

Arrangements	(Total N = 24)	
	Percent	
Rented/leased facilities that were independent of the district		42%
Used district facility at no cost		33%
Purchased facilities		17%
Rented/leased facilities from the district		4%
Other		4%

**Table 79: Open Enrollment Charter Schools- Charter School Board Practices**

School Board Practices	Total N	Percent
Implementation of open Board meetings	16	100%
Sharing of agendas and other important information prior to Board meetings	16	100%
Commitment to strategic planning	13	100%
Written descriptions of board members roles and responsibilities	15	93%
Clear procedures for the selection of board members	15	93%
Open lines of communication	14	93%
Use of available funds for continued board development	12	92%
Formal orientation and training sessions for Board members	14	86%

School Board Practices	Total N	Percent
Clear, up-to-date by-laws	14	86%
Formal plan for family and community involvement	13	85%
Functioning executive committee	11	82%
Identification of a board director	14	79%
Formal processes for the development of school policy	14	71%
Use of advisory committees	14	71%
Decision-making flow charts	10	30%
Responsibility of fund-raising	12	25%

Table 80: Primary Methods for Instruction Delivery

Methods	(Total N = 24)
	Percent
Regular integration of technology	79%
Character education	79%
Project-based or hands-on learning	75%
Individualized or tailored instruction	75%
Reduced or small class size	71%
Direct instruction	71%
Interdisciplinary instruction	67%
Cooperative learning	63%
Regular integration of fine arts	58%
Multi-grade classrooms	54%
Alternative or authentic assessment	50%
Extended school day (before, after, summer, and/or vacation)	50%
Team teaching	42%
School-to-work concepts & strategies	38%
Distance-learning and/or instruction via Internet	38%
Work-based or field based learning	29%
Year-round or extended schooling	29%
Theme-based curriculum	29%

Methods	(Total N = 24)
	Percent
Independent study	25%
Home-based learning with parent as primary instructor	4%
Other	4%

Table 81: Extended School Instructional Hours

Extended School Arrangement	(Total N = 23)
	Percent
No, we used a traditional school day and year	52%
Yes, we had an extended school year, but not extended school day	4%
Yes, we had an extended school day, but not extended school year	22%
Yes, we had an extended school day and year	22%

Table 82: Accommodations for Special Needs Students

Accommodations	(Total N = 24)
	Percent
Pull-out services	79%
Inclusive classrooms	79%
Self-contained special education classes	42%
Other	4%

Table 83: Services for English Language Learners

Services	(Total N = 23)
	Percent
This school did not have students with limited English proficiency	52%
ESL instruction	39%
Other	4%
Self-contained bilingual education	4%

**Table 84: Student Assessment Methods**

Assessment Methods	(Total N = 23)
	Percent
State benchmark exams	96%
Standardized achievement tests	96%
Teacher assigned grades	91%
State EOC exams	74%
Behavioral indicators, such as attendance and suspension	74%
Student demonstrations or exhibitions	70%
Other performance-based tests	65%
Student portfolios	57%
Other	9%

**Table 85: Instructional Staff Practices under Charter School Status**

Practices	(Total N = 23)
	Percent
Ongoing, targeted professional development	57%
Dismiss teachers for unsatisfactory performance	57%
Lack of tenure for teachers	44%
Reward teachers for exemplary performance	39%
Contract for PD services with non-district providers	35%
Private fund raising/grants development	17%
Other	17%
Higher teacher salaries (than public schools)	13%

**Table 86: Satisfaction with Parent/Community Involvement**

Indicator	Total N	Level of Satisfaction Reported				
		Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Unsatisfactory
The level of parental involvement at this school concerning students' academic achievement, attendance, and/or behavior	24	29%	33%	25%	13%	0%



Indicator	Total N	Level of Satisfaction Reported				
		Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Unsatisfactory
This school's level of parental involvement concerning participation in school-wide events or activities (e.g., Parents Club)	24	13%	42%	33%	8%	4%
The level of community involvement at this school	24	13%	33%	29%	21%	4%

