



## Charter Schools Get High Marks Students Learning More, Faster

- Research Fact Sheet -  
*Part III*

### BACKGROUND

This new round-up of academic achievement from around the country shows that charter schools are having their intended effect – raising students' test scores to levels beyond those found in conventional public schools. Both proponents and critics of charter schools have eagerly anticipated definitive data that show benefits of this important education reform.

### KEY FINDINGS

In national assessments of public school students, charter schools showed more improvement in both reading and math between the 2003 and 2005 tests. In reading charter schools improved 4 points while conventional public schools remained stagnant. This caused an increase in the percentage of charter students achieving proficiency while those students in conventional schools showed no change since 2003. Charter schools typically attract a higher proportion of at-risk children. At the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level a full 60 percent of students in charter schools are minorities, showing that charter students come from backgrounds that have traditionally been under-served. While the present difference in scores is statistically insignificant it will become all the more apparent because charter schools are showing more improvement over time while conventional public schools continue to show little or no such change.

- In **New York City**, where a restrictive cap limits the number of charters that can open statewide, charter students outperformed their counterparts in the third, fifth, sixth, and seventh grades. Sixty-two percent of charter students achieved proficiency in reading compared to 55 percent of conventional public schools. In math the difference is even larger, 61 percent of charter students reached proficiency compared to only half of all conventional public school students.
- Charter students in the **District of Columbia** now account for 26 percent of all public school students, the highest in the nation. The 65 charter schools are also scoring higher in reading and math. 54 percent of DC charter

students are proficient in math, a full 10percent higher than conventional schools. In reading 45percent of charter students are proficient compared to 39percent of students in conventional public schools. Recent federal data show that DC charter schools made larger gains since the 2003 test.

- The pioneer in chartering, **Minnesota**, still managed to grow its numbers by 13percent since 2004. The amount of charter schools failing to meet federal standards *decreased* by 29percent meanwhile the number of all public schools that failed to meet the same standards *increased* by 2percent since last year.
- Showing its affinity to high academic standards and the ability to choose a schools that's best, **Utah** charter school enrollment nearly doubled in less than a year's time with nearly 12,000 students in the state's high-performing schools.
- Charter schools in **California** gained more ground based on the Academic Performance Index (API) than conventional public schools (28 points vs. 20 points). Charters also outperformed conventional schools at the middle- and high-school levels.
- While charter schools only make up 3percent of all **Massachusetts** public schools their showing on the recent MCAS far exceeds their market share. A full 13percent of the top performing schools on the state math tests are charters.
- While the final numbers are still being tabulated in **Arizona**, the findings of one major study suggest a continued pattern of success. 4<sup>th</sup> grade students attending charter schools are 9.6percent more likely to be proficient in reading and 10.3percent more likely to be proficient in mathematics than their conventional school counterparts (based on state AIMS tests).
- The findings of one major study indicate the high levels of achievement by **Colorado's** charter schools. 4<sup>th</sup> grade students attending charter schools are 12.3percent more likely to be proficient in reading and 13.5percent more likely to be proficient in mathematics than their conventional school counterparts. Disaggregated results on Colorado's state test, the CSAP, are still unavailable.

Source: The Center for Education Reform [www.edreform.com](http://www.edreform.com)

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