Table 87: Parent/Community Involvement Strategies

Strategies	(Total N = 24)
	Percent
Implementing parent-teacher conferences	96%
Involving parents in monitoring students' academic progress	96%
Scheduling school events to accommodate parents' schedules	88%
Involving parents in discipline-related discussions	83%
Using community resources (e.g., museums, parks, gyms) to enhance students learning	79%
Conducting parent workshops	79%
Using parents and community volunteers to provide special instruction	67%
Establish parent and community advisory committees	67%
Creating learning partnerships with community-based organizations	63%
Implementing parent involvement contracts	58%
Using community sites for service learning or work-based learning opportunities	50%
Hiring a parent involvement coordinator and/or community liaison	46%
Using the school as a community center	17%
Inviting parents to attend staff trainings	17%
Other	8%

Table 88: Parent Requirements

Requirements	(Total N = 22)
	Percent
Attend parent meetings	55%
Sign a contract with the school	50%

Requirements	(Total N = 22)
	Percent
Participate in a minimum number of hours at the school	32%
Participate on committees or the governance board	23%
Other	23%

Table 89: Charter School Issues/Challenges

Issues/challenges	Total N	Percent
Managing public perceptions & public relations		57%
Facility costs		43%
Increasing parent & community involvement		33%
Facility management		29%
Personnel (e.g., retaining teachers)		23%
Fiscal and business management		19%
Designing/delivering professional development		15%
Other		11%
Selecting and implementing curricula		9%
Charter school board operations		5%



## E. Evaluation Survey Instruments

**ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION — 2009–2010 AND 2010–2011 CHARTER SCHOOL  
 EVALUATION  
 Student Survey**

**Directions:** The reason for this survey is to hear from you about whether your charter school is meeting your needs. The information you provide will be used to make the program better in the future. No one will know your responses on this survey. Using a pencil or pen, please answer the following questions by completely filling in the circle next to your choice. We are interested in hearing what you thought of your previous two school years (2009–2010 and 2010–2011). After finishing, please insert and seal your survey in the envelope your teacher has. There are no risks in participating in this study. You may choose not to participate at any time.

**\*\*\* IF YOU AGREE TO PARTICIPATE, PLEASE CHECK THIS BOX:  \*\*\***

1. What grade are you in this year? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Including this year, how many years have you gone to this school?

- 1 Year       2 Years       3 Years       4 or More Years

3. Before coming to this school, where did you go to school?

- This is my first school       Was home schooled  
 Attended a regular public school       Attended a private school  
 Attended a *different* charter school

4. How interested were you in your school...

- ...last year (2010–2011 school year)?     Very     Somewhat     Just a little     Not at all  
 ...two years ago (2009–2010 school year)?     Very     Somewhat     Just a little     Not at all

5. How were your grades...

- ...last year (2010–2011 school year)?                      
 Excellent    Good    Average    Poor    Not Sure or I was  
 not at this school  
 ...two years ago (2009–2010 school year)?                      
 Excellent    Good    Average    Poor    Not Sure or I was  
 not at this school

6. If you went to another school before this one, how would you rate your previous school?

- Excellent     Good     Average     Poor     This is my first school

**7. How hard did your teachers expect you to work...**

- ...last year (2010–2011 school year)?     Very hard     Hard     Somewhat     Not at all  
 ...two years ago (2009–2010 school year)?     Very hard     Hard     Somewhat     Not at all

**8. How often were your teachers able to help you when you needed help...**

- ...last year (2010–2011 school year)?     Very often     Often     Sometimes     Rarely or Never  
 ...two years ago (2009–2010 school year)?     Very often     Often     Sometimes     Rarely or Never

**9. How did you feel about the number of students in your class(es)...**

- ...last year (2010–2011 school year)?     Too many students in my classes     Just right  
 ...two years ago (2009–2010 school year)?     Too many students in my classes     Just right

**10. How much did you feel you learned...**

- ...last year (2010–2011 school year)?     A lot     An average amount     Little  
 ...two years ago (2009–2010 school year)?     A lot     An average amount     Little

**11. How much homework did you get...**

- ...last year (2010–2011 school year)?     A lot     An average amount     Little  
 ...two years ago (2009–2010 school year)?     A lot     An average amount     Little

**12. How often did you get to use computers and other electronics in your classes...**

- ...last year (2010–2011 school year)?     Very often     Often     Sometimes     Rarely or Never  
 ...two years ago (2009–2010 school year)?     Very often     Often     Sometimes     Rarely or Never

**13. How often were there behavior disruptions in your classes...**

- ...last year (2010–2011 school year)?     Very often     Often     Sometimes     Rarely or Never  
 ...two years ago (2009–2010 school year)?     Very often     Often     Sometimes     Rarely or Never

**14. How safe was your school...**

- ...last year (2010–2011 school year)?     Very Safe     Safe     Somewhat unsafe     Very unsafe  
 ...two years ago (2009–2010 school year)?     Very Safe     Safe     Somewhat unsafe     Very unsafe

**15. How clean was your school...**

- ...last year (2010–2011 school year)?     Very clean     Clean     Somewhat unclean     Very Dirty  
 ...two years ago (2009–2010 school year)?     Very clean     Clean     Somewhat unclean     Very Dirty

**Thank you for completing this survey!**

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION—CHARTER SCHOOL EVALUATION  
**Parent Survey**

**Directions:** The Arkansas Department of Education is asking that you complete this survey as part of a study of the public charter schools for the **2009–2010 and 2010–2011 school years**. Your experiences with your child’s charter school will be an important part of the study. Please know that the information you provide is confidential and that you will not be identified with any of your answers. Your participation is voluntary and there are no known risks in participating in this study. You may withdraw from participating at any time. Please complete and mail this survey using the postage paid envelope within two weeks of receiving it. If you wish to complete this survey online instead, please visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CharterParentSurvey2011>. Please complete only one survey per parent unless you have children enrolled in multiple charter schools.

1) Do you agree to participate in this research study?  Yes

**Background Information**

2) For how many years (including this year) have you had a child enrolled in:  
 the *SCHOOL NAME*? \_\_\_\_\_ Years

3) Where did your child attend school before enrolling in this charter school?

- Regular/traditional public school
- Private school
- Home school
- Another charter school

4) How many of your children were enrolled in this charter school during the **2009–2010** year? \_\_\_\_

5) How many of your children were enrolled in this charter school during the **2010–2011** year? \_\_\_\_

6) What is your highest educational degree?

- High school diploma
- Associate’s or 2-year degree
- Bachelor’s or 4-year degree
- Graduate degree
- Other, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

7) What were the main reasons for choosing this charter school for your child? (Check **all** that apply.)

- Interest in the charter school’s educational mission or philosophy
- Child was doing poorly in his or her previous school
- Dissatisfaction with traditional public school options and/or safety
- Interest in the charter school’s instructional or academic program
- More convenient location than previous school
- Child has special needs that the previous school was not addressing/meeting
- Better teachers at this charter school
- My child wanted to come to this charter school
- This charter school offers extended day hours/before and after school programs
- Small size of this charter school or small classes
- Greater opportunities for parental involvement at this charter school
- Not Applicable
- Other, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

- 8) How did your child do academically at his or her previous school?  
 Excellent       Good       Average       Poor       Failing
- 9) How did your child do academically at this charter school during the 2009–2010 year?  
 Excellent       Good       Average       Poor       Failing       Not applicable
- 10) How did your child do academically at this charter school during the 2010–2011 year?  
 Excellent       Good       Average       Poor       Failing       Not applicable

**Charter School Satisfaction**

11) How satisfied were you with the following areas of your child(ren)’s charter school during the 2009–2010 school year?

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Not Sure	Not Applicable
a. Curriculum (i.e., what the school teaches).....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
b. Performance of the teachers (i.e., how well the school teaches).....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
c. Class size .....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
d. The individualized attention your child gets .....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
e. Opportunities for parents to be involved or participate .....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
f. Communication with your child’s teacher .....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
g. Quality of the building in which the school is located.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
h. Quality of the school facilities (i.e., school library, gymnasium, and science labs).....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
i. Use of technology within the instructional program .....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
j. School discipline policies and practices.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
k. Quality of student support services such as guidance counseling and tutoring .....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
l. Extracurricular activities (i.e., sports programs, after school clubs or activities) .....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
m. School size .....	<input type="checkbox"/>					

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Not Sure	Not Applicable
n. School climate (i.e., the feel or tone of every day life at the school).....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
o. Quality of reading instruction.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
p. Quality of math instruction.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
q. Quality of writing instruction .....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
r. School safety.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
s. Extra help or special services for students when needed.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					

12) How satisfied were you with the following areas of your child(ren)'s charter school during **2010–2011**?

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Not Sure	Not Applicable
a. Curriculum (i.e., what the school teaches).....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
b. Performance of the teachers (i.e., how well the school teaches).....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
c. Class size .....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
d. The individualized attention your child gets.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
e. Opportunities for parents to be involved or participate .....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
f. Communication with your child's teacher .....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
g. Quality of the building in which the school is located.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
h. Quality of the school facilities (i.e., school library, gymnasium, and science labs).....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
i. Use of technology within the instructional program.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
j. School discipline policies and practices.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Not Sure	Not Applicable
k. Quality of student support services such as guidance counseling and tutoring .....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
l. Extracurricular activities (i.e., sports programs, after school clubs or activities) .....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
m. School size .....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
n. School climate (i.e., the feel or tone of every day life at the school) .....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
o. Quality of reading instruction .....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
p. Quality of math instruction .....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
q. Quality of writing instruction .....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
r. School safety .....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
s. Extra help or special services for students when needed .....	<input type="checkbox"/>					

13) How satisfied were you with your child(ren)'s prior school in terms of:

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Not applicable
a. Quality of reading instruction .....	<input type="checkbox"/>				
b. Quality of math instruction .....	<input type="checkbox"/>				
c. Quality of writing instruction .....	<input type="checkbox"/>				
d. School safety .....	<input type="checkbox"/>				
e. School facilities .....	<input type="checkbox"/>				
f. Parent involvement or participation .....	<input type="checkbox"/>				
g. Extra help or special services for students when needed .....	<input type="checkbox"/>				

14) How would you rate the overall quality of your child's previous school?

- Excellent       Good       Fair       Poor

15) How would you rate the overall quality of this charter school?

- Excellent       Good       Fair       Poor

16) How would you rate the overall quality of this charter school....

- |  |                                    |                               |                               |                               |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ...for the <b>2009–2010</b> school year? | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> Good | <input type="checkbox"/> Fair | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor |
| ...for the <b>2010–2011</b> school year? | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> Good | <input type="checkbox"/> Fair | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor |

17) What issues most concerned you about this charter school during the **2009–2010** year?

18) What issues most concerned you about this charter school during the **2010–2011** year?

**Thank you for completing this survey.**

## Arkansas Charter Schools - Administrator Survey (2009-2011)

**Introduction:** The Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) has asked Metis Associates, an independent research and evaluation firm, to conduct a study of Arkansas' Public Charter Schools for the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school years. The purpose of this study is to assess the impact of charter schools on student performance and the effects of innovative teaching and learning practices. Because your opinions are valuable, we are asking that you take about 30 minutes to complete this survey. All responses will remain anonymous and confidential. Responses to the items will be reported in the aggregate and never attributed to any one individual. There are no known risks in participating in this study, and you may withdraw your participation at anytime. The information you provide is greatly appreciated and will be used to improve future implementation of the program.

**IMPORTANT:** Since you cannot return to the survey once you have closed your browser, it must be completed in one sitting. Be certain to click the "SAVE AND COMPLETE THE SURVEY" button at the end of the survey before closing the survey window in order to ensure that your responses are saved.

**\*1. Do you agree to participate in this research study?**

- Yes  
 No (You will be redirected to another page)

**\*2. What is the name of your school?**

**\*3. What is your position at this school?**

- Principal/Director  
 Assistant Principal/Director  
 Superintendent  
 Other (please specify)

**\*4. Number of years at current position in this charter school (including current year):**

- |   |                                |
|---|--------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> This is my first year | <input type="radio"/> 3 years  |
| <input type="radio"/> 1 year                | <input type="radio"/> 4 years  |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 years               | <input type="radio"/> 5+ years |

## Arkansas Charter Schools - Administrator Survey (2009-2011)

**\*5. Number of overall years in this school (including current year):**

- This is my first year                       3 years  
 1 year     4 years  
 2 years     5+ years

**\*6. What exemptions/waivers from the state and district education laws, regulations, and policies were specified in your school's charter AND put into practice during the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school years at your school?**

	2009-2010	2010-2011
Teacher certification requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Collective bargaining provisions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Establishing curriculum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Purchasing procedures (e.g., outside bidding, more timely purchases)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contractual services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Resource allocations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher hiring, discipline, and dismissal practices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student discipline policies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
School calendar	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
School year length	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
School day length	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**\*7. Which of the following enrollment methods were used at your school during the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school years? (Check all that apply)**

	2009-2010	2010-2011
Use of zoning laws (i.e., all zoned students welcome)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Admissions criteria (i.e., competitive application process)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
First-come, first-served basis (until maximum capacity is reached)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lottery	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Arkansas Charter Schools - Administrator Survey (2009-2011)

**\*8. During the 2009-10 and 2010-2011 school years, what arrangements were made for your schools facilities? (Only choose ONE arrangement per school year)**

	2009-2010	2010-2011
Used district facility at no cost	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Used district facility at a reduced cost	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rented/leased facilities from the district	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rented/leased facilities that were independent of the district	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Purchased facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**9. Open Enrollment Schools only: Which of the following were regular practices of the charter school board during the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school years for this school?**

	2009-2010	2010-2011
Written descriptions of board members roles and responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identification of a board director	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clear procedures for the selection of board members	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Formal orientation and training sessions for Board members	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Decision-making flow charts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Formal processes for the development of school policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Functioning executive committee	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Open lines of communication	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Implementation of open Board meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sharing of agendas and other important information prior to Board meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commitment to strategic planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clear, up-to-date by-laws	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Formal plan for family and community involvement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use of advisory committees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Responsibility of fund-raising	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use of available funds for continued board development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Arkansas Charter Schools - Administrator Survey (2009-2011)

**\*10. What were the primary methods for delivering instruction to students at your charter school during the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school years? (Check all that apply for each school year)**

	2009-2010	2010-2011
Interdiscipline instruction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Team teaching	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Project-based or hands-on learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regular integration of technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Character education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Individualized or tailored instruction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Direct instruction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Foreign language immersion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Theme-based curriculum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mutli-grade classrooms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
School-to-work concepts & strategies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regular integration of fine arts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alternative or authentic assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work-based or field based learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cooperative learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reduced or small class size	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year-round or extended schooling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Extended school day (before, after, summer, and/or vacation)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Home-based learning with parent as primary instructor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Distance-learning and/or instruction via Internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Independent study	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
None	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**\*11. Did the design for this charter school include instructional hours that went beyond the typical school year (e.g., 180 days) or the typical school day (e.g., 6.5 hours) during the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school years? (Choose only one response per year)**

	2009-2010	2010-2011
No, we used a traditional school day and year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes, we had an extended school year, but not extended school day	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes, we had an extended school day, but not extended school year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes, we had an extended school day and year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Arkansas Charter Schools - Administrator Survey (2009-2011)

### 12. What accommodations were available for students with special needs during the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school years? (check all that apply for each year)

	2009-2010	2010-2011
Self-contained special education classes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pull-out services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inclusive classrooms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
None	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This school did not have students with special needs during the 2009-2010 school year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### \*13. During the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school years, what services were available for English Language Learners (ELLs)?

	2009-2010	2010-2011
Self-contained bilingual education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ESL instruction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
None	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This school did not have students with limited English proficiency during the 2009-2010 school year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### \*14. Which of the following student assessment strategies or methods were used at this school in 2009-2010 and in 2010-2011?

	2009-2010	2010-2011
Teacher assigned grades	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student portfolios	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Standardized achievement tests	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
State benchmark exams	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
State end-of-course exams	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student demonstrations or exhibitions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student interviews or surveys	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Behavioral indicators, such as attendance and suspension	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other performance-based tests	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Arkansas Charter Schools - Administrator Survey (2009-2011)

**15. Please give us an estimate of the percentage (%) of staff that fall into each racial/ethnic background category among your school's 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 paid instructional staff, including both full-time and part-time staff: (Note: each school year should add up to 100%)**

	2009-2010	2010-2011
White	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
African American	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Hispanic/Latino	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Asian/Pacific Islander	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Other	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

**\*16. Does your school have a waiver for teacher certification?**

- Yes  
 No

**\*17. Among the full-time instructional staff, how many had full state certification for the subjects/areas they taught in your school during the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school years?**

2009-2010

2010-2011

**\*18. During the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school years, what did the charter status allow you to do with respect to your instructional staff that you could not have done under the traditional school/district structure?(Check all that apply for each school year)**

	2009-2010	2010-2011
Higher teacher salaries (than public school)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Private fund raising/grants development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lack of tenure for teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Performance-based bonuses for teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ongoing, targeted professional development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reward teachers for exemplary performance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dismiss teachers for unsatisfactory performance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contract for PD services with non-district providers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Arkansas Charter Schools - Administrator Survey (2009-2011)

**\*19. Including the summer, how many teacher professional development days did your charter school offer during the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school years?**

2009-2010

2010-2011

**\*20. Please rate the following areas for each of the past two school years (2009-2010 and 2010-2011):**

	2009-2010	2010-2011
The level of parental involvement at this school concerning students' academic achievement, attendance, and/or behavior?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
This school's level of parental involvement concerning participation in school-wide events or activities (e.g., Parents Club)?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
The level of community involvement at this school?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

**\*21. During the 2009-2010 school year, which of the following strategies used at this school involved parents or other members of the community? (Check all that apply for each school year)**

	2009-2010	2010-2011
Conducting parent workshops	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inviting parents to attend staff trainings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using parents and community volunteers to provide special instruction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using community sites for service learning or work-based learning opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using the school as a community center	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Implementing parent involvement contracts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Implementing parent-teacher conferences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Involving parents in discipline-related discussions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Involving parents in monitoring students' academic progress	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scheduling school events to accommodate parents' schedules	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creating learning partnerships with community-based organizations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using community resources (e.g., museums, parks, gyms) to enhance students learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Establish parent and community advisory committees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hiring a parent involvement coordinator and/or community liaison	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Arkansas Charter Schools - Administrator Survey (2009-2011)

**\*22. In school years 2009-2010 and 2010-2011, did your school require parents (or other adult family members of your students) to do any of the following? (Check all that apply for each school year)**

	2009-2010	2010-2011
Sign a contract with the school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participate in a minimum number of hours at the school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participate in a minimum number of activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participate on committees or the governance board	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attend parent meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**\*23. There are issues and challenges which might be encountered when implementing a charter school. For each potential problem listed below, check yes if you believe it was an issue or challenge for this school, or no if it was not an issue or challenge for this school in 2009-2010 and/or 2010-2011.**

	2009-2010	2010-2011
Charter school organization	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Charter school board operations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
General school administration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fiscal and business management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personnel (e.g., retaining teachers)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Managing public perceptions & public relations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Facility management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Selecting and implementing curricula	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increasing parent & community involvement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Designing/delivering professional development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Facility costs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**24. Are there any additional issues or concerns you would like to add about the 2009-2010 Charter School Program that you think might help inform the evaluation?**

## Arkansas Charter Schools - Administrator Survey (2009-2011)

**25. Are there any additional issues or concerns you would like to add about the 2010-2011 Charter School Program that you think might help inform the evaluation?**

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!